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THE

WHOLE WORKS

OF

THE REV. JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

RECTOR OF WESTON-FAVELL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

CONTAINING

MEDITATIONS AMONG THE TOMBS.—REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER GARDEN.
A DESCANT UPON CREATION.
CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NIGHT.—CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS.
A WINTER-PIECE.—THERON AND ASPASIO.
SERMONS.—MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS, AND LETTERS.

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LIFE

OF

THE REV. JAMES HERVEY.

A REGARD to eminent writings, which display genius, learning, orthodoxy, and piety, naturally excites a desire to be acquainted with the writer; and this desire is the stronger, when these writings are not only truly excellent in themselves, but are universally admired, eagerly read by good people of all denominations, and calculated to promote the best interests of mankind. Hence one desires to know the author in private life, how he spent his time, how he sustained his character as a public teacher of religion, what influence the doctrines of grace, which he so warmly inculcated on others, had on his own heart and conversation; and finally, how he closed the last scene. Abundant satisfaction as to all these particulars will be obtained from the following account.

Mr. JAMES HERVEY was born on Friday the 26th of February 1713-14, at Hardingstone, a country village, one mile from Northampton, his father being then minister of the parish of Collingtree, within two miles of Hardingstone. His first instruction was from his mother, who taught him his letters, and to read. Under her tuition he continued till he was seven years of age, when he was sent as a day-scholar to the free grammar-school at Northampton, of which the Rev. Mr. Clarke, vicar of St. Sepulchre's in the said town, was at that time master.

At this school he remained till he was seventeen years old, and learned the Latin and Greek languages; in which his genius and memory would have enabled him to have made a much earlier progress, if it had not been prevented by his schoolmaster, who would not suffer him, or any other of his scholars, to learn faster than his own son. Whilst Mr. Hervey was at school, though he showed a remarkable dexterity at the innocent games usual among children, yet he had a perfect indifference for the acquisitions he made by his skill in these games, which he practised only for exercise and amusement.

In the year 1731, at the age of seventeen, he was sent by his father to the university of Oxford, and entered of Lincoln college there, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Hutchins, now Doctor, and rector of that college. He resided in the university seven years, and took the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The first two or three years were spent by him with some degree of indolence, or rather less application to his studies than he afterwards used. But in 1733, about his nineteenth year, becoming acquainted with some persons who began to distinguish themselves by their serious impressions of religion, and their zeal for the promotion of it, he was engaged by their influence in a stricter attachment both to piety and learning. He made himself master of Dr. James Keill's Anatomy, Dr. Durham's Physico-theology and Astro-theology, the *Spectacle de la Nature* (Nature Displayed) as translated by Mr. Humphreys; which last work he read with a peculiar satisfaction. Nor was he less delighted by the Essay on Pope's Odyssey, written by the Rev. Mr. Spence, now prebendary of Durham; to which elegant and judicious discourse Mr. Hervey often acknowledged, that he owed more of his improvement in style and composition, than to any other which he had ever read.

In 1734, at the persuasion of a much valued friend, he began to learn the Hebrew language without any teacher, by the Westminster Grammar itself: but soon found that Grammar too concise and difficult for the instruction of a learner; and therefore then despaired of ever attaining a competent knowledge of the Hebrew, though he afterwards made himself so thorough a master of that sacred language.

It appears, from his letters to his sister in 1733 and 1734, that though he then showed a pious and serious turn, yet these letters either speak a language different from free grace, for which we find he was afterwards so powerful an advocate, or at least, they treat very confusedly of it. The truth is,

he was then a stranger to, and had strong prepossessions against, the doctrine of justification by faith in imputed righteousness; and he acknowledges, in a note on his Descant upon Creation, that Mr. Jenks's excellent treatise, entitled, Submission to the Righteousness of God, was the instrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment.

He entered into holy orders as soon as his age and the canons of the church would allow; and though the precise time of his taking orders cannot be ascertained, yet it appears to have been in the end of the year 1736, or beginning of 1737; at least, it appears from one of his letters, that he had a curacy in the beginning of the latter year. Whilst he was at Oxford he had a small exhibition of about L.20 a-year; and, when he was ordained, his father pressed him very much to take some curacy in or near Oxford, and to hold his exhibition; but this he would by no means comply with, thinking it an injustice to detain it after he was in orders, from another person who might more want the benefit of that provision. On his leaving Oxford in 1736, he went to his father, and became his curate. He afterwards went to London; and, after staying some time there, became curate at Dummer. Here he continued about twelve months; and upon his leaving that curacy, in the year 1738, he was invited and went to Stoke-Abbey, in Devonshire, the seat of his worthy friend, the late Paul Orchard, Esq. Here he lived upwards of two years, in great esteem and friendship with that worthy gentleman, who valued him very much for his piety. A remarkable proof of the great regard he had for him on that account, he showed on the following occasion:—When his eldest son, the present Paul Orchard, Esq. to whom the second volume of the Meditations is dedicated, was to be baptized, he insisted that Mr. Hervey should be one of his godfathers, that he might have an eye to his Christian education; and this he did in preference to many gentlemen of large estates in the neighbourhood, who would have thought themselves honoured to have stood sponsors for Mr. Orchard's son.

In the year 1740 he undertook the curacy of Biddeford, fourteen miles from Stoke-Abbey, where he lived greatly beloved by his people. His congregation was large, though his stipend was small; his friends, therefore, made a collection yearly for him, which raised his income to L.60 a-year, so highly did they esteem him. At Biddeford he was curate about two years and a half; and remained so until there was a new rector of that church, who dismissed Mr. Hervey from his curacy, against the united requests of his parishioners, who offered to maintain him at their own expense. During the time that Mr. Hervey lived in the west, viz. from 1738 till the latter end of 1743, his family heard very little of him, by reason of the great distance he was from them; though he laboured diligently in the service of his Master. Here it was that he planned his Meditations, and probably wrote some part of them. He says, in his first volume of Meditations, that it was on a ride to Kilkhampton, in Cornwall, that he went into the church, where he lays the scene of his Meditations among the Tombs.

In August 1743, or thereabouts, he returned from Biddeford to Weston-Favell, leaving behind him many disconsolate friends, and officiated as curate to his father. Here he paid the greatest attention to his duty, and faithfully preached the gospel of Christ.

The first of his writings which raised the attention of the public, was his Meditations among the Tombs, Reflections on a Flower-garden, and a Descant upon Creation, published in February 1745-6. Of this kind of writing, we had before an example from no less a man than the great philosopher Mr. Boyle, in his Occasional Reflections on several subjects, written in his younger years.

Mr. Hervey's performance was so well received by the public, that it has already passed through about twenty editions in London, besides many surreptitious ones in Scotland and Ireland. A second volume, containing Contemplations on the Night and Starry Heavens, and a Winter-Piece, was published in December 1747.

In June 1750, his health being much impaired by his great attention to duty, and his family and friends judging that the change of air might be of benefit to him, they formed a design, which they executed, of conveying him to London, under a pretence of his riding a few miles in a friend's post-chaise, who was going thither; and of which he pleasantly complains in a letter, dated June 28, 1750, to a friend, upon his arrival there.

He staid in London until April or May 1752; during which time he was visited with a severe sickness, which had well nigh put a period to his life. But he recovered; and, upon his father's death in 1752, he returned to Weston, where he constantly resided till his death.

Mr. Hervey took his degree of Master of Arts at Cambridge in 1752, when he entered at Clarehall; and as he was of sufficient standing at Oxford, he staid only the few days required by the statutes to perform the university exercise.

It may be thought strange, that he who had refused to hold his exhibition at Oxford along with a curacy, should, upon his father's death, accept of the two livings of

Weston-Favell and Collingtree, and hold them during his life. It was very far from being his choice, and it was what he had for a long time refused to do. He was determined against being a pluralist; and notwithstanding his father kept him at Oxford, with a design that he should take his degree of Master of Arts, and constantly urged him to do it, yet he could not be persuaded to yield to such a request, though he was of a sufficient standing to have taken the same, looking upon that step as a qualification intended for his future holding both his father's livings. When his father died, he remained determined to have Weston-Favell only; and this he frequently declared to his family and friends, and refused to accept of Collingtree, or to qualify himself for the same; insomuch that it was in danger of lapsing to the bishop. But at length, through the earnest and constant entreaties of his family, and of his friends, who, unknown to him, had sent to and procured from Oxford the necessary certificates of his being a Bachelor of Arts, in order to his taking his Master's degree at Cambridge, he was, after much importunity, prevailed on to comply with their requests, hoping that he might be thereby enabled to do so much the more good; and, when he waited upon Dr. Thomas, the then bishop of Peterborough, for institution to Collingtree, which was near six months after he had been inducted to Weston-Favell, he said to him, "I suppose your Lordship will be surprised to see James Hervey come to desire your Lordship to permit him to be a pluralist; but I assure you, I do it to satisfy the repeated solicitations of my mother and my sister, and not to please myself."

In November 1752 he published his Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study and Use of History, so far as they relate to the History of the Old Testament, and especially to the case of Noah denouncing a curse upon Canaan; in a Letter to a Lady of Quality.

The year following, having been called upon to preach, on the 10th of May, the sermon at the visitation of the Rev. Dr. John Browne, archdeacon of Northampton, at All-Saints' church in that town, he permitted it, the same year, for the benefit of a poor diseased child, to be printed, under the title of The Cross of Christ, the Christian's Glory. He had preached before this another sermon at the same church, which he had been solicited to print, but could not then be prevailed upon to do it. Since his death, it has been published under the title of the Mystery of Reconciliation, &c.

The same year he wrote a recommendatory preface to Burnham's Pious Memorial, or the Power of Religion on the Mind in Sickness and in Death; exemplified by the experience of many eminent persons at those important seasons.

His Theron and Aspasio, published in January 1755, in three volumes octavo, met with the same approbation from the public as his Meditations; and the demand for this work likewise was very uncommon, it having passed through three editions in one year.

In 1756, Mr. Hervey being informed of the design of reprinting the Gospel Mystery of Sanctification, by the Rev. Mr. Walter Marshall, and of prefixing to it, by way of recommendation, what he had said in its favour in Theron and Aspasio, he wrote a letter, dated Nov. 5, 1756, to his bookseller, giving his consent, and enlarging on that recommendation. This he did the more readily, as Mr. Marshall's book might (for so he has declared) be looked upon as no improper supplement to the dialogues and letters contained in Theron and Aspasio.

His Theron and Aspasio was attacked by several writers, particularly by Mr. Robert Sandeman, a congregational preacher at Edinburgh, in a book entitled Letters on Theron and Aspasio; wherein the doctrine of the gospel, under the title of the popular doctrine, is most abominably misrepresented, and its tendency aspersed. The Arminians, too, objected to that work; and Mr. John Wesley in particular wrote against it. Mr. Cudworth wrote a defence of Theron and Aspasio; and Mr. David Wilson, minister of the Scots congregation in Bow Lane, London, published a book, entitled Palæmon's Creed Reviewed, &c., in which he vindicates Mr. Hervey's doctrine, and exposes that of Mr. Sandeman.

Mr. Hervey's own defence of Theron and Aspasio against the objections of Mr. John Wesley, was transcribed fair for the press from his short-hand copy, within a few pages; and would have been published in a volume of the same size with Theron and Aspasio, had he lived a few weeks longer. The manuscript was left in the possession of his brother, Mr. William Hervey, wine merchant in Miles' Lane, London; who published it in 1766, for the reasons given by him in a preface prefixed to it.

In August 1757, Mr. Hervey obliged the public with three sermons, preached by him on the late public fast-days; to which, in the third edition, in 1759, were added his visitation sermon, preached in 1753, his posthumous sermon on the ministry of reconciliation, and his considerations on the prevailing custom of visiting on Sundays. In a posterior edition of these, were given his remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's letters, and a treatise on the religious education of daughters.

In the same year, likewise, he published

a new edition of his favourite author, Mr. Jenks's Meditations, in two volumes octavo; to which he wrote a very strong recommendatory preface, showing the use of those meditations, and the reasons for such republication.*

He intended to have wrote a treatise on gospel holiness, as a supplement to Theron and Aspasio, and actually wrote a very excellent and judicious plan of it, which he communicated in letters to some of his correspondents; but he did not live to finish it, to the very great loss of the public.

His labours both in his ministerial office and in his study, were pursued by him as long as possible, under the disadvantage of a very weak constitution of body; which, together with the severity of his last illness, he supported not only with incredible patience, but without a single expression of peevishness. That illness had long been coming on him, but greatly increased in the beginning of October 1758, and grew very formidable in the December following. For, on Sabbath the third of that month, in the evening, after prayer in his family, he seemed to be arrested by the messenger of death; so that the united assistance of his sister and servant with difficulty enabled him to get up stairs into his room, from whence he never came down. His illness gaining ground every day, he soon became sensible that his end was approaching. He had frequent and violent returns of the cramp, which gave him most acute pain. He had likewise a hectic cough, which afflicted him so grievously in the night, that he could seldom lie in bed till four† in the morning; and was often obliged to rise at two, especially as opium (how much soever guarded by other medicines) would not agree with him. On the 15th of that month he complained of a pain in his side; for which, at his own desire, he was bled, though his physician, Dr. Stonehouse, in whom he placed the greatest confidence, had objected to it, apprehending him too weak to bear any evacuation of that kind. When the surgeon came, he could scarcely perceive any pulsation, and therefore took away no more than four ounces of blood; intimating to his relations and friends, that the case was desperate, and that he had blooded him very unwillingly, and merely to satisfy Mr. Hervey's desire, who had some hope that the pain might possibly be relieved by it. His curate, the Rev. Mr. Abraham Maddock, being much with him in the afternoon of that day, Mr. Hervey spoke to him in strong and pathetic terms of his assurance of faith, and of the great love of God in Christ. "Oh!" said he, "what has Christ, how much has Christ done for me; and how little have I done for so loving a Saviour! If I preached even once a-week, it was at last a burden to me. I have not visited the people of my parish as I ought to have done, and thus preached, as it were, from house to house. I have not taken every opportunity of speaking for Christ."

These expressions being accompanied with tears, which were too visible not to be observed; and lest his tears should be misinterpreted, as they had been conversing about his expected end, and of his assurance of happiness, he proceeded thus: "Do not think that I am afraid to die. I assure you I am not. I know what my Saviour hath done for me, and I wish to be gone. But I wonder and lament to think of the love of Christ in doing so much for me; and how little I have done for him." And in another conversation, discoursing likewise of his approaching dissolution, which he did with the utmost calmness and serenity; and of the little which we know of God's word, he said, "How many precious texts are there big with the most rich truths of Christ, which we cannot comprehend, which we know nothing of; and of those we do know, how few do we remember! *Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus*—a good textuary is a good divine; and that is the armour, the word of God is the sword. Those texts are the weapons which I must use when that subtle spirit, that arch adversary of mankind, comes to tempt and sift me in my last conflict. Surely I had need be well provided with these weapons; I had need have my quiver full of them, to answer Satan with texts out of the word of God, when he assaults me. Thus did Christ when he was tempted in the wilderness."

On the 19th the pains of his body abated, and he grew drowsy and lethargic; but, in the night following, his immediate death was apprehended.

The next day, the 20th, he was visited by Dr. Stonehouse, who declared, that in his opinion Mr. Hervey could not live above three or four days; and happening to speak of the many consolations through Christ which a good man enjoys in the prospect of death, and discoursing on the emptiness of worldly honour to an immortal, and on the unprofitableness of riches to the irreligious, Mr. Hervey replied, "True, doctor, true, the only valuable treasures are in heaven. What would it avail me now to be archbishop of Canterbury? Disease would show no respect to my mitre. That prelate*

* This Preface, with that to Burnham's Pious Memorials, his letter to the publisher of Marshall on Sanctification, one to the publisher of Mr. Traill's works, &c. are annexed to his tracts in this edition.

† When Mr. Hervey was in tolerable health, he rarely lay in bed after six, even in the winter; and rose still earlier in the summer.

* The late Dr. Thomson Secker, who died August 3, 1763.

is not only very great, but, I am told, he has religion really at heart. Yet, it is godliness, and not grandeur, that will avail him hereafter. The gospel is offered to me, a poor country parson, the same as to his Grace. Christ makes no difference betweeen us. Oh! why then do ministers thus neglect the charge of so kind a Saviour, fawn upon the great, and hunt after worldly preferments with so much eagerness, to the disgrace of our order? These, these are the things, doctor, and not our poverty or obscurity, which render the clergy so justly contemptible to the worldlings. No wonder the service of our church, grieved I am to say it, is become such a formal lifeless thing, since it is, alas! too generally executed by persons dead to godliness in all their conversation; whose indifference to religion, and worldly-minded behaviour, proclaim the little regard they pay to the doctrines of the Lord who bought them."

When the Doctor was going away, Mr. Hervey, with great tenderness, observed to him, that as not long ago he had a dangerous fall from his horse, by which he was much bruised, and as he had been lately ill, and then looked very pale, he hoped he would think on these narrow escapes, so often fatal to others, as a kind of warning from God to him, and remember them as such; adding, "How careful ought we to be to improve those years which remain, at a time of life when but few can remain for us!"

The day before his death, Mr. Hervey went a few steps across his room; but immediately finding his strength failing him, he sunk rather then fell down, his fall being broken by his sister, who, observing his weakness, ran and caught him: but he fainted away, and was in all appearance dead, it being a considerable time before any pulse could be perceived. When he came to himself, his brother, Mr. William Hervey, who was come from London to visit him, said, "We were afraid you was gone." He answered, "I wish I had." And well he might wish so, for his strength was quite exhausted, his body extremely emaciated, and his bones so sore, that he could not bear any one to touch him, when it was necessary to move him about. Yet, under all this calamity, he was ever praising God for his mercies, and for enduing him with patience.

On the 25th (Christmas-day,) on which he died, Mr. Maddock paying him his morning visit, Mr. Hervey lifted up his head, and opened his eyes, as he sat in his easy-chair, (for he could not lie in bed,) to see who it was, and said, "Sir, I cannot talk with you." He complained much all this day of a great inward conflict which he had, laying his hand upon his breast, and saying, "Oh! you know not how great a conflict I have." During this he almost constantly lifted up his eyes towards heaven, with his hands clasped together in a praying form, and said, two or three times, "When this great conflict is over, then—" but said no more; though it was understood he meant that then—he should go to rest.

Dr. Stonehouse came to him about three hours before he expired. Mr. Hervey urged strongly and affectionately to the Doctor the importance and care of his everlasting concerns, as here is no abiding place; and entreated him not to be overcharged with the cares of this life, but to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to "the one thing needful:"

Which done, the poorest can no wants endure,
And which not done, the richest must be poor.*
POPE.

The Doctor seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke, (for he was almost suffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings,) and finding by his pulse that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. "No," said he, "Doctor, no. You tell me I have but a few moments to live; oh! let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer." He then repeated the 26th verse of Psalm lxxiii. "Though my flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever;" and he expatiated in a most striking manner on these words of Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, "All things are yours; life and death, for ye are Christ's." "Here," says ye, "is the treasure of a Christian. Death is reckoned among this inventory; and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for death, as it is the passage through which I pass to the Lord and Giver of eternal life; and as it frees me from all the misery you now see me endure as long as God thinks fit! for I know he will by and by, in his own good time, dismiss me from the body. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory!—Oh! welcome, welcome death! Thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian. To live is Christ, but to die is gain." After which, as the Doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr. Hervey expressed great gratitude for his visits, though it had been long out of the power of medicines to cure him. He then paused a little, and with great serenity and sweetness in his countenance, though the pangs of death were upon him, being raised a little in his chair, repeated those words, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable "word, for mine eyes have

* Mr. Hervey used frequently to repeat those lines with such an emphasis, and significant look, as conveyed their important meaning in a manner not easily to be forgot.

seen thy precious salvation." "Here, Doctor, is my cordial! What are all the cordials given to support the dying, in comparison of that which arises from the promises of salvation by Christ? This, this supports me." About three o'clock he said, "The great conflict is over. Now all is done." After which he scarce spoke any other words intelligibly, except now and then "precious salvation!"

During the last hour he said nothing, but leaned his head against the side of an easy chair, and without a sigh, groan, struggle, or the least emotion in the world, he shut his eyes, and died, between four and five in the afternoon, on Chrismas day, 1758, in the forty-fifth year of his age. God grant that we may all live the life, and die the death of the righteous, and that our last end may be like his!

When his body was conveyed to church, it was covered, by his express desire, with the poor's pall, and he was buried under the middle of the communion table, in the chancel of Weston-Favell church, on Friday, Dec. 28, in the presence of a numerous congregation, full of regret for the loss of so excellent a pastor. His funeral was indeed a most awful and very affecting sight. Mr. Maddock, his curate, who buried him, was himself in tears. Some were wringing their hands, others sobbing, many were silently weeping, but all were inwardly and sincerely grieved, as their looks sufficiently testified; and his attendants then bore a visible witness, that he had not been altogether unserviceable in his generation. The poor thankfully acknowledged it; and, as they looked into his grave, seemed to say within themselves, "There lies the man whose unwearied kindness was the constant relief of my various distresses; who tenderly visited my languishing bed, and readily supplied my indigent circumstances." Others, once ignorant and ungodly, looked at his grave, and seemed by their expressive sighs to say, "Here are the last remains of that sincere friend who watched for my soul. I tremble to think into what irretrievable ruin I might quickly have been plunged, had not his faithful admonitions and repeated exhortations, arrested me in the wild career. I was then unacquainted with the gospel of peace; but now, enlightened by his instructions, I see the all-sufficiency of my Saviour. His discourses are still warm on my heart, and I trust will be more and more operative on my life.

It may be truly said of Mr. Hervey, that few lives have ever been more heavenly, and few deaths more triumphant. He died in the Lord, and is now at rest, where even the wicked cease from troubling. His name is recorded in the annals of eternity; and the honours conferred on him by Christ will for ever continue blooming and incorruptible in the world of glory.

His character, both in his public and private capacity, was of the most exemplary kind.

As a minister, he performed all the duties of that office with the greatest strictness. In the pulpit he was earnest and fervent, and showed that he felt the efficacy of what he preached. Nor did he think it sufficient to preach on the Lord's day only, but set up a weekly lecture every Wednesday evening, at Weston-Favell church, which was very well attended. His zeal for the performance of his duty was, however, for some time before he died, much interrupted by the ill state of his health, which would not permit him personally to take due care even of the parish of Weston, where he resided—a circumstance that gave him inexpressible concern. The last two or three years of his life he could scarce do any thing more than preach once on the Lord's day, when people for many miles around flocked to hear him. His Wednesday evening lecture at seven, he discontinued for the last year. He had not been able to preach for some time at Collingtree,* or to visit his parishioners at their own houses, as his custom had been; but he encouraged them to come to him, and to converse freely on the subjects relating to their eternal interests; and on such occasions he would speak with a force and propriety peculiar to himself. He would frequently lament his inability to serve his people, comparing himself to a bleeding disabled soldier, and only not slain.

He always preached without notes, except on some very particular occasion; but his method was judicious, clear, and not encumbered with too many subdivisions. His weakness having rendered him, for several months before his death, incapable of speaking to his congregation as usual, he shortened his discourses, and took a most useful method of inculcating his instructions; for, after he had expounded his text, and divided his sermon into two heads, (rarely into more, and never exceeding three,) he would speak briefly, and, at the conclusion of each head, enforce what he had said by a pertinent text of Scripture, desiring his congregation (which was generally very numerous) to turn to their Bibles, and double down that text. "Now," added he, "my dear brethren, if you forget my sermon, you cannot forget God's word in this text, unless you wilfully throw your Bibles aside. Show these to your children, or the absent part of your family, when you return home." Then he

* Weston-Favell and Collingtree, the two family livings, are within five measured miles of each other; which Mr. Hervey and his curate used to attend alternately, till his ill health confined him entirely to Weston-Favell.

gave a striking exhortation, and at the end of it another text for them to double down; so that they had always three texts; in order to their finding of which, he paused in the pulpit two or three minutes. This method was attended with another good effect; it obliged the generality of his hearers to bring their Bibles along with them; for those who were without a Bible lost the benefit of the texts, and were unemployed, while the majority who had one were very busy in looking for the passages referred to in his sermon.

He endeavoured as much as possible to divest himself, in his public discourses, of his usual elegancy of style, and to adapt his language to the lowest capacity. In this he followed the example of Luther, who, in his *Table-talk*, says, "If in my preaching I were to pay a regard to Philip Melancthon, and other learned divines, then I should do little good. I preach in the plainest manner to the illiterate, and that gives content to all. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, I spare till we learned ones come together." Mr. Hervey thought perspicuous language and evangelical doctrine of much more importance to his parishioners, than elaborate or ornamented discourses; though few men living, perhaps, were more capable of satisfying a polite or learned audience.

His method of catechising children in church, and of speaking to them in private, was very engaging and useful. He would put little questions to them, after they had repeated the words of the catechism; as for instance, "Well, my little maid, let me hear if you understand what you said. If you do understand the meaning of these words, you will then be able to answer the questions I shall put to you." He would at these times ask not only such questions as were suitable to the words of the catechism, but also such as would strike at the capital vices of his parishioners, yet without giving personal offence.

He did not forget that he was a minister in his house; for he worshipped God with his family twice a-day. He supped at eight every night, and at nine he expounded a text of Scripture for about a quarter of an hour, and seldom longer, except when some friend was present, to whom he thought his discourse might be useful, or when particularly requested to enlarge. After this he concluded with prayer.

He breakfasted at nine; and about eight ne called his family together, and required each of his servants to repeat by heart the text which he had explained the preceding evening, and then he would recapitulate his exposition; by which method both his text and commentary were imprinted on their memories. After this he had prayers.

In the afternoon, when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his Hebrew Bible or Greek Testament with him, and would speak (as he was ever studious how he might promote the glory of God and improve time) either upon one or more verses, as occasion offered, in the most instructive and entertaining manner imaginable. And in the summer season he would now and then drink tea, when his health would permit him, with some of his most serious parishioners; and then five or six of the neighbours were invited, and Mr. Hervey's conversation was remarkably affecting, as he had a happy talent at spiritualizing almost every incident, and was naturally of a most obliging and cheerful disposition.

He was a member of an assembly formed for Christian improvement, which was established in his neighbourhood on the 7th of July 1747, and constantly attended it so long as he was able to ride to the place of meeting. A short account of the rules of this assembly is given at the end of his Tracts, together with two prayers composed by him for the use of the members thereof.

In the exercise of his charity, Mr. Hervey chose to clothe the poor, rather than give them money; and he would get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloth, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand; alleging, that the poor could not purchase on such good terms what they wanted, at the little shops, and with small sums of money. "I am," said he, "God's steward for the poor, and I must husband the little pittance I have to bestow upon them, and make it go as far as possible." But when money would be really serviceable to a family, as to a prudent housekeeper distressed by sickness or misfortunes, he would give five or more guineas at a time, taking care that it should not be known whence the money came. Pope's compliment to Mr. Allen of Bath might be justly applied to him, who would

> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.

He was particularly desirous of getting the advice of a physician (or at least of some judicious apothecary) for the sick poor; and was very ready to procure them the best medicines—a most beneficial sort of charity to mankind, and in which it were to be wished he had many imitators. He would frequently petition such physicians of his acquaintance in different parts of the kingdom, as he apprehended thus charitably disposed, to give their advice occasionally, when they rode through a town, to such poor creatures as the clergyman of the place, or some substantial inhabitant, should recommend as real objects of compassion. Mr. Hervey would then, with great pleasure, and with as much gratitude to the physician as if done to himself, defray the expense of what medicines were wanted. He

greatly disapproved indeed of the clergy's attempting to give medicines to their parishioners; as he judiciously inferred, that it was impossible for them to do it with the requisite judgment. "Let my brethren," he would say, "give them wine, bread, or beer, and get good spoon-meats made for them; but medicines are of too important a nature to be given indiscriminately." He observed, that by his own method the sick poor had the very best medicines, as the physician saw them himself, and bought them very cheap, because the apothecary, knowing they were for charitable uses, charged the physician for them no more than prime cost, with some little allowance merely for his trouble in compounding them; and as the physician knew what diseases were curable, there was no waste of medicines in fruitless attempts to cure cases which, though actually incurable, persons of less judgment could not pronounce to be so.

He gave away a great number of good books, with suitable instructions for their use, and especially Bibles. In the blank leaf he frequently wrote something capable of making an impression, or else stuck in a printed paper relating to the promises of God in and through Jesus Christ, or to creation, preservation, and redemption.*

All the future profits of his works he has left to some of the charitable uses above specified, except his Meditations; the copy of which he had sold, after it had passed through several editions: which sale of the copy, and the profits of the former impressions, amounted to about L.700, all of which he gave away in charity. He said, that it was devoted to God, and that he would on no account apply it to worldly uses; that he wrote not for profit or fame, but to serve the cause of God; and as Providence had blessed his attempt, he thought himself bound to relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures with it.

In any expenses relating to himself he was extremely frugal, that he might be liberal to others; and it was always his desire to die just even with the world. "I will be my own executor," said he; and, as he died on Christmas-day, his fund expired almost with his life. What little remained, he desired might be given in warm clothing to the poor in that severe season.

To these instances of his charity, we may properly add an incident, which, how trifling soever in itself, yet affords a very strong proof, not only of the benevolence of his heart, but of his regard to practical religion, and to the doing of every good work within his power.

A day or two before his death, when he was reduced to such extreme weakness as to be unable to read, and could with difficulty speak, a little account being settled with him by a friend, on the balance of which he received 18s. looking on the money with great indifference, he expressed himself to this effect: "I would gladly dispose of this small sum in such manner as may do most good. It is the only act which I now am, and probably the last that I shall be, able to perform. Give yourself the trouble of looking amongst these books, and you will find Mr. Richards' pamphlet; at the latter end of which are, I remember, some Hints concerning the means of promoting religion in ourselves or others, which (even with some additions and improvements which you might easily make) will not fill more than a sheet of paper,* and, if stuck up or framed, might be particularly useful in that form. Let, then, such a number of them be printed and given away as this money will admit of." His orders were properly executed; and the evidences of such an angelic temper were equally matter of edification and comfort to his friend, as this charitable legacy, if we may so call it, will be to all who receive and rightly use it.

This incident affords a striking evidence of the happy fruits and effects of his favourite doctrine, and strong expressions of the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ as the sole requisite to justification before God and acceptance with him, and shows that indeed his faith wrought by love. No man had ever a greater disregard for money, which he esteemed unworthy of his notice on any other account than as it furnished him with the means of doing good. Surely we may here borrow the sentiment and expression of the celebrated Mr. Pope, and justly conclude, that

He felt his ruling passion strong in death.

Mr. Hervey was indeed too negligent of his dress, which, though it could not in the least lessen the respect paid to him in his own parish and neighbourhood, where he was so well known, yet he would unquestionably have avoided it if he had lived in a public scene, where the decency and propriety of appearance are of much greater importance.

In learning he was inferior to few. Greek was almost as familiar to him as his native language. He was a great master of the classics; and, in the younger part of his life, had written some copies of verses, which showed no contemptible genius for poetry. He had a critical knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and delighted in it.

With respect to his private capacity, he was never known to be in a passion. He

* See a copy of this printed paper among his Tracts.

* The Hints, &c. are subjoined to the Tracts.

lived as in heaven. No worldly concern (though he sometimes met with very trying ones) ever affected him. His humility rendered him invulnerable. When he was misrepresented and calumniated, he would say, "Our enemies are sometimes our best friends, and tell us truths; and then we should amend our faults, and be thankful for such information; and if what they say be not true, and only spoken through malice, then such persons are to be considered as diseased in their minds, and we should pray for them. They are to be pitied," says he, "and I might be as justly angry with a man who is diseased in his body."

All this he spoke with humility, seriousness, and sweetness; for it was the language of his heart, and not of affectation. In his ordinary transactions with others, he was ever cheerful, punctual, just, and candid to persons of every denomination.

He frequently wrote religious letters to his acquaintances, according to their different circumstances, in the most amiable and convincing manner; and he seemed to make it almost an invariable rule, not to write a letter on any occasion, without at least one pious sentence* in it; and that not introduced in a forced and awkward manner, but interwoven so as to appear naturally to arise from the subject. Of this kind some specimens may be seen in the note at the bottom of the page.†

Notwithstanding Mr. Hervey lived a very holy and exemplary life, preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified, and inculcating the practice of real religion and holiness in heart and life, yet his enemies (for strange as it is, even Mr. Hervey himself, the most inoffensive of men, had enemies) have not scrupled to assert, that "his tenets were dishonourable to God, subversive of all gospel-holiness, destructive even of common morality, and very injurious to society itself, by making men melancholy, and regardless of business." These were the very words of an abusive and anonymous letter sent to him by the post; on which that meek and most excellent man observed to an intimate friend, with all his usual mildness, "Indeed this gentleman may be said, I think, to write at random. Surely he has never read my work. If I knew where to direct to him, I should desire him to turn to what I have advanced in the ninth paragraph of my Contemplation on the Starry Heavens; and such a reply, I would hope, might convince him of his mistake."

Some of Mr. Hervey's friends thought he carried the Calvinistical tenets so far, that consequences disadvantageous to religion might be deduced from them, and which he himself, instead of assenting to them, would have startled at and rejected with abhorrence. The fact is, the doctrine he delivered in his writings is purely scriptural, and agreeable to that contained in all the confessions of the reformed churches; and is so far from having a tendency to weaken the obligations to purity and holiness of life, that it promotes them in the most effectual manner, and has the most happy influence on morality. When persons of judgment have pointed out to him some expressions that were liable to be misunderstood in that respect, he always disavowed any such meaning; and affirmed, that the fault was not in the evangelical doctrines so much insisted on by him, but in the misapprehension, ignorance, or inattention, of those who abused them to licentiousness. He would then add, he was ready to alter or retract any sentiment or expression which he apprehended to be really objectionable; but that to make things equally clear to every one's apprehension, or to have the same effect upon every one's mind, was an impracticable attempt; that he professed himself a Calvinist, and that, consequently, the Arminians would not relish some things he advanced, though what he wrote was exactly conformable to the church articles, which are Calvinistical; yet he hoped they would not reject the whole, because they could not, in every point, concur with him; and that his writings in general might be useful, how much soever some of his particular (though truly scriptural) opinions might be doubted or censured. And on this head let us hear Mr. Hervey himself. He, in a letter written by him a very little before his happy death, thus expresses himself: "Do they who deny faith, and extol their good works, distinguish themselves by the practice of them? I will be bold to say, that, on an impartial examination, the majority will be found on the side of those who embrace the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and who expect salvation by him alone."

Of the compliments publicly paid to his piety and genius, it will be sufficient to in-

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* *Nulla dies sine linea, nulla epistola sine Christo*, were Mr. Hervey's maxims.

† These specimens are taken from hasty message-cards, or billets, to some of his intimate friends.

"When I see my dear friend, we will talk about the contents of his last. My money is Christ's, and I only desire that he will give me benevolence to dispose of it willingly, discretion to bestow it prudently. I hope you have quite recovered, and adopted the Psalmist's resolution, Psalm cxvi. 8, 9. What do you think is the meaning of that remarkable expression, "I will walk before the Lord?"

In another billet to a person about retiring from business, he writes,—"Thanks for your Witsius de Œconomia Fœderum. The time, I hope, is coming, when you will have leisure to read, a heart to relish, and a tongue to display such precious doctrines."

In another he writes,—

"Let us all remember, my dear friend, that time is upon the wing; eternity is at our door; therefore what we do for our blessed Master we must do quickly."

sert a paragraph from the Northampton Mercury, which may be seen at the bottom of the page;* and the following eulogium extracted from the Rev. Mr. Dodd's poem on the Epiphany.

——Thou HERVEY, too,
Whose page and soul alike breathe humblest love
To thy adored Redeemer, thou hast shown
That piety and polish'd elegance
May well together suit; and while remains
Or piety or elegance, thy works,
Like genuine gold, the touchstone will abide,
And grateful to thy countrymen remain:
Oh! may I to my lowly strains derive
Some merit from the friendship of thy name;
Strains, whose exalted subject fills thy heart
So constant with delight; and from thy tongue
In converse pours such streams of eloquence,
That the wrapt hearer wonders at his fears
Of death ere-while, and glowing with the love
Of Jesus, caught from thee, longs to behold
His Saviour in the clouds: for who can stand
Amidst the sweetness of Arabian groves,
And not bear thence some fragrance?—Valued friend,
Proceed; and (thy too feeble strength renew'd)
May to hoar age thy journey be prolong'd,
And strew'd each step with blessings to mankind!

We shall close this account of Mr. Hervey's life with the following elegy on him.

URANIA, speak! in pensive numbers tell
How Zion trembled when great HERVEY fell!
When fail'd his strength, and when his pulse beat low,
Tell how she mourn'd to see the impending blow!
O thou, to whom all sacred themes belong,
Pour forth the sweetly melancholy song!
"Alas! grim death hath shot the fatal dart,
Which long seem'd pointed at his languid heart;
The insatiate tyrant, crown'd with funeral gloom,
In triumph drags him to the hollow tomb!
Who now so well can paint the blooming flower,
Or preach from sepulchres at midnight hour?
Who now so well the starry heavens scan,
And read the lectures nature meant for man?
No more his voice a careless world can move,
Or tell the wonders of redeeming love;
No more shall thousands round his pulpit throng,
To hear the heavenly precepts of his tongue;
For lo! above this gross impurer air,
Released from every pain and every care,
He soars aloft (angelic hosts his guide)
On wings new plumed, which ne'er before he tried.
With rapid speed his golden pinions rise
Through starry planes, and skim the empyrean skies.
And now, where sparkling portals wide display
The blissful regions of eternal day,
His Lord receives him 'midst celestial choirs,
Who crown his head, and strike their golden lyres:
Through heaven's glad courts the greeting anthems roll,
And joys new blooming feast his ravish'd soul;
Joys which to tell all eloquence is faint,
And which the loftiest muse can never paint."

* On Christmas-day, in the afternoon, died, in the 45th year of his age, the Rev. Mr. James Hervey, rector of Weston-Favell, near Northampton, and author of the Meditations among the Tombs, Flower Garden, &c. He was one of the most eminent instances of the power of Christianity upon the human mind. In his ministerial province he was pious, fervent, and indefatigable. In his ordinary connexions with the community he was ever cheerful, conscientiously punctual in all his dealings, and amiably candid to persons of every denomination. To his charities he set no bounds, scarcely leaving himself the mere requisites of his station. Under the severest trials of infirmity, for several years he displayed the highest example of fortitude, serenity, patience, and an entire resignation to the divine will. His writings most abundantly evidence his learning and ingenuity: But, reader, it is not the acquisitions of his understanding, but the improvements of his heart, and his confidence in the great Redeemer, which will now avail this most excellent man.

* The reader may be assured, that these verses were wrote by a very serious and well-disposed young man, apprentice to a Jersey comber, in the town of Northampton, in a low station of life, and of no liberal education; whose mind, by Mr. Hervey's preaching and writings, had been very early impressed with the sacred ardour of piety and poetry.

TO

MISS R—— T——.

MADAM,

THESE Reflections, the one on the deepest, the other on the gayest, scenes of Nature, when they proceeded privately from the pen, were addressed to a Lady of the most valuable endowments, who crowned all her other endearing qualities by a fervent love of Christ, and an exemplary conformity to his divine pattern. She, alas! lives no longer on earth, unless it be in the honours of a distinguished character, and in the bleeding remembrance of her acquaintance.

It is impossible, Madam, to wish you a richer blessing, or a more substantial happiness, than that the same spirit of unfeigned faith, the same course of undefiled religion, which have enabled her to triumph over death, may both animate and adorn your life. And you will permit me to declare, that my chief inducement in requesting your acceptance of the following Meditations, now they make a public appearance from the press, is, that they are designed to cultivate the same sacred principle, and to promote the same excellent practice.

Long, Madam, may you bloom in all the vivacity and amiableness of youth, like the charming subject of one of these Contemplations. But, at the same time, remember, that with regard to such inferior accomplishments, you must one day fade (may it prove some very remote period!) like the mournful objects of the other. This consideration will prompt you to go on as you have begun, in adding the meekness of wisdom, and all the beauties of holiness, to the graces of an engaging person, and the refinements of a polite education.

And might—O! might the ensuing hints furnish you with the least assistance in prosecuting so desirable an end; might they contribute in any degree to establish your faith, or elevate your devotion; they would then administer to the author such a satisfaction as applause cannot give, nor censure take away—a satisfaction which I should be able to enjoy, even in those awful moments when all that captivates the eye is sinking in darkness, and every glory of this lower world disappearing for ever.

These wishes, Madam, as they are a most agreeable employ of my thought, so they come attended with this additional circumstance of pleasure, that they are also the sincerest expressions of that very great esteem with which I am,

MADAM,

Your most obedient most humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favell, near Northampton,
May 20, 1746.

PREFACE.

The first of these occasional Meditations begs leave to remind my readers of their latter end; and would invite them to set, not their houses only, but, which is inexpressibly more needful, their souls in order; that they may be able, through all the intermediate stages, to look forward upon their approaching exit without any anxious apprehensions; and when the great change commences, may bid adieu to terrestrial things, with all the calmness of a cheerful resignation, with all the comforts of a well-grounded faith.

The other attempts to sketch out some little traces of the all-sufficiency of our Redeemer for the grand and gracious purposes of everlasting salvation; that a sense of his unutterable dignity and infinite perfections may incite us to regard him with sentiments of the most profound veneration, to long for an assured interest in his merits with all the ardency of desire, and to trust in his powerful mediation with an affiance not to be shaken by any temptations, not to be shared with any performances of our own.

I flatter myself, that the thoughts conceived among the tombs may be welcome to the serious and humane mind; because, as there are few who have not consigned the remains of some dear relations, or honoured friends, to those silent repositories, so there are none but must be sensible, that this is the house appointed for all living, and that they themselves are shortly to remove into the same solemn mansions. And who would not turn aside for a while from the most favourite amusements, to view the place where his once loved companions lie? who would not sometimes survey those apartments, where he himself is to take up an abode till time shall be no more?

As to the other little essay, may I not humbly presume, that the very subject itself will recommend the remarks? For who is not delighted with the prospect of the blooming creation, and even charmed with the delicate attraction of flowers? Who does not covet to assemble them in the garden, or wear them in a nosegay? Since this is a passion so universal, who would not be willing to render it productive of the sublimest improvement? This piece of holy frugality I have ventured to suggest, and endeavoured to exemplify, in the second letter; that while the hand is cropping the transient beauties of a flower, the attentive mind may be enriching itself with solid and lasting good. And I cannot but entertain some pleasing hopes, that the nicest taste may receive and relish religious impressions when they are conveyed by such lovely monitors; when the instructive lessons are found, not on the leaves of some formidable folio, but stand legible on the fine sarcenet of a narcissus; when they savour not of the lamp and recluse, but come breathing from the fragrant bosom of a jonquil.

MEDITATIONS

AMONG

THE TOMBS,

IN

LETTER TO A LADY.

MADAM,

TRAVELLING lately into Cornwall, I happened to alight at a considerable village in that county; where, finding myself under an unexpected necessity of staying a little, I took a walk to the church.* The doors, like the heaven to which they lead, were wide open, and readily admitted an unworthy stranger. Pleased with the opportunity, I resolved to spend a few minutes under the sacred roof.

In a situation so retired and awful, I could not avoid falling into a train of meditations, serious and mournfully pleasing; which, I trust, were in some degree profitable to me, while they possessed and warmed my thoughts; and if they may administer any satisfaction to you, Madam, now they are recollected, and committed to writing, I shall receive a fresh pleasure from them.

It was an ancient pile: reared by hands, that ages ago were mouldered into dust.—Situate in the centre of a large burial-ground, remote from all the noise and hurry of tumultuous life.—The body spacious, the structure lofty; the whole magnificently plain. A row of regular pillars extended themselves through the midst, and supported the roof with simplicity and with dignity.—The light that passed through the windows, seemed to shed a kind of luminous obscurity; which gave every object a grave and venerable air.—The deep silence added to the gloomy aspect, and both heightened by the loneliness of the place, greatly increased the solemnity of the scene.—A sort of religious dread stole insensibly on my mind, while I advanced all pensive and thoughtful, along the inmost aisle. Such a dread as hushed every ruder passion, and dissipated all the gay images of an alluring world.

Having adored that eternal Majesty, who, far from being confined to temples made with hands, has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool;—I took particular notice of a handsome altar-piece, presented, as I was afterwards informed, by the master-builders of Stow;* out of gratitude, I presume, to that gracious God, who carried them through their work, and enabled them to "bring forth their top-stone with joy."

O! how amiable is gratitude! especially when it has the supreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude, as the most exalted principle that can

* I had named, in some former editions, a particular church, viz. Kilkhampton; where several of the monuments, described in the following pages, really exist. But, as I thought it convenient to mention some cases here, which are not, according to the best of my remembrance, referred to in any inscriptions there: I have now omitted the name, that imagination might operate more freely, and the improvement of the reader be consulted, without any thing that should look like a variation from truth and fact.

* The name of a noble seat belonging to the late Earl of Bath, remarkable formerly for its excellent workmanship and elegant furniture; once the principal resort of the quality and gentry of the west; but now demolished, laid even with the ground, and scarce one stone left upon another.—So that corn may grow, or nettles spring where Stow lately stood.

actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. Repentance indicates our nature fallen, and prayer turns chiefly upon a regard to one's self. But the exercises of gratitude subsisted in paradise, when there was no fault to deplore; and will be perpetuated in heaven, when "God shall be all in all."

The language of this sweet temper is, "I am unspeakably obliged; what return shall I make?"—And surely, it is no improper expression of an unfeigned thankfulness to decorate our Creator's courts, and beautify "the place where his honour dwelleth." Of old, the habitation of his feet was glorious; let it not now be sordid or contemptible. It must grieve an ingenious mind, and be a reproach to any people, to have their own houses wainscotted with cedar, and painted with vermillion, while the temple of the Lord of hosts is destitute of every decent ornament.

Here I recollected and was charmed with Solomon's fine address to the Almighty, at the dedication of his famous temple. With immense charge, and exquisite skill, he had erected the most rich and finished structure that the sun ever saw. Yet upon a review of his work, and a reflection on the transcendent perfections of the Godhead, how he exalts the one, and abases the other! The building was too glorious for the mightiest monarch to inhabit; too sacred for unhallowed feet even to enter, yet infinitely too mean for the Deity to reside in. It was, and the royal worshipper acknowledged it to be, a most marvellous vouchsafement in uncreated excellency, to "put his name there." The whole passage breathes such a delicacy, and is animated with such a sublimity of sentiment, that I cannot persuade myself to pass on without repeating it.* But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold! the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?—Incomparable saying, worthy the wisest of men. Who would not choose to possess such an elevated devotion, rather than to own all the glittering materials of that sumptuous edifice?

We are apt to be struck with admiration at the stateliness and grandeur of a masterly performance in architecture, and perhaps, on a sight of the ancient sanctuary, should have made the superficial observation of the disciples, "What manner of stones, and what buildings are here!"—But what a nobler turn of thought, and juster taste of things does it discover, to join with Israel's king, in celebrating the condescension of the divine Inhabitant! That the high and lofty One, who fills immensity with his glory, should, in a peculiar manner, fix his abode there! should there manifest an extraordinary degree of his benedictive presence; permit sinful mortals to approach his majesty, and promise "to make them joyful in his house of prayer!"—This should more sensibly affect our hearts, than the most curious arrangement of stones can delight our eyes.

Nay the everlasting God does not disdain to dwell in our souls by his holy Spirit, and to make even our bodies his temple.—Tell me, ye that frame critical judgments, and balance nicely the distinction of things: "is this most astonishing or most rejoicing?"—He humbleth himself, the scripture assures us, even to behold the things that are in heaven.* It is a most condescending favour, if HE pleases to take the least approving notice of angels and archangels, when they bow down in homage from their celestial thrones; will he then graciously regard, will he be united, most intimately united, to poor, polluted, breathing dust?—O! unparalleled honour! Invaluable privilege! Be this my portion, and I shall not covet crowns, nor envy conquerors.

But let me remember what a sanctity of disposition, and uprightness of conversation, so exalted a relation demands; Remember this, "and rejoice with trembling."—Durst I commit any iniquity, while I tread these hallowed courts? Could the Jewish High-Priest allow himself in any known transgression, while he made that solemn yearly entrance into the holy of holies;† and stood before the immediate presence of Jehovah? No, truly. In such circumstances, a thinking person must shudder at the most remote solicitation to any wilful offence. I should now be shocked at the least indecency of behaviour, and am apprehensive of every appearance of evil. And why do we not carry this holy jealousy into all our ordinary

* 1 Kings vii. 27. But will.—A fine abrupt beginning, most significantly describing the amazement and rapture of the royal prophet's mind!—God: he uses no epithets where writers of inferior discernment would have been fond to multiply them; but speaks of the Deity as an incomprehensible Being, whose perfections, and glories are exalted above all praise—Dwell: To bestow on sinful creatures a propitious look, to favour them with a transient visit of kindness, even this were an unutterable obligation: Will he then vouchsafe to fix his abode among them, and take up his stated residence with them?—Indeed; A word in this connexion, peculiarly emphatical; expressive of a condescension wonderful and extraordinary, almost beyond all credibility.—Behold: intimating the continued or rather the increasing surprise of the speaker, and awakening the attention of the hearer.—Behold! the heaven. The spacious concave of the firmament, that wide extended azure circumference, in which worlds unnumbered perform their revolutions, is too scanty an apartment for the Godhead.—Nay the heaven of heavens: those vastly higher tracks which lie far beyond the limits of human survey, to which our very thoughts can hardly soar; even these (unbounded as they are) cannot afford an adequate habitation for Jehovah; even these dwindle into a point when compared with the infinitude of his essence! even these "are as nothing before him."—How much less proportionate is this poor diminutive speech, which I have been erecting and embellishing, to so august a Presence, so immense a Majesty.

* Psalm cxii. 6. † Heb. ix. 7.

life? Why do we not in every place reverence ourselves;* as persons dedicated to the Divinity, as living temples of the Godhead? For, if we are real, and not merely nominal Christians, the God of glory, according to his own promise, dwells in us, and walks in us†—O! that this one doctrine of our religion might operate, with an abiding efficacy, upon our consciences; it would be instead of a thousand laws to regulate our conduct; instead of a thousand motives to quicken us in his holiness. Under the influence of such a conviction, we should study to maintain a purity of intention; a dignity of action; and to walk worthy of that transcendently majestic Being, who admits us to a fellowship with himself, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

The next thing which engaged my attention, was the lettered floor: the pavement somewhat like Ezekiel's roll, was written over from one end to the other. I soon perceived the comparison to hold good in another respect; and the inscriptions to be matter of "mourning, lamentation, and woe."‡ They seemed to court my observation; silently inviting me to read them.—And what would these dumb monitors inform me of?—"That beneath their little circumferences were deposited such and such pieces of clay, which once lived, and moved, and talked; that they had received a charge to preserve their names, and were the remaining trustees of their memory."

Ah! said I, is such my situation? The adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow creatures under me! Surely, then, I have great reason to cry out, with the revering patriarch, How dreadful is this place!‖ Seriousness and devotion become this house for ever: May I never enter it lightly or irreverently; but with a profound awe, and godly fear!

Oh! that they were wise:§ said the inspired penman. It was his last wish for his dear people; he breathed it out, and gave up the ghost.—But what is wisdom? It consists not in refined speculations, accurate researches into nature, or an universal acquaintance with history. The divine lawgiver settles this important point in his next aspiration: Oh! that they understood this! That they had right apprehensions of their spiritual interests, and eternal concerns! that they had eyes to discern, and inclinations to pursue the things which belong to their peace!—But how shall they attain this valuable knowledge? I send them not, adds the illustrious teacher, to turn over all the volumes of literature: they may acquire, and much more expeditiously, this scene of life, by considering their latter end. This spark of heaven is often lost under the glitter of pompous erudition, but shines clearly in the gloomy mansions of the tomb. Drowned in this gentle whisper amidst the noise of mortal affairs, but speaks distinctly in the retirements of serious contemplation—Behold! how providentially I am brought to the school of wisdom![*] The grave is the most faithful master;† and these instances of mortality, the most instructive lessons.—Come then calm attention, and compose my thoughts: come, thou celestial Spirit, and enlighten my mind; that I may so peruse these awful pages, as to "become wise unto salvation."

Examining the records of mortality, I found the memorials of a promiscuous multitude.‡ They were huddled, at least they rested together, without any regard to rank or seniority. None were ambitious of the uppermost rooms, or chief seats in this house of mourning. None entertained fond and eager expectations of being honourably greeted in their darksome cells. The man of years and experience, reputed as an oracle in his generation, was content to lie down at the feet of a babe. In this house appointed for all living, the servant was equally accommodated, and lodged in the same story with his master. The poor indigent lay as softly, and slept as soundly, as the most opulent possessor. All the distinction that subsisted, was a grassy hillock, bound with osiers; or a sepulchral stone ornamented with imagery.

Why then, said my working thoughts, Oh! why should we raise such a mighty stir about superiority and precedence, when the next remove will reduce us all to a state of equal meanness? Why should we exalt ourselves, or debase others; since we must all one day be upon a common level, and blended together in the same undistinguished dust? Oh! that this consideration might humble my own and other's pride; and sink our imaginations as low as our habitation will shortly be!

Among these confused relics of humanity, there are without doubt, persons of contrary interests, and contradicting sentiments: But

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* ——— PANTAN DE MALIS AISCHUTREO SE AUTON, was the favourite maxim of Pythagoras, and supposed to be one of the best moral precepts ever given to the Heathen world. With what superior force, and very singular advantage, does the argument take place in the Christian Scheme! where we are taught to regard ourselves, not merely as intellectual beings, that have reason for our monitor, but as consecrated creatures, who have a God of the most consummate perfection ever with us, ever in us.

† 2 Chron. vi. 16. ‡ Ezek. ii. 10.

‖ Gen. xxviii. 17. § Deut. xxx. 29.

* The man who wise, who sick of gaudy scenes,
Is led by choice to take his fav'rite walk
Beneath death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray!
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs!
Night Thoughts.

† Wait the great teacher, death. *Pope.*

‡ Mista senum ac juvenum densantur funera.
Hor.

death, like some able days-man, has laid his hands on the contending parties, and brought all their differences to an amicable conclusion.* Here enemies, sworn enemies, dwell together in unity. They drop every embittered thought, and forget that they once were foes. Perhaps their crumbling bones mix as they moulder; and those who, while they lived, stood aloof in irreconcilable variance, here fall into mutual embraces, and even incorporate with each other in the grave.—Oh! that we might learn from these friendly ashes, not to perpetuate the memory of injuries; not to foment the fever of resentment; nor cherish the turbulence of passion; that there may be as little animosity and disagreement in the land of the living as there is in the congregation of the dead!—But I suspend for a while such general observations, and address myself to a more particular inquiry.

Yonder white stone, emblem of the innocence it covers, informs the beholder of one, who breathed out its tender soul almost in the instant of receiving it. There the peaceful infant, without so much as knowing what labour and vexation mean,† "lies still and is quiet; it sleeps, and is at rest." Staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bid a speedy adieu to time and terrestrial things—What did the little hasty sojourner find, so forbidding and disgustful in our upper world, to occasion its precipitant exit? It is written, indeed, of its suffering Saviour, that when he had tasted the vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink:‡ And did our new come stranger begin to sip the cup of life; but perceiving the bitterness, turn away its head, and refuse the draught? Was this the cause why the wary babe only opened its eyes; just looked on the light; and then withdrew into the more inviting regions of undisturbed repose?

Happy voyager; no sooner launched, than arrived at the haven.§—But more eminently happy they, who have passed the waves and weathered all the storms of a troublesome and dangerous world; who, "through many tribulations have entered into the kingdom of heaven;" and thereby brought honour to their divine Convoy, administered comfort to the companions of their toil, and left an instructive example to succeeding pilgrims.

Highly favoured probationer! accepted without being exercised! It was thy peculiar privilege not to feel the slightest of those evils which oppress thy surviving kindred: which frequently fetch groans from the most manly fortitude, or most elevated faith; the arrows of calamity, barbed with anguish, are often fixed deep in our choicest comforts. The fiery darts of temptation, shot from the hand of hell, are always flying in showers around our integrity. To thee, sweet babe, both these distresses and dangers were alike unknown.

Consider this, ye mourning parents, and dry up your tears. Why should you lament that your little ones are crowned with victory, before the sword was drawn, or the conflict begun?—Perhaps the supreme disposer of events foresaw some inevitable snare of temptation forming, or some dreadful storm of adversity impending. And why should you be so dissatisfied with that kind precaution, which housed your pleasant plant, and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared; before the lightnings flew; before the tempest poured its rage?—O remember, they are not lost, but taken away from the evil to come.*

At the same time let survivors, doomed to bear the heat and burden of the day, for their encouragement, reflect—that it is more honourable to have entered the lists, and to have fought the good fight before they come off conquerors. They who have borne the cross, and submitted to afflictive providences, with a cheerful resignation, have girded up the loins of their mind, and performed their Master's will, with an honest and persevering fidelity;—these, having glorified their Redeemer on earth, will probably be as stars of the first magnitude in heaven. They will shine with brighter beams, be replenished with stronger joys, in their Lord's everlasting kingdom.

Here lies the grief of a fond mother, and the blasted expectation of an indulgent father.—The youth grew up like a well watered plant: he shot deep, rose high, and bid fair for manhood; but just as the cedar began to tower, and promised ere long to be the pride of the wood, and prince among the neighbouring trees:—behold the axe is laid unto the root; the fatal blow struck; and all its branching honours tumbled to the dust,—and did he fall alone? No: the hopes of his father that begat him, and the pleasing prospects of her that bare him, fell, and were crushed together with him.

Doubtless, it would have pierced one's heart to have beheld the tender parents following the breathless youth to his long home, perhaps drowned in tears, and all overwhelmed with sorrows, they stood like weeping statues, on this very spot,—methinks, I see the deeply distressed mourners attending the

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* Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent.
Virg.

† Job. iii. 13.

‡ Matt. xxvii. 34.

§ Happy the babe, who privileg'd by fate
To shorter labour and a lighter weight,
Receiv'd but yesterday the gift of breath;
Order'd to-morrow to return to death.
Prior's Sol.

* Isa. lvii. 1.

sad solemnity ; how they wring their hands, and pour floods from their eyes !—Is it fancy ? or do I really hear the passionate mother, in an agony of affliction, taking her final leave of the darling of her soul ? Dumb she remained, while the awful obsequies were performing ; dumb with grief, and leaning upon the partner of her woes. But now the inward anguish struggles for vent ; it grows too big to be repressed. She advances to the brink of the grave. All her soul is in her eyes. She fastens one look more upon the dear doleful object, before the pit shuts its mouth upon him, and as she looks she cries ;—in broken accents, interrupted by many a rising sob, she cries ; —" Farewell, my son ! my son ! my only beloved ! Would to God I had died for thee ! —Farewell my child ! and farewell, all my earthly happiness—I shall never more see good in the land of the living.—Attempt not to comfort me.—I will go mourning all my days, till my gray hairs come down with sorrow to the grave."

From this affecting representation, let parents be convinced how highly it concerns them to cultivate the morals, and secure the immortal interests of their children. If you really love the offspring of your own bodies ; if your bowels yearn over those amiable pledges of conjugal endearment ; spare no pains, give all diligence ; I entreat you to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Then may you have joy in their life, or consolation in their death. If their span is prolonged, their unblamable and useful conduct will be the staff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be cut off in the midst, you may commit their remains to the dust, with much the same comfortable expectations, and with infinitely more exalted views, than you send the survivors to places of genteel education. You may commit them to the dust with cheering hopes of receiving them again to your arms, inexpressibly improved in every noble and endearing accomplishment.

It is certainly a severe trial, and much more afflictive than I am able to imagine, to resign a lovely blooming creature, sprung from your own loins, to the gloomy recesses of corruption. Thus to resign him after having been long dandled upon your knees, united to your affections by a thousand ties of tenderness, and now become both the delight of your eyes, and the support of your family !—to have such a one torn from your bosom, and thrown into darkness, doubtless it must be like a dagger in your hearts,—But, O ! how much more cutting to you, and confounding to the child, to have the soul separated from God ; and for shameful ignorance or early impiety consigned over to places of eternal torment ! How would it aggravate your distress, and add a distracting emphasis to all your sighs, if you should follow the pale corpse with these bitter reflections !—" This dear creature, though long ago capable of knowing good from evil, is gone out of the world before it had learned the great design of coming into it. A short-lived, momentary existence it received from me : but no good instructions, no holy admonitions, nothing to further its well-being in that everlasting state, upon which it is now entered. The poor body is consigned to the coffin, and carried out to consume away in the cold and silent grave. And what reason have I to suppose that the precious soul is in a better condition ? May I not justly fear, that, sentenced by the righteous Judge, it is going, or gone away into the pains of endless punishment !—Perhaps, while I am bewailing its untimely departure, it may be cursing in utter darkness, that ever to be deplored, that most calamitous day, when it was born of such a careless ungodly parent as I have been."

Nothing, I think, but the gnawings of that worm which never dies, can equal the anguish of these self-condemning thoughts. The tortures of a rack must be an easy suffering compared with the stings and horror of such a remorse.—How earnestly do I wish that as many as are entrusted with the management of children, would take timely care to prevent these intolerable scourges of conscience, by endeavouring to conduct their minds into an early knowledge of Christ, and a cordial love of his truth !

On this hand is lodged one whose sepulchral stone tells a most pitiable tale indeed ! Well may the little images, reclined over the sleeping ashes, hang down their heads with that pensive air ! None can consider so mournful a story without feeling some touches of sympathizing concern.—His age twenty-eight ; his death sudden ; himself cut down in the prime of life, amidst all the vivacity and vigour of manhood, while " his breasts were full of milk, and his bones moistened with marrow."—Probably he entertained no apprehensions of the evil hour. And indeed, who could have suspected that so bright a sun should go down at noon ? To human appearance, his hill stood strong. Length of days seemed written in his sanguine countenance. He solaced himself with the prospect of a long, long series of earthly satisfactions.—When lo ! an unexpected stroke descends ! descends from that mighty arm, which "overturneth the mountains by their roots ; and crushes the imaginary hero, before the moth ;"* as quick-

* Job iv. 19.———Ad instar, ad modum, tinæ ——I retain this interpretation, both as it is most suitable to my purpose, and as it is patronized by some eminent commentators ; especially the celebrated Schultens. Though I cannot but give the preference

ly, and more easily, than our fingers press such a feeble fluttering insect to death.

Perhaps the nuptial joys were all he thought on. Were not such the breathings of his enamoured soul? "Yet a very little while, and I shall possess the utmost of my wishes. I shall call my charmer mine; and in her enjoy whatever my heart can crave."—In the midst of such enchanting views, had some faithful friend but softly reminded him of an opening grave, and the end of all things; how unseasonable would he have reckoned the admonition! Yet, though all warm with life, and rich in visionary bliss, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both."—Dreadful vicissitude! to have the bridal* festivity turned into the funeral solemnity. Deplorable misfortune! to be shipwrecked in the very haven! and to perish even in sight of happiness!—What a memorable proof is here of the frailty of man, in his best estate! Look, O, look on this monument, ye gay and careless? Attend to this date; and boast no more of to-morrow!

Who can tell, but the bride-maids, girded with gladness, had prepared the marriage-bed! had decked it with the richest covers, and dressed it in pillows of down? When, —Oh! trust not in youth or strength, or in any thing mortal! for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on, beneath the unchangeable God.—Death, relentless death, is making him another kind of bed in the dust of the earth. Unto this he must be conveyed, not with a splendid procession of joyous attendants: but stretched in the gloomy hearse, and followed by a train of mourners. On this he must take up a lonely lodging, nor ever be released, till "the heavens are no more."—In vain does the consenting fair one put on her ornaments and expect her spouse. Did she not, like Sisera's mother, look out of the lattice: chide the delay of her beloved; and wonder "why his chariot was so long in coming?" Little thinking, that the intended bridegroom had for ever done with transitory things: that now everlasting cares employ his mind, without one single remembrance of his lovely Lucinda!—Go, disappointed virgin! go, mourn the uncertainty of all created bliss? Teach thy soul to aspire after a sure and immutable felicity! For the once gay and gallant Fidelio sleeps in other embraces, even in the icy arms of death! forgetful, eternally forgetful, of the world—and thee.

Hitherto one is tempted to exclaim against the king of terrors, and call him capriciously cruel. He seems, by beginning at the wrong end of the register, to have inverted the laws of nature. Passing over the couch of decrepit age, he has nipped infancy in its bud; blasted youth in its bloom; and torn up manhood in its full maturity.—Terrible indeed are these providences, yet not unsearchable the counsels:

For us they sicken, and for us they die.*

Such strokes must not only grieve the relatives, but surprise the whole neighbourhood. They sound a powerful alarm to heedless dreaming mortals, and are intended as a remedy for our carnal security. Such passing bells inculcate loudly our Lord's admonition: "Take ye heed; watch, and pray; for ye know not when the time is."—We nod like intoxicated creatures, upon the very verge of a tremendous precipice. These astonishing dispensations are the kind messengers of heaven, to rouse us from our supineness, and quicken us into timely circumspection. I need not surely accommodate them with language, nor act as their interpreter. Let every one's conscience be awake, and this will appear their awful meaning:—"O ye sons of men, in the midst of life you are in death. No state, no circumstances, can ascertain your preservation a single moment. So strong is the tyrant's arm, that nothing can resist its force; so true his aim, that nothing can elude the blow. Sudden as lightning, sometimes is his arrow launched: and wounds and kills in the twinkling of an eye. Never promise yourself safety in an expedient but constant preparation. The fatal shafts fly so promiscuously, that none can guess the next victim. Therefore, "be ye always ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the final summons cometh."

Be ye always ready; for in such an hour as ye think not. Important admonition! Methinks it reverberates from sepulchre to sepulchre; and addresses me with line upon line, precept upon precept. The reiterated warning, I acknowledge, is too needful; may co-operating grace render it effectual! The

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to the opinion of a judicious friend, who would render the passage more literally, "Before the face of a moth," making it to represent a creature so exceedingly frail, that even a moth flying against it may dash it to pieces.—Which besides its closer correspondence with the exact import of the Hebrew, presents us with a much finer image of the most extreme imbecility. For it certainly implies a far greater degree of weakness, to be crushed by the feeble flutter of the feeblest creature, than only to be as easily crushed as that creature, by the hand of man.—The French version is very expressive and beautiful, à la rencontre d'un vermisseau.

* A distress of this kind is painted in very affecting colours, by Pliny, in an epistle to Mercellinus: O triste plane acerbumque funus? O morte ipsa mortis tempus indignius! Jam destinata erat egregio juveni, jam electus nuptiarum dies; jam nos advocati. Quod gaudium quo moerore mutatum est! Non possum exprimere verbis, quantum animo vulnus acceperim cuum audivi Fundanum ipsum (ut multa luctuosa dolor invenit) praecipientim, quod in vestes, marganitas, gemmas, fuerat erogaturus, hoc in thura, et unguenta, et odores, impenderetus.

Plin. Lib. v. Epist. 26

* Night Thoughts.

momentous truth, though worthy to be engraved on the tables of a most tenacious memory, is but slightly sketched on the transient flow of passion. We see our neighbours fall, we turn pale at the shock; and feel, perhaps, a trembling dread. No sooner are they removed from our sight, but driven in the whirl of business, or lulled in the languors of pleasure, we forget the providence, and neglect its errand. The impression made on our unstable minds, is like the trace of an arrow through the penetrated air, or the path of a keel in the furrowed wave. Strange stupidity! To cure it, another monitor bespeaks me, from a neighbouring stone. It contains the narrative of an unhappy mortal, snatched from his friends, and hurried to the awful bar; without leisure, either to take a last farewell of the one, or to put up so much as a single prayer preparatory for the other; killed, according to the usual expression, by a sudden stroke of casualty.

Was it then a random blow? Doubtless the stroke came from an aiming, though invisible hand. God presideth over the armies of heaven; God ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth; and God conducteth what men call chance. Nothing, nothing comes to pass through a blind and undiscerning fatality. If accidents happen, they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and conformably to the determinate counsels of eternal wisdom. The Lord, with whom are the issues of death, signs the warrant, and gives the high commission. The seemingly fortuitous disaster, is only the agent, or the instrument appointed to execute the supreme decree. When the impious monarch was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual shot. A certain man drew a bow at a venture.*—At a venture as he thought. But his hand was strengthened by an omnipotent aid, and the shaft levelled by an unerring eye. So that what we term casualty, is really providence, accomplishing deliberate designs, but concealing its own interposition.—How comforting this reflection! Admirably adapted to soothe the throbbing anguish of the mourners, and compose their spirits into a quiet submission! Excellently suited to dissipate the fears of godly survivors and create a calm intrepidity even amidst innumerable perils!

How thin is the partition between this world and another! How short the transition from time to eternity! The partition nothing more than the breath in our nostrils; and the transition may be made in the twinkling of an eye.—Poor Chreumylus, I remember, arose from the diversions of a card-table, and dropt into the dwellings of darkness. One night Corinna was all gaiety in her spirits, all finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball. The next night, she lay pale and stiff, an extended corpse, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead. Young Atticus lived to see his ample and commodious seat completed, but not to spend one joyous hour under the stately roof. The sashes were hung to admit the day; but the master's eyes were closed in endless night. The apartments were furnished to afford refreshment or invite repose; but their lord rests in the more peaceful chambers of the tomb. The gardens were planned, and a thousand elegant decorations designed; but, alas! their intended possessor is gone down to "the place of skulls;" is gone down to the valley of the shadow of death.

While I am recollecting, many, I question not, are experiencing the same tragical vicissitude. The eyes of that sublime Being—Who sits upon the circle of the earth, and views all its inhabitants with one comprehensive glance—even now behold many tents in affliction; such affliction as overwhelmed the Egyptians in that fatal night, when the destroying angel sheathed his arrows in all the pride of their strength.—Some sinking to the floor from their easy chair; and deaf even to the most piercing shrieks of their distracted relations.—Some giving up the ghost, as they sit retired, or lie reclined under the shady arbour to taste the sweets of the flowery scene.—Some as they sail, associated with a party of pleasure, along the dancing stream, and through the laughing meads. Nor is the grim intruder mollified though wine and music flow around. Some intercepted as they are returning home; and some interrupted, as they enter upon an important negotiation.—Some arrested with the gain of injustice in their hands: and some surprised in the very act of lewdness, or the attempt of cruelty.

Legions, legions of disasters, such as no prudence can foresee, and no care prevent, lie in wait to accomplish our doom. A starting horse may throw his rider; may at once dash his body against the stones, and fling his soul into the invisible world. A stack of chimneys may tumble into the street, and crush the unwary passenger under the ruins: even a single tile, dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the fall of the whole structure.—So frail, so very attenuated is the thread of life, that it not only bursts before the storm, but breaks even at a breeze. The most common occurrences, those from which we suspect not the least harm, may prove the weapons of our destruction. A grape-stone, a despicable fly, may be more mortal than Goliath, with all his formidable armour. Nay, if God give command, our very comforts become killing. The air we

* 1 Kings xxii. 34.

breathe, is our bane! and the food we eat, the vehicle of death.—That last enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach: yea, lies entrenched in our very bosom, and holds his fortress in the seat of our life. The crimson fluid, which distributes health, is impregnated with the seeds of death.* Heat may inflame it, or toil oppress it, and make it destroy the parts it was designed to cherish. Some unseen impediment may obstruct its passage, or some unknown violence may divert its course: in either of which case it acts the part of a poisonous draught, or a deadly stab.

> Ah! in what perils is vain life engag'd?
> What slight neglects, what trivial faults destroy
> The hardiest frame! of indolence, of toil,
> We die; of want, of superfluity.
> The all surrounding heaven, the vital air,
> Is big with death.

Since then we are so liable to be dispossessed of this earthly tabernacle, let us look upon ourselves only as tenants at will; and hold ourselves in perpetual readiness to depart at a moment's warning. Without such an habitual readiness, we are like wretches that sleep on the top of a mast, while a horrid gulf yawns, or furious waves rage below. And where can be the peace, what the satisfaction of such a state! Whereas, a prepared condition will inspire a cheerfulness of temper, not to be displayed by any alarming accident, and create a firmness of mind, not to be overthrown by the most threatening dangers. When the city is fortified with walls, furnished with provision, guarded by able and resolute troops; what have the inhabitants to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, just so, or rather by a much surer band, are connected the real taste of life, and the constant thought of death.

I said, our very comforts may become killing.—And see the truth inscribed by the hand, sealed with the signet of fate. The marble, which graces yonder pillar, informs me, that near it are deposited the remains of Sophronia; the much lamented Sophronia, who died in child-bed.—How often does this calamity happen? The branch shoots, but the stem withers. The babe springs to light; but she that bare him breathes her last. She gives life, but gives it (O pitiable consideration!) at the expense of her own; and becomes at once a mother and a corpse.—Or else, perhaps, she expires in severe pangs, and is herself a tomb for her infant; while the melancholy complaint of a monarch's woe is the epitaph for them both; 'The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth,'*—Less to be lamented in my opinion, this misfortune than the other. Better for the tender stranger, to be stopped in the porch, than to enter only to converse with affliction. Better to find a grave in the womb than to be exposed on a hazardous world, without the guardian of its infantile years, without the faithful guide of its youth.

This monument is distinguished by its finer materials, and more delicate appendages. It seems to have taken its model from an affluent hand, directed by a generous heart, which thought it could never do enough for the deceased. It seems, also, to exhibit an emblematical picture of Sophronia's person and accomplishments. Is her beauty, or, what is more than beauty, her white robed innocence, represented by the snowy colour? The surface smoothly polished, like her amiable temper, and engaging manners. The whole elegantly adorned, without either extravagant pomp, or sordid negligence; like her undissembled goodness, remote from the least ostentation, yet in all points exemplary. But ah! how vain were all these endearing charms! How vain the lustre of thy sprightly eye! How vain the bloom of thy bridal youth! How vain the honours of thy superior birth! How unable to secure the lovely possessor from the savage violence of death! How ineffectual the universal esteem of thy acquaintance; the fondness of thy transported husband; or even the spotless integrity of thy character, to prolong thy span, or procure thee a short reprieve!—The concurrence of all these circumstances reminds me of those beautiful and tender lines,

> How lov'd how valu'd once, avails thee not:
> To whom related, or by whom begot.
> A heap of dust alone remains of thee:
> 'Tis all *thou* art!—and all the *proud* shall be!†
> *Pope's Miscell.*

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* As man, perhaps the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principles of death,
The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.
Pope's Ethics.

* Isaiah xxxvii. 3.

† These verses are inscribed on a small, but elegant monument lately erected in the great church at Northampton; which, in the hierogyphical decorations, corresponds with the description introduced above. In this circumstance particularly, that it is dedicated to the memory of an amiable woman, Mrs. ANNE STONEHOUSE, the excellent wife of my worthy friend, Dr. STONEHOUSE; who has seen all the power of that healing art, to which I, and so many others, have been greatly indebted, failing in their attempts to preserve a life dearer to him than his own.

> Nec prosunt domino que profunt omnibus, artes.
> *Ovid.*
>
> No longer his all-healing art avails;
> But every remedy its Master fails.

In the midst of his tender distress, he has sought some kind of consolation, even from the sepulchral marble, by teaching it to speak, at once his esteem for her memory; and his veneration for that religion, which she so eminently adorned. Nor could this be more significantly done, than by summing up her character, in that concise, but comprehensive sentence, A SINCERE CHRISTIAN. Concise enough to be the motto for a

Yet though unable to divert the stroke, Christianity is sovereign to pluck out the sting of death. Is not this the silent language of those lamps which burn; and of that heart which flames; of those palms which flourish; and of that crown which glitters, in the well imitated and gilded marble? Do they not, to the discerning eye, describe the vigilance of her faith; the fervency of her devotion; her victory over the world; and the celestial diadem, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give her at that day.*

How happy the husband, in such a sharer of his bed, and partner of his fortunes! their inclinations were nicely tuned unisons, and all their conversation was harmony. How silken the yoke to such a pair, and what blessings were twisted with such bands? Every joy was heightened, and every care alleviated. Nothing seemed wanting to consummate their bliss, but a hopeful progeny rising around them; that they might see themselves multiplied in their little ones; see their mingled graces transfused into their offspring; and feel the glow of their affection augmented, by being reflected from their children. "Grant us this gift," said their united prayers, "and our satisfactions are crowned, we request no more."

Alas! how blind are mortals to future events? how unable to discern what is really good!* Give me children, said Rachel, or else I die.† An ardour of impatience altogether unbecoming, and as mistaken as it was unbecoming. She dies not by the disappointment, but by the accomplishment of her desire. If children are to parents, like a flowery chaplet, whose beauties blossom with ornament, and whose odours breathe delight; death or some fell misfortune, may find means to entwine themselves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our souls are poured out, with passionate importunity, after any inferior acquisition, it may be truly said, in the words of our divine Master, Ye know not what ye ask.—Does Providence withhold the thing that we long for? It denies in mercy; and only withholds the occasion of our misery, if not the instrument of our ruin. With a sickly appetite we often loathe what is wholesome, and hanker after our bane. Where imagination dreams of unmingled sweets, there experience frequently finds the bitterness of woe.

Therefore may we covet immoderately, neither this nor that form of earthly felicity; but refer the whole of our condition to the choice of unerring wisdom. May we learn to renounce our own will, and be ready to make a sacrifice of our warmest wishes, whenever they run counter to the good pleasure of God. For indeed, as to obey his laws is to be perfectly free, so to resign ourselves to his disposal, is to establish our own happiness, and to be secure from fear of evil.

Here a small and plain stone is placed upon the ground, purchased, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand of frugality itself. Nothing costly; not one decoration added; only a very short inscription; and that so effaced, as to be scarcely intelligible.—Was the depository unfaithful to its trust? Or were the letters

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mourning ring; yet, as comprehensive as the most enlarged sphere of personal, social, and religious worth. "For whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" are they not all included in that grand and noble aggregate—A Sincere Christian!

The first lines, considered in such a connexion, are wonderfully plaintive and pathetic;

> How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails thee not;
> To whom related, or by whom begot.

They sound, at least in my ears, like the voice of sorrow mingled with admiration. The speaker seems to have been lost, for a while in melancholy contemplation; suddenly breaks out in this abrupt encomium, then melts into tears, and can proceed no farther. Yet in this case, how eloquent is silence! While it hints the universal esteem which attended, and the superiority of birth which distinguished the deceased wife; it expresses beyond all the pomp of words, the yearning affection, and heart-felt affliction, of the surviving husband. Amidst the group of monumental marbles, which are lavish of their panegyric, this, I think, resembles the incomparable address of the painter; who having placed round a beautiful expiring virgin, her friends in all the agonies of grief, represented the unequalled anguish of the father with far greater liveliness and strength, or rather with an inexpressible emphasis, by drawing a veil over his face.

If the last lines are a wild departure from the beaten tract of our modern epithets, and the very reverse of their high-flown compliments,

> A heap of dust alone remains of thee!
> 'Tis all *thou* art! and all the *proud* shall be,—

they are not without a precedent, and one of the most consummate kind. Since they breathe the very spirit of that sacred elegy, in which all the heart of the hero and the friend seems to be dissolved; "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" 2 Sam. i. 27. They remind the reader of that awful lesson which was originally dictated by the supreme Wisdom; "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Gen. iii. 19.—They inculcate, with all the force of the most convincing evidence, that solemn admonition delivered by the prophet; "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. ii. 22.

That no reader, however inattentive, might mistake the sense and design of this part of the last line,

> 'Tis all *thou* art!

it is guarded above and beneath.—Above is an expanded book, that seems to be waved with an air of triumph, over the emblem of death; which we cannot but suppose to be the volume of inspiration, as it exhibits a sort of abridgment of its whole contents, in those animated words, "Be ye not slothful but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi. 12.—Beneath, that every part might be pregnant with instruction, are these striking reflections; worthy the consideration of the highest proficient in knowledge and piety, yet obvious to the understanding of the most untaught reader: Life, how short! Eternity, how long!—May my soul learn the forcible purport of this short lesson in her contracted span of time! and all eternity will not be too long to rejoice in having learned it.

* Tim. iv. 8.

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* Nescia mens hominum fati, fortisque futura!
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum,
Intactum Pallanta, et cum spolia ista diemque
Oderit.——
Virg.

† Gen. xxx. 1.

worn; by the frequent resort of the surviving family, to mourn over the grave, and revive the remembrance of a most valuable and beloved relative?—For I perceive upon a closer inspection, that it covers the remains of a father—A religious father, snatched from his growing offspring, before they were settled in the world, or so much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

This, sure, is the most complicated distress, that has hitherto come under our consideration. The solemnities of such a dying chamber, are some of the most melting and melancholy scenes imaginable.—There lies the affectionate husband; the indulgent parent; the faithful friend; and the generous master. He lies in the last extremities, and on the very point of dissolution. Art has done its all. The raging disease mocks the power of medicine. It hastens with resistless impetuosity, to execute its dreadful errand; to rend asunder the silver cord of life, and the more delicate tie of social attachment and conjugal affection.

A servant or two, from a revering distance, cast many a wishful look, and condole their honoured master in the language of sighs. The condescending mildness of his commands was wont to produce an alacrity of obedience, and render their service a pleasure. Now the remembrance of both embitters their grief, and makes it trickle plentifully down their honest cheeks.—His friends, who have so often shared his joys, and gladdened his mind with their enlivening converse, are now miserable comforters. A sympathizing and mourning pity is all the relief they are able to contribute, unless it be augmented by their silent prayers for the divine succour, and a word of consolation suggested from the scriptures.* — Those poor innocents, the children croud around the bed; drowned in tears, and almost frantic with grief, they sob out their little souls, and passionately cry, "Will he leave us? leave us in a helpless condition! leave us to an injurious world!"

These separate streams are all united in the distressed spouse, and overwhelm her breast with an impetuous tide of sorrows. In her, the lover weeps, the wife mourns, and all the mother yearns. To her, the loss is beyond measure aggravated, by months and years of delightful society, and exalted friendship.—Where, alas! can she meet with such unsuspected fidelity, or repose such unreserved confidence? where find so discreet a counsellor, so improving an example, and a guardian so sedulously attentive to the interests of herself, and her children? See! how she hangs over the languishing bed; most tenderly solicitous to prolong a life, important and valuable, far beyond her own; or, if that be impracticable, no less tenderly officious to soothe the last agonies of her dearer self. Her hands, trembling under direful apprehensions, wipe the cold dews from the livid cheeks; and sometimes stay the sinking head on her gentle arms, sometimes rest it on her compassionate bosom.—See! how she gazes, with a speechless ardour on the pale countenance, and meagre features! While all her soft passions beat unutterable fondness, and her very soul bleeds with exquisite anguish.

The sufferer, all patient and adoring, submits to the divine will; and, by submission, becomes superior to his affliction. He is sensibly touched with the disconsolate state of his attendants, and pierced with an anxious concern for his wife and his children; his wife, who will soon be a destitute widow: his children, who will soon be helpless orphans. Yet, "though cast down, not in despair." He is greatly refreshed by his trust in the everlasting covenant and his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity to distress. At each interval of ease, he comforts his very comforters; and suffers with all the majesty of woe.

The soul, just going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her last efforts. The good man raises himself on his pillow; extends a kind hand to his servants, who are bathed in tears; takes an affecting farewell of his friends; clasps his wife in a feeble embrace; kisses the dear pledges of their mutual love; and then pours all that remains of life and strength, in the following words;—"I die, my dear children: But God, the everlasting God, will be with you.—Though you lose an earthly parent, you have a Father in heaven, who lives for evermore.—Nothing, nothing but an unbelieving heart, and irreligious life, can ever separate you from the regards of his providence—from the endearments of his love."

He could proceed no farther. His heart was full; but utterance failed.—After a short pause, prompted by affectionate zeal, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added—"You the dear partner of my soul; you are now the only protector of our orphans.—I leave you under a weight of cares.—But God, who defendeth the cause of the widow,—God, whose promise is faithfulness, and truth—God hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*—This revives my drooping spirits, let this support the wife of

* Texts of scripture proper for such an occasion, containing promises—of support under affliction, Lam. iii. 32. Heb. xii. 6. 2 Cor. iv. 17.—of pardon, Isa. i. 18. Isa. liii. 5. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Acts x. 43.—of justification, Rom. v. 9. Rom. viii. 33, 34, 2 Cor. v. 21.—of victory over death, Psal. xxiii. 4. Psal. lxxiii. 26. 1 Cor xv. 56, 57.—of a happy resurrection, John vi. 40. 2 Cor. v. 1 Rev. vii. 16, 17.

* Heb. xiii. 5.

my bosom.—And now, O Father of compassions, into thy hands I commend my spirit.—Encouraged by thy promised goodness, I leave my fatherless——."

Here he fainted; fell back upon the bed; and lay for some minutes, bereft of his senses. As a taper upon the very point of extinction, is sometimes suddenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame; so life, before it totally expired, gave a parting struggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eye-lids. He would fain have spoke; fain have uttered the sentence he began. More than once he essayed; but the organs of speech were become like a broken vessel, and nothing but the obstructing phlegm rattled in his throat; his aspect, however, spoke affection inexpressible. With all the father, all the husband, still living in his looks, he takes one more view of those dear children, whom he had often beheld with a parental triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that beloved woman, whom he had never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this posture, amidst smiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they shine out their last.

Upon this, the silent sorrow bursts into loud laments. They weep, and refuse to be comforted. Till some length of time had given vent to the excess of passion; and the consolations of religion had staunched their bleeding woes. Then, the afflicted family search for the sentence, which fell unfinished from those loved, those venerable and pious lips. They find it recorded by the prophet Jeremiah, containing the direction of infinite wisdom, and the promise of unbounded goodness: "Leave thy fatherless children: I will preserve them alive: and let thy widows trust in me."*—This now is the comfort of their life, and the joy of their heart. They treasure it up in their memories. It is the best of legacies, and an inexhaustible fund. A fund, which will supply all their wants, by entailing the blessing of heaven on all their honest labours.—They are rich, they are happy, in this sacred pledge of the divine favour. They fear no evil; they want no good; because God is their portion and their guardian God.

No sooner turned from one memento of my own, and memorial of another's decease, but a second, a third, a long succession of these melancholy monitors crowd upon my sight.†—That which has fixed my observation, is one of a more grave and sable aspect than the former. I suppose it preserves the relics of a more aged person. One would conjecture, that he made somewhat of a figure in his station among the living, as his monument does among the funeral marbles. Let me draw near, and inquire of the stone. "Who or what is beneath its surface?"—I am informed, he was once the owner of a considerable estate: which was much improved by his own application and management: that he left the world in the busy period of life, advanced a little beyond the meridian.

Probably, replied my musing mind, one of those indefatigable drudges, who rise early, late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, not to secure the loving-kindness of the Lord, not to make provision for any reasonable necessity, but only to amass together ten thousand times more than they can possibly use. Did he not lay schemes for enlarging his fortune, and aggrandizing his family? Did he not purpose to join field to field, and add house to house, till his possessions were almost as vast as his desires? That, then, he would* sit down and enjoy what he had acquired, breathe a while from his toilful pursuit of things temporal, and, perhaps, think a little of things eternal.

But see the folly of worldly wisdom! How silly, how childish is the sagacity of (what is called) manly and masterly prudence, when it contrives more solicitously for time, than it provides for eternity! How strangely infatuated are those subtile heads which weary themselves in concerting measures for phantoms of a day, and scarce bestow a thought on everlasting realities!—when every wheel moves on smoothly; when all the well-disposed designs are ripening apace for execution; and the long expected crisis of enjoyment seems to approach; behold! God from on high laughs at the Babel-builder. Death touches the bubble and it breaks; it drops into nothing. The cob-web, most finely spun indeed, but more easily dislodged, is swept away in an instant; and all the abortive projects are buried in the same grave with their projector. So true is that verdict which the wisdom from above passes on these successful unfortunates, "They walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain."†

Speak ye that attended such a one in his last minutes; ye that heard his expiring sentiments, did he not cry out, in the language of disappointed sensuality, "O death! how terrible is thy approach to a man immersed in secular cares, and void of all concern for the never ending hereafter? Where, alas! is the profit, where the comfort of entering deep into the knowledge, and of being dexterous in the dispatch of earthly affairs;

* Jer. xlix. 11.
† ——Plurima mortis imago.—*Virg.*

* —Hac mente laborem,
Sese serre, senes ut in otia tuta recedant,
Aiut, cum sibi sint congesta cibaria.—*Hor.*
† Psalm xxxix. 6.

since I have all the while neglected the one thing needful? Destructive mistake! I have been attentive to every inferior interest. I have laid myself out on the trifles of a moment, but have disregarded heaven; have forgot eternal ages! Oh! that my days."—Here, he was going on to breathe some fruitless wishes, or to form I know not what ineffectual resolutions. But a sudden convulsion shook his nerves; disabled his tongue; and, in less than an hour, dissolved his frame.

May the children of this world be warned, by the dying words of an unhappy brother; and gather advantage from his misfortune.—Why should they pant with such impatient ardour: after white and yellow earth, as if the universe did not afford sufficient for every one to take a little! Why should they lade themselves with thick clay, when they are to "run for an incorruptible crown, and press towards the prize of their high calling?" Why should they overload the vessel, in which their everlasting all is embarked; or fill their arms with superfluities, when they are to swim for their lives? Yet so preposterous is the conduct of those persons, who are all industry, to heap up an abundance of the wealth which perisheth, but scarce so much as faintly desirous of being rich towards God.

O that we may walk from henceforth through all these glittering toys, at least with a wise indifference, if not with a superior disdain! Having enough for the conveniencies of life, let us only accommodate ourselves with things below, and lay up our treasures in the regions above.—Whereas, if we indulge an anxious concern, or lavish an inordinate care, on any transitory possessions, we shall rivet them to our affections with so firm an union, that the utmost severity of pain must attend the separating stroke. By such an eager attachment to what will certainly be ravished from us, we shall only ensure to ourselves accumulated anguish, against the agonizing hour, we shall plant, aforehand, our dying pillow with thorns.*

Some, I perceive, arrived at threescore years and ten, before they made their exit: nay, some few resigned not their breaths, till they had numbered fourscore revolving harvests.—These, I would hope, "remembered their Creator in the days of their youth," before their strength became labour and sorrow;—before that low ebb of languishing nature, when the keepers of the house tremble, and those that look out of the windows are darkened;† when even the lighting down of the grasshopper is a burden on the bending shoulders, and desire itself fails in the listless lethargic soul;—before those heavy hours come, and those tiresome moments draw nigh in which there is too much reason to say, "We have no pleasure in them; no improvement from them."

If their lamps were unfurnished with oil, how unfit must they be, in such decrepit circumstances, to go to the market and buy!* For, besides a variety of disorders arising from the enfeebled constitution, their corruptions must be surprisingly strengthened, by such a long course of irreligion. Evil habits must have struck the deepest root; must have twisted themselves with every fibre of the heart, and be as thoroughly ingrained in the disposition, as the soot in the Ethiopian's complexion, or the spots in the leopard's skin. If such a one, under such disadvantages, surmounts all the difficulties which lie in his way to glory, it must be a great and mighty salvation indeed. If such a one escapes destruction, and is saved at the last, it must, without all peradventure, be—so as by fire.†

This is the season which stands in need of comfort, and is very improper to enter upon the conflict. The husbandman should now be putting in his sickle or eating the fruit of his labours; not beginning to break up the ground or scatter the seed.—Nothing, it is true, is impossible with God; he said, "Let there be light, and there was light" instantaneous light, diffused as quick as thought through all the dismal dominion of primeval darkness. At his command a leprosy, of the longest continuance, and of the utmost inveteracy, departs in a moment. He can, in the greatness of his strength, quicken the wretch, who has lain dead in trespasses and sins, not four days only, but fourscore years. Yet trust not, O trust not, a point of such inexpressible importance, to so dreadful an uncertainty. God may suspend his power; may withdraw his help; may swear in his wrath, that such abuses of his long-suffering shall "never enter into his rest."

Ye therefore, that are vigorous in health, and blooming in years, improve the precious opportunity. Improve your golden hours to the noblest of all purposes; such as may render you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and ascertain your title to a state of immortal youth, to a crown of eternal glory.—Stand not all the prime of your day idle; trifle no longer with the offers of this immense felicity; but make haste, and

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* Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear;
On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.
Night Thoughts, No. III.

† Eccl. xii. 3, 5. I need not remind my reader, that by the former of these figurative expressions is signified the enervated state of the hands and arms; by the latter, the dimness of the eyes, or the total loss of sight; that taken in connexion with other parts of the chapter, they exhibit in a series of bold and lively metaphors, a description of the various infirmities attendant on old age.

* Matt. xxv. 9. † 1 Cor. iii. 15.

delay* not the time to keep God's commandments. While you are loitering in a gay insensibility, death may be bending his bow, and marking you out for speedy victims.—Not long ago, I happened to spy a thoughtless jay. The poor bird was idly busied in dressing his pretty plumes, or hopping carelessly from spray to spray. A sportsman coming by, observes the feathered rover. Immediately he lifts the tube and levels his blow. Swifter than whirlwind flies the leaden death; and in a moment, lays the silly creature breathless on the ground.—Such, such may be the fate of the man, who has a fair occasion of obtaining grace to-day, and wantonly postpones the improvement of it, till to morrow. He may be cut off in the midst of his folly, and ruined for ever while he is dreaming of being wise hereafter.

Some, no doubt, came to this their last retreat full of piety, and full of days; "as a shock of corn, ripe with age and laden with plenty, cometh in, in his season."†—These were children of light and wise in their generation; wise with that exalted wisdom which cometh from above; and with that enduring wisdom which lasts to eternity.—Rich also they were, more honourably and permanently rich than all the votaries of mammon. The wealth of the one has made itself wings, and is irrecoverably gone; while the wretched acquirers are transmitted to that place of penury and pain, where not so much as one drop of water is allowed to cool their scorching tongues, the stores of the other still abide with them; will never depart from them; but make them glad for ever and ever in the city of their God. Their treasures were such as no created power could take away, such as none but infinite beneficence can bestow, and (comfortable to consider!) such as I, and every indigent longing sinner may obtain treasures of heavenly knowledge, and saving faith; treasures of atoning blood and imputed righteousness.

Here‡ lie their bodies in "peaceful habitations, and quiet resting places." Here they have thrown off every burden, and are escaped from every snare. The head aches no more; the eye forgets to weep; the flesh is no longer racked with acute, nor wasted with lingering distemper. Here they receive a final release from pain, and an everlasting discharge from sorrow. Here danger never threatens them with her terrifying alarms; but tranquillity softens their couch, and safety guards their repose.—Rest then, ye precious relics, within this hospitable gloom; rest in gentle slumbers, till the last trumpet

* May I be permitted to recommend, as a treasure of fine sentiments, Dr. Lucas' Inquiry after Happiness; and, as a treatise particularly apposite to my subject, that part of his inquiry which displays the method, and enumerates the advantages of improving life, or living much in a little time. Chap. iii. p. 158.—An author, in whom the gentleman, the scholar, and the Christian are remarkably united.—A performance, which in point of solid argument, unaffected piety, and a vein of thought amazingly fertile, has few superiors. Insomuch that I know not how to wish my reader a more refined pleasure, or a more substantial blessing, than to have the maxims of this entertaining and pathetic writer's little piece, wove into the very texture of his heart. Unless I might be allowed to wish, that the writer himself had interspersed the glorious peculiarities of the gospel (on which our happiness so much depends) a little more liberally through all his works.

† Job v 26.

‡ Some, I know, are offended at our burying corpses within the church, and exclaim against it as a very great impropriety and indecency. But this, I imagine, proceeds from an excessive and mistaken delicacy. Let proper care be taken to secure from injury the foundations of the building, and to prevent the exhalation of any noxious effluvia from the putrefying flesh; and I cannot discover any inconveniences attending this practice.

The notion, that noisome carcases (as they are called) are very unbecoming a place consecrated to religious purposes, seems to be derived from the antiquated Jewish canon; whereby it was declared, that a dead body imparted defilement to the person who touched it, and polluted the spot where it was lodged. On which account the Jews were scrupulously careful to have their sepulchres built at a distance from their houses, and made it a point of conscience, not to suffer burial places to subsist in the city. But as this was a rite purely ceremonial, it seems to be entirely superseded by the gospel dispensation.

I cannot forbear thinking, that under the Christian economy, there is a propriety and usefulness in the custom.—Usefulness, because it must render our solemn assemblies more venerable and awful. For, when we walk over the dust of our friends, or kneel upon the ashes of our relations, this awakening circumstance must strike a lively impression of our own mortality. And what consideration can be more effectual to make us serious and attentive in hearing, earnest and importunate in praying.

As for the fitness of the usage, it seems perfectly suitable to the design of those sacred edifices. They are set apart for God: not only to receive his worshippers, but to preserve the furniture for holy ministrations, and what is in a peculiar manner appropriated to the divine Majesty. Are not the bodies of the saints the Almighty's property? Were they not once the objects of his tender love? Are they not still the objects of his special care? Has he not given commandment concerning the bones of his elect; and charged the ocean, and enjoined the grave, to keep them till that day? When rocks bright with gems, or mountains rich with mines, are abandoned to the devouring flames, will not these be rescued from the fiery ruin! will not these be translated into Jehovah's kingdom, and conjointly with the soul, made "his jewels," made "his peculiar treasure;" made to "shine as the brightness of the firmament and the stars for ever and ever."

Is not Christ the Lord of our bodies? Are they not bought with a price; bought not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his divinely precious blood? And if the blessed Jesus purchased the redemption of our bodies at so infinitely dear a rate, can it enter into our hearts to conceive, that he should dislike to have them reposed under his own habitation?—Once more; Are not the bodies of the faithful "temples of the Holy Ghost?" and is there not upon this supposition, an apparent propriety, rather than the least indecorum, in committing those temples of flesh; to the temples made with hands? They are vessels of honour; instruments of righteousness; and, even when broken by death, like the fragments of a golden bowl, are valuable, are worthy to be laid up in the safest, most honourable repositories.

Upon the whole, since the Lord Jesus has purchased them at the expense of his blood; and the blessed Spirit has honoured them with his indwelling presence; since they are right dear in the sight of the adorable Trinity, and undoubted heirs of a glorious immortality; why should it be thought a thing improper to admit them to a transient rest in their heavenly Father's house? Why may they not lie down and sleep, in the outer courts; since they are soon to be introduced into the inmost mansions of everlasting honour and joy?

shall give the welcome signal, and sound aloud through all your silent mansions, "Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you." (Isa. lx. 1.)

To those, how calm was the evening of life! In what a smiling serenity did their sun go down! When their flesh and their heart failed, how reviving was the remembrance of an all-sufficient Redeemer; once dying for their sins, now risen again for their justification! How cheering the well grounded hope of pardon for their transgressions, and peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord! How did this assuage the agonies, and sweeten the bitterness of death!—Where now is wealth, with all her golden mountains? Where is honour with her proud trophies of renown? Where are all the vain pomps of a deluded world? Can they inspire such comfort, can they administer any support in this last extremity? Can they compose the affrighted thoughts, or buoy up the departing soul, amidst all the pangs of dissolution?—The followers of the Lamb seem pleased and triumphant even at their last gasp. "God's everlasting arms are underneath" (Deut. xxxiii. 27.) their fainting heads. His spirit whispers peace and consolation to their consciences. In the strength of these heavenly succours, they quit the field, not captives but conquerors; with "hopes full of immortality."

And now they are gone—The struggles of reluctant nature are over. The body sleeps in death, the soul launches into the invisible state.—But who can imagine the delightful surprise, when they find themselves surrounded by guardian angels, instead of weeping friends? How securely do they wing their way, and pass through unknown worlds under the conduct of those celestial guides.—The vale of tears is quite lost. Farewell, for ever, the realms of woe, and range of malignant beings! They arrive on the frontiers of inexpressible felicity. They "are come to the city of the living God;" while a voice, sweeter than music in her softest strains, sweet as the harmony of hymning seraphim, congratulates their arrival, and bespeaks their admission: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the heirs of glory may enter in."

Here then let us leave the spirits and souls of the righteous, escaped from an entangling wilderness, and received into a paradise of delights! escaped from the territories of disquietude, and settled in regions of unmolested security! Here they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of their Father. Here they mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and rejoice around the throne of the Lamb; rejoice in the fruition of present felicity, and in the assured expectation of an inconceivable addition to their bliss; when God shall call the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people.*

Fools account their life madness, and their end to be without honour; but they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot, their distinguished and eternal lot, is among the saints!† However, therefore, an undiscerning world may despise, and a profane world vilify the truly religious; be this the supreme, the invariable desire of my heart! "Let me live the life, and die the death of the righteous. Oh! let my latter end, and future state be like theirs."

What figure is that which strikes my eye, from an eminent part of the wall? It is not only placed in a more elevated situation than the rest, but carries a more splendid and sumptuous air than ordinary. Swords and spears, murdering engines, and instruments of slaughter, adorn the stone with a formidable magnificence.—It proves to be the monument of a noble warrior.

Is such respect, thought I, paid to the memory of this brave soldier, for sacrificing his life to the public good?—Then what honours, what immortal honours, are due to the great captain of our salvation? who, though Lord of the angelic legions, and supreme commander of all the heavenly hosts, willingly offered himself a bleeding propitiation for sinners.

The one died being a mortal, and only yielded up a life which was long before forfeited to divine justice; which must soon have been surrendered as a debt to nature, if it had not fallen as a prey to war.—But Christ took flesh and gave up the ghost, though he was the great I AM; the fountain of existence, who calls happiness and immortality all his own. He who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, he, whose outgoings were from everlasting; even he was made in the likeness of man, and cut off out of the land of the living. Wonder, O heavens! be astonished, O earth! He died the death, of whom it is witnessed, that he is "the true God, and eternal life." (1 John v. 20.)

The one exposed himself to peril in the service of his sovereign and his country; which, though it was glorious to do, yet

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* Seneca's reflections upon the state of holy souls delivered from the burden of the flesh, are sparkling and fine; yet very indistinct and empty, compared with the particulars mentioned above, and with many others that might be collected from scripture. In hoc tam procelloso, et in omnes tempestates exposito navigantibus mari nullus portus, nisi mortus est. Ne itaque invideris fratri tuo; quiescit. Tandem liber, tandem tutus, tandem eternus est. Fruitor, nunc aperto et libero coelo; ex humili et depresso in cum em cuit locum qui solutas vinculis animus beato recipit sinu; et nunc omnia, rerum natura hona cum summa voluptate percipit. Sen. ad Polyb.

† Wisdom v. 4, 5.

would have been ignominious, in such circumstances to have declined.—But Christ took the field, though he was the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Christ took the field, though he was sure to drop in the engagement; and put on the harness, though he knew beforehand that it must reek with his blood. That prince of heaven resigned his royal person, not barely to hazard but to the inevitable stroke; to death, certain in its approach, and armed with all its horrors.—And for whom? Not for those who were in any degree deserving: but for his own disobedient creatures; for the pardon of condemned malefactors, for a band of rebels, a race of traitors, the most obnoxious and inexcusable of all criminals; whom he might have left to perish in their iniquities, without the least impeachment of his goodness, and to the display of his avenging justice.

The one, it is probable, died expeditiously; was suddenly wounded, and soon slain. A bullet lodged in his heart, a sword sheathed in his breast, or a battle-axe cleaving the brain, might put a speedy end to his misery; dispatch him "as in a moment."—Whereas the divine Redeemer expired in tedious and protracted torments. His pangs were as lingering, as they were exquisite. Even in the prelude to his last suffering, what a load of sorrows overwhelmed his sacred humanity! till the intolerable pressure wrung blood, instead of sweat from every pore; till the crimson flood bathed his body, stained all his raiment, and tinged the very stones.—But when the last scene of the tragedy commenced; when the executioner's hammer had nailed him to the cross, O! how many dismal hours did that amiable and illustrious sufferer hang; a spectacle of woe to God, to angels, and to men! his temples mangled with the thorny crown! his hands and feet cleft with the rugged irons! his flesh covered with wounds smarting and agonizing in every nerve! and his soul, his very soul, pierced with pangs of unutterable distress!—So long he hung, that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into sympathizing commotions. The earth could no longer sustain such barbarous indignities without trembling, nor the sun behold them without horror. Nay, so long did he hang in this extremity of torture, that the alarm reached even the remote regions of the dead.—Never, O my soul, never forget the amazing truth: The lamb of God was seized, was bound, was slaughtered with the utmost inhumanity, and endured death in all its bitterness, for thee! His murderers, studiously cruel, so guided the fatal cup, that he tasted every drop of its gall, before he drank it off to the very dregs.

Once again: the one died like a hero, and fell gallantly in the field of battle. But died not Christ as a fool dieth!* Not on the bed of honour, with scars of glory on his breast; but like some execrable miscreant, on a gibbet! with lashes of the vile scourge on his back! Yes, the blessed Jesus bowed his expiring head on the accursed tree, suspended between heaven and earth, as an outcast from both, and unworthy of either.

What suitable returns of inflamed and adoring devotion, can we make to the Holy One of God, thus dying, that we might live? dying in ignominy and anguish, that we might live for ever in the heights of joy, and sit for ever on thrones of glory.—Alas! it is not in us, impotent, insensible mortals, to be duly thankful. He only who confers such inconceivable rich favours, can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection. Then build thyself a monument, most gracious Immanuel, build thyself an everlasting monument of gratitude in our souls. Inscribe the memory of thy matchless beneficence not with ink and pen, but with that precious blood which gushed from thy wounded veins. Engrave it, not with the hammer and chisel, but with that sharpened spear, which pierced thy sacred side. Let it stand conspicuous and indelible, not on outward tables of stone, but on the very inmost tables of our hearts.

One thing more, let me observe before I bid adieu to this entombed warrior, and his garnished sepulchre. How mean are those ostentatious methods of bribing the vote of fame, and purchasing a little posthumous renown! What a poor substitute for a set of memorable actions, is polished alabaster, or the mimicry of sculptured marble! The real excellency of this bleeding patriot† is written on the minds of his countrymen; it would be remembered with applause, so long as the nation subsists, without this artificial expedient to perpetuate it.—And such, such is the monument I would wish for myself. Let me leave a memorial in the breasts of my fellow-creatures. Let surviving friends bear witness that I have not lived to myself alone, nor been altogether unserviceable in my generation. O!

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* 2 Sam. iii. 33. Of this indignity our Lord complains, "Are ye come out as against a thief?" Matth. xxvi. 55.

† Sir Bevil Granville, slain in the civil wars at an engagement with the rebels.—It may possibly be some entertainment to the reader, to subjoin Sir Bevil's character, as it is drawn by that celebrated pen which wrote the history of those unfortunate times.—"That which would have clouded any victory, says the noble historian, and made the loss of others less spoken of, was the death of Sir Bevil Granville. He was indeed an excellent person, whose activity, interest, and reputation, were the foundation of what had been done in Cornwall: his temper and affections so public, that no accident which happened, could make any impression upon him; and his example kept others from taking any thing ill, or at least seeming to do so. In a word, a brighter courage, and a gentler disposition, were never married together, to make the most cheerful and innocent conversation.—*Clar. Hist. Reb. vol. II.*

let an uninterrupted series of beneficent offices be the inscription, and the best interests of my acquaintance the plate that exhibits it.

Let the poor, as they pass by my grave, point at the little spot, and thankfully acknowledge,—"There lies the man, whose unwearied kindness was the constant relief of my various distresses; who tenderly visited my languishing bed, and readily supplied my indigent circumstances. How often were his counsels a guide to my perplexed thoughts, and a cordial to my dejected spirit! It is owing to God's blessing on his seasonable charities, and prudent consolations, that I now live, and live in comfort."—Let a person, once ignorant and ungodly, lift up his eyes to heaven, and say within himself, as he walks over my bones, "Here are the last remains of that sincere friend, who watched for my soul. I can never forget with what heedless gaiety I was posting on in the paths of perdition; and I tremble to think, into what irretrievable ruin I might quickly have been plunged, had not his faithful admonitions met me in the wild career. I was unacquainted with the gospel of peace, and had no concern for its unsearchable treasures; but now, enlightened by his instructive conversation, I see the all-sufficiency of my Saviour; and, animated by his repeated exhortations, I count all things but loss that I may win Christ. Methinks, his discourses, seasoned with religion, and blessed by grace, still tingle in my ears; are still warm on my heart; and, I trust, will be more and more operative, till we meet each other in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The only infallible way of immortalizing our characters, a way equally open to the meanest and most exalted fortune, is "to make our calling and election sure;" to gain some sweet evidence, that our names are written in heaven. Then, however they may be disregarded, or forgotten among men, they will not fail to be had in everlasting remembrance before the Lord.—This is of all distinctions far the noblest; this will issue in never dying-renown. Ambition, be this thy object, and every page of scripture will sanctify the passion; even grace itself will fan thy flame.—As to earthly memorials, yet a little while, and they are all obliterated. The tongue of those, whose happiness we have zealously promoted, must soon be silent in the coffin. Characters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the solid rock, will, ere long, cease to be legible.* But as many as are inrolled "in the Lamb's book of Life," he himself declares, shall never be blotted out from those annals of eternity. (Rev. iii. 5.) When a flight of years has mouldered the triumphal column into dust; when the brazen statue perishes, under the corroding hand of time; those honours still continue; still are blooming and incorruptible, in the world of glory.

Make the extended skies your tomb:
Let stars record your worth;
Yet know, vain mortals, all must die,
As nature's sickliest birth.

Would bounteous heav'n indulge my pray'r,
I frame a nobler choice;
Nor living, wish the pompous pile;
Nor dead, regret the loss.

In thy fair book of life divine,
My God, inscribe my name;
There let it fill some humble place,
Beneath the slaughter'd Lamb.

Thy saints, while ages roll away,
In endless fame survive;
Their glories o'er the wrongs of time,
Greatly triumphant live.

Yonder entrance leads, I suppose, to the vault. Let me turn aside and take one view of the habitation, and its tenants.—The sullen door grates upon its hinges; not used to receive many visitants, it admits me with reluctance and murmurs.—What meaneth this sudden trepidation, while I descend the steps, and am visiting the pale mansions of the dead?—Be composed my spirits: there is nothing to fear in these quiet chambers; here, even "the wicked cease from troubling."

Good heavens! what a solemn scene! how dismal the gloom! Here is perpetual darkness, and night even at noon-day.—How doleful the solitude! Not one trace of cheerful society; but sorrow and terror seem to have made this their dread abode.—Hark! how the hollow dome resounds at every tread. The echoes, that long have slept, are awakened, and whisper along the walls.

A beam or two finds its way through the grates, and reflects a feeble glimmer from the nails of the coffins. So many of those sad spectacles, half concealed in shades, half seen dimly by the baleful twilight, add a deeper horror to these gloomy mansions.—I pore upon the inscriptions, and am just able to pick out, that these are the remains of the rich and renowned. No vulgar dead are deposited here. The most illustrious, and right honourable, have claimed this for their last retreat. And indeed, they retain somewhat of a shadowy pre-eminence. They lie, ranged in mournful order, and in a sort of silent pomp, under the arches of an ample sepulchre: while meaner corpses, without much ceremony, "go down to the stones of the pit."

My apprehensions recover from their surprise. I find here are no phantoms, but such as fear raises. However, it still amazes me, to observe the wonders of this

* Data sunt ipsis quoque fata sepulchris.—*Juv.*

nether world. Those who received vast revenues, and called whole lordships their own, are here reduced to half a dozen feet of earth, or confined in a few sheets of lead. Rooms of state and sumptuous furniture, are resigned for no other ornament than the shroud, for no other apartment than the darksome niche. Where is the star that blazed upon the breast; or the coronet that glittered round the temples? The only remains of departed dignity are, the weather-beaten hatchment, and the tattered escutcheon. I see no splendid retinue surrounding this solitary dwelling. The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeless master. He has no other attendant than a dusty statue; which, while the regardless world is as gay as ever, the sculptor's hand is taught to weep.

Those who gloried in high born ancestors, and noble pedigree, here drop their lofty pretensions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and quarter arms with the meanest reptiles. They say to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.—Or should they still assume the style of distinction, alas! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the ostentation! it is said by their monument, here lies the great! how easily is it replied by the spectator?—False marble! Where! Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here. Mortifying truth! sufficient, one would think, to wean the most sanguine appetite from this transitory state of things; from its sickly satisfactions, its fading glories, its vanishing treasures.

For now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever tempting, ever cheating train!
Where are ye now, and what is your amount?*

What is all the world to these poor breathless beings?—What are their pleasures? A bubble broke.—What their honours? A dream that is forgotten.—What the sum-total of their enjoyments below? Once, perhaps, it appeared to inexperience and fond desire, something considerable; but now death has measured it with his line, and weighed it in his scale; what is the upshot? Alas! it is shorter than a span, lighter than the dancing spark, and driven away like the dissolving smoke.

Indulge my soul, a serious pause. Recollect all the gay things that were wont to dazzle thine eyes, and inveigle thy affections. Here examine those baits of sense; here form an estimate of their real value. Suppose thyself first among the favourites of fortune, who revel in the lap of pleasure, who shine in the robes of honour, and swim in tides of inexhausted riches; yet how soon would the passing-bell proclaim thy exit! and when once that iron call has summoned thee to thy future reckoning, where would all these gratifications be? At that period, how will all the pageantry of the most affluent, conspicuous, or luxurious circumstances, vanish into empty air!—And is this a happiness so passionately to be coveted?

I thank you, ye relics of sounding titles, and magnificent names; ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world, than all the volumes of my library. Your nobility, arrayed in a winding-sheet; your grandeur, mouldering in an urn; are the most indisputable proofs of the nothingness of created things. Never, surely, did Providence write this important point, in such legible characters, as in the ashes of my Lord, or on the corpse of his Grace.*—Let others, if they please, pay their obsequious court to your wealthy sons; and ignobly fawn, or anxiously sue for preferments; my thoughts shall often resort, in pensive contemplation, to the sepulchre of their sires; and learn from their sleeping dust—to moderate my expectations from mortals; to stand disengaged from every undue attachment to the little interests of time—to get above the delusive amusements of honour, the gaudy tinsels of wealth, and all the empty shadows of a perishing world.

Hark! what sound is that?—In such a situation, every noise alarms—Solemn and slow it breaks again upon the silent air.—It is the striking of the clock, designed, one would imagine, to ratify all my serious meditations. Methinks it says Amen, and sets a seal to every improving hint. It tells me, That another portion of my appointed time is elapsed. One calls it, "The knell of my departed hours." It is the watch-word to vigilance and activity. It cries, in the ear of reason, "Redeem the time. Catch the favourable gales of opportunity: O! catch them while they breathe; before they are irrecoverably lost. The span of life shortens continually. Thy minutes are all upon the wing, and hastening to be gone. Thou art a borderer upon eternity, and making incessant advances to the state thou art contemplating." May the admonition sink deep into an attentive and obedient mind! May it teach me that heavenly arithmetic of "numbering my days, and applying my heart unto wisdom!"

I have often walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff; I have sometimes trod the vast spaces of the lonely desert, and penetrated the inmost recesses of

* Thomson's Winter, line 210 last edit.

* —Mors sola satetur
Quantuia sint hominum corpuscula.—*Juv.*

the dreary cavern; but never, never beheld nature lowering, with so tremendous a form; never felt such impressions of awe, striking cold on my heart, as under these black-browed arches, amidst these mouldy walls, and surrounded by such rueful objects: where melancholy, deepest melancholy, for ever spreads her raven-wings.—Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obscurity.—Farewell, ye seats of desolation, and shades of death!—Gladly I revisit the realms of day.

Having cast a superficial view upon these receptacles of the dead, curiosity prompts my inquiry to a more intimate survey. Could we draw back the covering of the tomb; could we discern what those are now, who once were mortals;—oh! how would it surprise and grieve us! Surprise us, to behold the prodigious transformation which has taken place on every individual; grieve us, to observe the dishonour done to our nature in general within these subterraneous lodgments!

Here the sweet and winning aspect, that wore perpetually an attractive smile, grins horribly a naked, ghastly skull.—The eye, that outshone the diamond's brilliancy, and glanced its lovely lightnings into the most guarded heart, alas! where is it? Where shall we find the rolling sparkler!—How are all its sprightly beams eclipsed, totally eclipsed!—The tongue, that once commanded all the sweetness of harmony, and all the powers of eloquence, in this strange land has "forgot its cunning." Where are now those strains of melody, which ravished our ears? Where is that flow of persuasion, which carried captive our judgments? The great master of language, and of song, is become silent as the night that surrounds him.—The pampered flesh, so lately clothed in purple and fine linen, how is it covered rudely with clods of clay! There was a time when the timerously nice creature would scarce "adventure to set a foot upon the ground, for delicateness and tenderness," (Deut. xxviii. 56.) but is now enwrapped in clammy earth, and sleeps on no softer a pillow than the rugged gravel stones.—Here "the strong men bow themselves;" the nervous arm is unstrung: the brawny sinews are relaxed; the limbs, not long ago the seats of vigour and activity, lie down motionless; and the bones which were as bars of iron, are crumbled into dust.

Here the man of business forgets all his favourite schemes, and discontinues the pursuit of gain. Here is a total stand to the circulation of merchandize, and the hurry of trade. In these solitary recesses, as in the building of Solomon's temple, is heard no sound of the hammer and axe. The winding-sheet and the coffin are the utmost bound of all earthly devices; "Hitherto may they go, but no farther."—Here the sons of pleasure take a final farewell of their dear delights. No more is the sensualist anointed with oil, or crowned with rosebuds; he chants no more to the melody of the viol, nor revels any longer at the banquet of wine. Instead of sumptuous tables and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himself a feast for fattened insects; the reptile riots in his flesh, "the worm feeds sweetly on him." (Job xxiv. 20.)—Here also beauty fails; bright beauty drops her lustre here. O! how her roses fade, and her lilies languish in this bleak soil! How does the grand leveller pour contempt upon the charmer of our hearts! How turn to deformity, what captivated the world before!

Could the lover have a sight of his once enchanting fair one, what a startling astonishment would seize him!—"Is this the object I not long ago so passionately admired! I said she was divinely fair, and thought her somewhat more than mortal. Her form was symmetry itself; every elegance breathed in her air; and all the graces waited on her motions.—It was music when she spoke, but when she spoke encouragement, it was little less than rapture. How my heart danced to those charming accents!—And can that which some weeks ago was to admiration lovely, be now so insufferably loathsome!—Where are those blushing cheeks: where the coral lips; where that ivory neck, on which the curling jet in such glossy ringlets flowed; with a thousand other beauties of person, and ten thousand delicacies of action?*—Amazing alteration! delusory bliss!—Fondly I gazed upon the glittering meteor; it shone brightly, and I mistook it for a star, for a permanent and substantial good.—But how is it fallen! fallen from an orb not its own! and all that I can trace on earth, is but a putrid mass."

Lie, poor Florello, lie deep as thou dost in obscure darkness. Let night with her impenetrable shades, always conceal thee. May no prying eye be witness to thy disgrace; but let thy surviving sisters think upon thy state, when they contemplate the idol in the glass. When the pleasing images rise gracefully to view, surrounded with a world of charms: and flushed with joy at the consciousness of them all;—then, in some minutes of temptation and danger, when vanity uses to steal into the thoughts;—then let them remember what a veil of horror is drawn over a face, which was once beautiful and brilliant as theirs. Such a seasonable reflection might regulate the la-

* Quo fugit Venus! Heo! quove color? decens
Quo motis? Quid habet illius, illius,
Quæ spirabat amores,
Quæ me surpuerat mihi?—*Hor.*

bours of the toilet, and create a more earnest solicitude to polish the jewel, than to varnish the casket. It might then become their highest ambition, to have the mind decked with divine virtues, and dressed after the amiable pattern of their Redeemer's holiness.

And would this prejudice their persons, or depreciate their charms?—Quite the reverse: it would spread a sort of heavenly glory over the finest set of features, and heighten the loveliness of every other engaging accomplishment.—And what is yet a more inviting consideration, these flowers would not wither with nature, nor be tarnished by time: but would open continually into richer beauties, and flourish even in the winter of age.—But the most incomparable recommendation of these noble qualities is, that from their hallowed relics as from the fragrant ashes of the phœnix, will ere long arise an illustrious form, bright as the wings of angels, lasting as the light of the new Jerusalem.

For my part, the remembrance of this sad revolution shall make me ashamed to pay my devotion to a shrine of perishing flesh, and afraid to expect all my happiness from so brittle a joy. It shall teach me, not to think too highly of well proportioned clay, though formed in the most elegant mould, and animated with the sweetest soul. 'Tis heaven's last, best, and crowning gift, to be received with gratitude, and cherished with love, as a most valuable blessing; not worshipped with the incense of flattery, and strains of fulsome adoration, as a goddess. —It will cure, I trust, the dotage of my eyes: and incline me always to prefer the substantial "ornaments of a meek and virtuous spirit," before the transient decorations of white and red on the skin.

Here I called in my roving meditations from their long excursion on this tender subject. Fancy listened a while to the soliloquy of a lover; now judgment resumes the reins, and guides my thoughts to more near and self-interesting inquiries.—However, upon a review of the whole scene, crowded with spectacles of mortality and trophies of death, I could not forbear smiting my breast, and fetching a sigh, and lamenting over the noblest of all visible beings, lying in ruins under the feet of "the pale horse, and his rider." (Rev. vi. 8.) I could not forbear that pathetic exclamation, "O! thou Adam, what hast thou done!" (2 Esdr. vii. 41.) What desolation has thy disobedience wrought in the earth! See the malignity, the ruinous malignity, of sin! Sin has demolished so many stately structures of flesh; sin has made such havoc among the most excellent ranks of God's lower creation; and sin (that deadly bane of our nation) would have plunged our better part into the execrable horrors of the nethermost hell, had not our merciful Mediator interposed, and given himself for our ransom. —Therefore, what grateful acknowledgments does the whole world of penitent sinners owe; what ardent returns of love will a whole heaven of glorified believers pay to such a friend, benefactor and deliverer!

Musing upon these melancholy objects, a faithful remembrancer suggests from within—"Must this sad change succeed in me also? Am I to draw my last gasp, to become a breathless corpse, and to be what I deplore?* Is there a time approaching, when this body shall be carried out upon the bier, and consigned to its clay-cold bed? while some kind acquaintance, perhaps, may drop one parting tear; and cry, alas! my brother, —Is the time approaching?"—Nothing is more certain. A degree, much surer than the law of the Medes and Persians, has irrevocably determined the doom.

Should one of these ghastly figures burst from his confinement, and start up in frightful deformity before me;—should the haggard skeleton lift a clattering hand, and point it full in my view;—should it open the stiffened jaws, and with a hoarse tremendous murmur, break this profound silence;—should it accost me, as Samuel's apparition addressed the trembling king.— "The Lord shall deliver thee also into the hands of death; yet a little while, and thou shalt be with me."†—The solemn warning, delivered in so striking a manner: must strongly impress my imagination; a message in thunder would scarce sink deeper. Yet there is abundantly greater reason to be alarmed by that express declaration of the Lord God Almighty, "Thou shalt surely die."—Well then, since sentence is passed, since I am a condemned man, and know not when the dead warrant may arrive let me die to sin, and die to the world, before I die beneath the stroke of a righteous God. Let me employ the little uncertain interval of respite from execution, in preparing for a happier state and a better life! that, when the fatal moment comes, and I am com-

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* I pass, with melancholy state,
By all these solemn heaps of fate;
And think, as soft and sad I tread,
Above the venerable dead.
"Time was, like me, they life possess'd,
And time will be when I shall rest." *Parnel.*

† 1 Sam. xxxviii. 19. On this place, the Dutch translator of the Meditations has added a note; to correct, very probably, what he supposes a mistake. On the same supposition, I presume, the compilers of our rubric, ordered the last verse of Ecclus. xlvi. to be omitted, in the daily service of the church. But that the sentiment hinted above, is strictly true; that it was Samuel himself (not an infernal spirit, personating the prophet) who appeared to the female necromancer at Endor: appeared not in compliance with any diabolical incantation, but in pursuance of the divine commission; this, I think, is fully proved in the Historical Account of the life of David, Vol. 1. chap. 23.

manded to shut my eyes upon all things here below, I may open them again, to see my Saviour in the mansions above.

Since this body, which is so fearfully and wonderfully made, must fall to pieces in the grave; since I must soon resign all my bodily powers to darkness, inactivity and corruption: let it be my constant care to use them well, while I possess them!—Let my hands be stretched forth to relieve the needy, and always be "more ready to give than to receive."—Let my knees bend in deepest humiliation before the throne of grace; while my eyes are cast down to the earth in penitential confusion, or devoutly looking up to heaven for pardoning mercy! —In every friendly interview, let the "law of kindness dwell on my lips;" or rather if the seriousness of my acquaintance permits, let the gospel of peace flow from my tongue. O! that I might be enabled in every public concourse, to lift up my voice like a trumpet; and pour abroad a more joyful sound than its most melodious accents, in proclaiming the glad tidings of free salvation! —Be shut, my ears, resolutely shut, against the malevolent whispers of slander and the contagious breath of filthy talking; but be swift to hear the instructions of wisdom, be all attention when your Redeemer speaks; imbibe the precious truths, and convey them carefully to the heart.—Carry me, my feet, to the temple of the Lord; to the beds of the sick, and houses of the poor. May all my members, devoted entirely to my divine Master, be the willing instruments of promoting his glory.

Then, ye embalmers, you may spare your pains; these works of faith and labours of love; these shall be my spices and perfumes. Enwrapped in these, I would lay me gently down, and sleep sweetly in the blessed Jesus; hoping that God will "give commandment concerning my bones;" and one day fetch them up from the dust, as silver from the furnace purified,—"I say not seven times, but seventy times seven."

Here my contemplation took wing; and, in an instant alighted in the garden adjoining to Mount Calvary. Having viewed the abode of my deceased fellow-creatures, methought I longed to see the place where our Lord lay. And, oh what a marvellous spectacle was once exhibited in this memorable sepulchre! He* "who clothes himself with light, as with a garment; and walks upon the wings of the wind;"† He was pleased to wear the habiliments of mortality, and dwelt among the prostrate dead. —Who can repeat the wondrous truth too often? Who can dwell upon the transporting theme too long? He who sits enthroned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly hosts, was once a pale and bloody corpse, and pressed this little spot.

O death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! Never did thy gloomy realms contain such a prisoner before.—Prisoner, did I say? No; he was more than conqueror. He arose far more mightily than Samson, from a transient slumber, broke down the gates, and demolished the strongholds of those dark dominions.—And this, O mortals, this is our only consolation and security. Jesus has trod the dreadful path, and smoothed it for our passage.—Jesus sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the dismal mansion, and left an inviting odour in those beds of dust. The dying Jesus (never let the comfortable truth depart from your minds) is your sure protection, your unquestionable passport through the territories of the grave. Believe in him, and they shall prove a "highway to Sion;" shall transmit you safe to paradise. Believe in him; and you shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers, by your dissolution. For hear what the oracle of heaven says upon this important point, Whoso believeth in me, shall never die." (John xi. 26.)—What sublime and emphatical language is this! Thus much, at least, it must import;—"The nature of that last change shall be surprisingly altered for the better. It shall no longer be inflicted, as a punishment; but rather be vouchsafed as a blessing. To such persons, it shall come attended with such a train of benefits, as will render it a kind of happy impropriety, to call it dying. Dying! No; 'tis then they truly begin to live. Their exit is the end of their frailty, and their entrance upon perfection. Their last groan is the prelude to life and immortality."

O ye timorous souls, that are terrified at the sound of the passing-bell; that turn pale

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* Darkness his curtain and his bed the dust,
Tho' sun and stars are dust beneath his throne.
Night Thoughts.

† The sacred scriptures, speaking of the Supreme Being, say—He walketh upon the waves of the sea, to denote his uncontrollable power, Job. ix. 8.—He walketh in the circuit of heaven, to express the immensity of his presence, Job xxii. 14.—He walketh upon the wings of the wind, to signify the amazing swiftness of his operation, Psal. civ. 3.—In which last phrase, there is, I think, an elegance and emphasis, not taken notice of by our commentators, and yet unequalled in any writer.—Not he flieth; he runneth; but he walketh; and that on the very wings of the wind; one of the most impetuous elements, roused into its utmost rage, and sweeping along with inconceivable rapidity. A tumult in nature, not to be described, is the composed and sedate work of the Deity. A speed not to be measured, is (with reverence I use the expression, and to comport with our low methods of conception) the solemn and majestic foot-pace of Jehovah.—How flat are the following lines, even in the great master of lyric song,

Ocyor cervis, et agente nimbos
Ocyor Furo,

when compared with this inimitable stroke of divine poetry!—He walketh upon the wings of the wind.

at the sight of an opened grave ; and can scarce behold a coffin, or a skull, without a shuddering horror ; ye that are in bondage to the grisly tyrant, and tremble at the shaking of his iron rod ; cry mightily to the Father of your spirits, for faith in his dear Son. Faith will free you from your slavery.* Faith will embolden you to tread on (this fiercest of) serpents, (Luke x. 19.) Old Simeon, clasping the child Jesus in the arms of his flesh, and the glorious Mediator in the arms of his faith, departs with tranquillity and peace. That bitter persecutor Saul, having won Christ, being found in Christ, longs to be dismissed from cumbrous clay, and kindles into rapture at the prospect of dissolution, (Phil. i. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) Methinks I see another of Immanuel's followers, trusting in his Saviour, leaning on his Beloved, go down to the silent shades with composure and alacrity, (2 Pet. i. 14.) In this powerful name, an innumerable company of sinful creatures have set up their banners ; and "overcome through the blood of the Lamb." Authorized by the Captain of thy salvation, thou also mayest set thy feet upon the neck of this king of terrors. Furnished with this antidote, thou also mayest play around the hole of the asp, and put thy undaunted hand on this cockatrice den, (Isa. xi. 8.) Thou mayest feel the viper fastening to thy mortal part, and fear no evil : Thou shalt one day shake it off by a joyful resurrection, and suffer no harm, (Acts xxviii. 35.)

Resurrection ! that cheering word eases my mind of an anxious thought, and solves a most momentous question. I was going to ask, "Wherefore do all these corpses lie here, in this abject condition ? Is this their final state ? Has death conquered ? and will the tyrant hold captivity captive ? How long wilt thou forget them, O Lord ? For ever ?"—No, saith the voice from heaven, the word of divine revelation : The righteous are all "prisoners of hope ;" (Zech. ix. 12.) There is an hour (an awful secret that, and known only to all-foreseeing wisdom) an appointed hour there is, when an act of grace will pass the great seal above, and give them an universal discharge, a general delivery from the abodes of corruption. Then shall the Lord Jesus descend from heaven, with the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God. Destruction itself shall hear his call, and the obedient grave give up her dead. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shake off the sleep of ten thousand years, and spring forth, like the bounding roe, "to meet their Lord in the air."

And, O ! with what cordial congratulations, what transporting endearments, do the soul and body, those affectionate companions, re-unite ! But with how much greater demonstrations of kindness, are they both received by their compassionate Redeemer ! The Ancient of days, who comes in the clouds of heaven, is their friend, their father, their bridegroom. He comes with irresistible power, and infinite glory. But they have nothing to fear from his majestic appearance. Those tremendous solemnities, which spread desolation and astonishment through the universe, serve only to inflame their love, and heighten their hopes. The Judge, the awful Judge, 'midst all his magnificence and splendour, vouchsafes to confess their names, vouchsafes to commemorate their fidelity, before all the inhabitants of the skies, and the whole assembled world.

Hark ! the thunders are hushed. See ! the lightnings cease their rage, the angelic armies stand in silent suspense ; the whole race of Adam is wrapt in pleasing or anxious expectation.—And now that adorable person, whose favour is better than life, whose acceptance is a crown of glory, lifts up the light of his countenance upon the righteous. He speaks ; and what ravishing words proceed from his gracious lips ! What ecstasies of delight they enkindle in the breasts of the faithful ! "I accept you, O my people ! Ye are they that believed in my name. Ye are they that renounced yourselves, and are complete in me. I see no spot or blemish in you : for ye are washed in my blood, and clothed with my righteousness. Renewed by my Spirit, ye have glorified me on earth, and have been faithful unto death. Come, then, ye servants of holiness, enter into the joy of your Lord. Come, ye children of light, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom that shall never be removed ; wear the crown which fadeth not away, and enjoy pleasures for evermore !"

Then it will be one of the smallest privileges of the righteous, that they shall languish no more ; that sickness will never again show her pale countenance in their

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* Death's terror is the mountain faith removes ;
'Tis faith disarms destruction—
Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

These and some other quotations I am proud to borrow from the Night Thoughts, especially from Night the Fourth ; in which energy of language, sublimity of sentiment, and the most exquisite beauties of poetry are the least perfections to be admired. Almost every line glows with devotion, rises into the most exalted apprehensions of the adorable Redeemer, and is animated with the most lively faith in his all-sufficient mediation. The author of this excellent performance has the peculiar felicity of ennobling all the strength of style, and every delicacy of imagination, with the grand and momentous truths of Christianity. These thoughts give the highest entertainment to the fancy, and impart the noblest improvement to the mind ; they not only refine our taste, but prepare us for death, and ripen us for glory. I never take up this admirable piece, but I am ready to cry out,—Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens, *i. e.* "Inspire me with such a spirit, and life shall be delightful, nor death itself unwelcome."

dwellings.* Death itself, will be "swallowed up in victory." That fatal javelin which has drank the blood of monarchs, and finds its way to the hearts of all the sons of Adam, shall be utterly broken. That enormous scythe, which has struck empires from their root, and swept ages and generations into oblivion, shall lie by in perpetual uselessness. Sin also which filled thy quiver, thou insatiate archer!—sin, which strung thy arm with resistless vigour, which pointed all thy shafts with inevitable destruction—sin, will then be done away. Whatever is frail or depraved, will be thrown off with our grave-clothes. All to come is perfect holiness, and consummate happiness; the term of whose continuance is eternity.

O Eternity! eternity! how are our nobles, our boldest, our strongest thoughts lost and overwhelmed in thee! Who can set landmarks to limit thy dimensions, or find plummets to fathom thy depths! Arithmeticians have figures to compute all the progressions of time; Astronomers have instruments to calculate the distances of the planets; but what numbers can state, what lines can gauge, the lengths and depths of eternity? "It is higher than heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, broader than the sea." (Job xi. 8, 9.)

Mysterious, mighty existence! A sum not be lessened by the largest deductions; an extent not to be contracted by all possible diminutions! None can truly say, after the most prodigious waste of ages, "So much of eternity is gone." For when millions of centuries are elapsed, it is but just commencing; and when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of spring increased by the herbage of summer, both augmented by the leaves of autumn, and all multiplied by the drops of rain, which drown the winter—when these, and ten thousand times ten thousand more—more than can be represented by any similitude, or imagined by any conception;—when all these are revolved and finished, eternity, vast, boundless, amazing eternity, will only be beginning.

What a pleasing, yet awful thought is this! full of delight, and full of dread. O may it alarm our fears, quicken our hopes, and animate all our endeavours! Since we are soon to launch into this endless and inconceivable state. let us give all diligence to secure our entrance into bliss.—Now let us give all diligence, because there is no alteration in the scenes of futurity. The wheel never turns; all is steadfast and immoveable beyond the grave. Whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack, a seal will be set to our condition, by the hand of everlasting mercy, or inflexible justice.—The saints always rejoice amid the smiles of heaven: their harps are perpetually tuned; their triumphs admit of no interruption.—The ruin of the wicked is irremediable. The fatal sentence, once passed, is never to be repealed. No hope of exchanging their doleful habitations. But all things bear the same dismal aspect for ever and ever.

The wicked—My mind recoils at the apprehension of their misery.* It has studiously waved the fearful subject, and seems unwilling to pursue it even now.—But, 'tis better to reflect upon it for a few minutes, than to endure to eternal ages. Perhaps, the consideration of their aggravated misery may be profitably terrible; may teach me more highly to prize the Saviour, who, "delivers from going down to the bottomless pit;" may drive me, like the avenger's sword, to this only city of refuge for obnoxious sinners.

The wicked seem to lie here, like malefactors in a deep and strong dungeon, reserved against the day of trial.—"Their departure was without peace." Clouds of horror sat lowring upon their closing eyelids, most sadly foreboding "the blackness of darkness for ever." When the last sickness seized their frame, and the inevitable change advanced; when they saw the fatal arrows fitting to their strings; saw the deadly archer aiming at their heart; and felt the envenomed shaft fastened in their vitals.—Good God! what fearfulness came upon them! what horrible dread overwhelmed them. How did they stand shuddering and aghast upon the tremendous precipice? excessively afraid to plunge into the abyss of eternity, yet utterly unable to maintain their standing on the verge of life.

O! what pale reviews, what startling prospects conspire to augment their sorrows! They look backward, and behold, a most melancholy scene! Sins unrepented of, mercy slighted, and the day of grace ending.—They look forward, and nothing presents itself but the righteous Judge, the dreadful tribunal, and a most solemn reckoning.—They roll around their affrighted eyes on attending friends.—If accomplices in debauchery, it sharpens their anguish, to consider this further aggravation of their guilt, that they have not sinned alone, but

* Isaiah, speaking of the new Jerusalem, mentions this as one of its impunities, The inhabitants thereof shall no more say, I am sick. Another clause in its royal charter runs thus, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. Isa. xxxiii. 24. Rev. xxi. 4.

* Animus meminisse horret luctuque refugit.—*Virg*

drawn others into the snare. If religious acquaintances, it strikes a fresh gash into their hearts to think of never seeing them any more, but only at an unapproachable distance separated by the unpassable gulf.

At last, perhaps, they begin to pray. Finding no other possible way of relief, they are constrained to apply unto the Almighty; with trembling lips and a faltering tongue, they cry unto that sovereign Being, "who kills and makes alive."—But why have they deferred, so long deferred, their addresses to God? Why have they despised all his counsels, and stood incorrigible under his incessant reproofs? How often have they been forewarned of these terrors, and most importunately entreated to seek the Lord, while he might be found?—I wish they may obtain mercy at the eleventh, at the last hour. I wish that they may be snatched from the jaws, the opened, the gaping, the almost closing jaws of damnation. But, alas! who can tell, whether affronted Majesty will lend an ear to their complaint? whether the holy One will work a miracle of grace in behalf of such transgressors? He may, for aught any mortal knows, "laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh."

Thus they lie, groaning out the poor remains of life; their limbs bathed in sweat; their hearts struggling with convulsive throes; pains insupportable throbbing through every pulse; and innumerable darts of agony transfixing their conscience.

> In that dread moment how the frantic soul
> Raves round the walls of her clay tenement:
> Runs to each avenue; and shrieks for help;
> But shrieks in vain! how wishfully she looks
> On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
> A little longer, yet a little longer,
> O! might she stay, to wash away her crimes,
> And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!
> Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
> She heaves, is big with horror; but the foe,
> Like a staunch murd'rer steady to his purpose,
> Pursues her close through every lane of life,
> Nor misses once the track, but presses on;
> Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
> At once she sinks.*

If this be the end of the ungodly, "My soul, come not thou into their secret! Unto their assembly, mine honour, be thou not united!"—How awfully accomplished is that prediction of inspired wisdom! "Sin, though seemingly sweet in the commission, yet at last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

Happy dissolution; were this the period of their woes, But, alas! all these tribulations are only the "beginning of sorrows;" a small drop only from that cup of trembling, which is mingled for their future portion.—No sooner has the last pang dislodged their reluctant souls but they are hurried into the presence of an injured angry God; not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but exposed to the insults of accursed spirits, who lately tempted them, now upbraid them, and will for ever torment them.—Who can imagine their confusion and distress, when they stand, guilty and inexcusable, before their incensed Creator? They are received with frowns: "The God that made them, has no mercy on them." (Isa. xxvii. 11.) The Prince of peace rejects them with abhorrence. He consigns them over to chains of darkness, and receptacles of despair, against the severer doom, and more public infamy, of the great day. Then all the vials of wrath will be emptied upon these wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the gospel they have slighted; the power they have defied, and the goodness they have abused; will all get themselves honour in their exemplary destruction. Then God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and set them as the mark of his inexorable displeasure.

Resurrection will be no privilege to them; but immortality itself their everlasting curse.—Would they not bless the grave, "that land where all things are forgotten;" and wish to lie eternally hid in its deepest gloom? But the dust refuses to conceal their persons, or to draw a veil over their practices. They must also awake; must arise; must appear at the bar: and meet the Judge: a judge before whom "the pillars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away;" a Judge once long-suffering and very compassionate, but now unalterably determined to teach stubborn offenders,—what it is to provoke the Omnipotent Godhead; what it is to trample upon the blood of his Son, and offer despite to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit.

O! the perplexity! the distraction! that must seize the impenitent rebels, when they are summoned to the great tribunal! What will they do in this day of severe visitation! this day of final decision.—Where? how? whence can they find help?—To which of the saints will they turn? whither betake themselves for shelter or for succour? Alas! it is all in vain; it is all too late.—Friends and acquaintances know them no more; men and angels abandon them to their approaching doom; even the Mediator, the Mediator himself deserts them in this dreadful hour.—To fly, it will be impracticable: to justify themselves, still more impossible; and now to make any supplications, utterly unavailable.

Behold! the books are opened! the secrets of all hearts are disclosed! the hid-

* See a valuable Poem, entitled The Grave.

den things of darkness are brought to light! How empty, how ineffectual now, are all those refined artifices, with which hypocrites imposed upon their fellow creatures, and preserved a character in the sight of men!—the jealous God, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and espied out all their ways, "sets before them the things that they have done." They cannot answer him one in a thousand, nor stand in the awful judgment. The heavens reveal their iniquities, and the earth rises up against them. (Job xx. 27.) They are speechless with guilt, and stigmatized with infamy before all the armies of the sky, and all the nations of the redeemed.—What a favour would they esteem it, to hide their ashamed heads in the bottom of the ocean, or even to be buried beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If the contempt poured upon them be thus insupportable, how will their hearts endure, when the sword of infinite indignation is unsheathed, and fiercely waved around their defenceless heads, or pointed directly at their naked breasts! How must the wretches scream with wild amazement, and rend the very heavens with their cries, when the right aiming thunderbolts go abroad! go abroad with a dreadful commission, to drive them from the kingdom of glory; and plunge them—not into the sorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour, but into all the restless agonies of unquenchable fire, and everlasting despair.*

Misery of miseries! too shocking for reflection to dwell upon. But if so dismal to foresee, and that at a distance, together with some comfortable expectation of escaping it.—O! how bitter, inconceivably bitter, to bear without any intermission, or any mitigation, through hopeless and eternal ages!

Who has any bowels of pity? Who has any sentiments of compassion? Who has any tender concern for his fellow creatures? Who? in God's name, and for Christ's sake, let him show it by warning every man, and beseeching every man, to seek the Lord while he may be found; to throw down the arms of rebellion, before the act of indemnity expires; submissively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden sceptre.—Here let us act the friendly part to mankind; here let the whole force of our benevolence exert itself: in exhorting relations, acquaintance, neighbours, whomsoever we may probably influence, to take the wings of faith unfeigned, or repentance undelayed, and flee away from this wrath to come.

Upon the whole, what stupendous discoveries are these! Lay them up in a faithful remembrance, O my soul. Recollect them with the most serious attention, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. When thou walkest; receive them for thy companions; when thou talkest, listen to them as thy prompters; and whatever thou dost, consult them as thy directors.—Influenced by these considerations, thy views will greaten, thy affections be exalted, and thou thyself raised above the tantalizing power of perishing things. Duly mindful of these, it will be the sum of thy desires, and the scope of thy endeavours, to gain the approbation of that sovereign Being, who will then fill the throne, and pronounce the decisive sentence. Thou wilt see nothing worth a wish, in comparison of having his will for thy rule; his glory for thy aim; and his Holy Spirit for thy ever actuating principal.

Wonder, O man; be lost in admiration, at those prodigious events, which are coming upon the universe; events, the greatness of which nothing finite can measure; such as will cause whatever is considerable or momentous in the annals of all generations, to sink into littleness or nothing. Events (Jesus prepare us for their approach! defend us, when they take place!) big with the everlasting fates of all the living and all the dead*.—I must see the graves cleaving, the sea teeming, and swarms unsuspected, crowds unnumbered, yea, multitudes of thronging nations, rising from both.—I must see the world in flames, must stand at the dissolution of all terrestrial things: and be an attendant on the burial of nature. I must see the vast expanse of the sky wrapt up like a scroll; and the incarnate God issuing forth from light inaccessible, with ten thousand times ten thousand angels, to judge both men and devils.—I must see the curtain of time drop; see all eternity disclosed to view, and enter upon a state of being, that will never, never have an end!

And ought I not (let the vainest imagination determine; ought I not) to try the sincerity of my faith, and take heed to my ways? Is there an inquiry, is there a care, of greater, of equal, of comparable importance?—Is not this an infinitely pressing call, to see that my loins are girded about, my lamp trimmed, and myself dressed for the Bridegroom's appearance: that, washed in the fountain opened in my Saviour's

* Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge fed
With ever burning sulphur unconsumed.—*Milton.*

* Great day of dread decision, and despair!
At thought of thee, each sublunary wish
Lets go its eager grasp and quits the hold.
Night Thoughts.

side, and clad with the marriage-garment, wove by his obedience, I may be found, in peace, unblameable, and unreproveable.—Otherwise, how shall I stand with boldness, when the stars of heaven fall from their orbs? how shall I come forth erect and courageous, when the earth itself reels to and fro like a drunkard? (Isa. xxiv. 20.) how shall I look up with joy and see my salvation drawing nigh, when the hearts of millions and millions fail for fear.

Now, Madam, lest my meditations set in a cloud, and leave any unpleasing gloom upon your mind; let me once more turn to the brightening prospects of the righteous. A view of them and their delightful expectations, may serve to exhilarate the thoughts which have been musing upon melancholy subjects, and hovering about the edges of infernal darkness! just as a spacious field, arrayed in cheerful green, relieves and reinvigorates the eye which has fatigued itself by poring upon some minute, or gazing upon some glaring object.

The righteous seem to lie by in the bosom of the earth, as a wary pilot in some well sheltered creek, till all the storms, which infest this lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy safe anchorage, are in no danger of foundering, amidst the waves of prevailing iniquity, or of being shipwrecked on the rocks of any powerful temptation. But ere long we shall behold them hoisting their flag of hope; riding before a sweet gale of atoning merit, and redeeming love; till they make with all the sails of an assured faith, the blessed port of eternal life.

Then may the honoured friend to whom I am writing, rich in good works, rich in heavenly tempers, but inexpressibly richer in her Saviour's righteousness.—Oh! may she enter the harbour, like a gallant stately vessel, returned successful and victorious from some grand expedition, with acclamations, honour and joy! while my little bark, attendant on the solemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after; and both rest together in the haven,—the wished-for blissful haven, of perfect security, and everlasting repose.

REFLECTIONS

ON A

FLOWER-GARDEN,

IN A

LETTER TO A LADY.

Madam,

Some time ago, my meditations took a turn among the Tombs; they visited the awful and melancholy mansions of the dead;* and you was pleased to favour them with your attention.—May I now beg the honour of your company, in a more inviting and delightful excursion, in a beautiful Flower-Garden, where I lately walked, and at once regaled the sense, and indulged the fancy?

It was early in a summer-morning, when the air was cool, the earth moist, the whole face of the creation fresh and gay. The noisy world was scarce awake. Business had not quite shook off his sound sleep; and riot had but just reclined his giddy head. All was serene, all was still, every thing tended to inspire tranquillity of mind, and invite to serious thought.

Only the wakeful lark had left her nest, and was mounting on high, to salute the opening day. Elevated in the air, she seemed to call the laborious husbandman to his toil, and all her fellow songsters to their notes.—Earliest of birds, said I, companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice! rise to offer the matin-song,

* "Discourses on the vanity of the creature which represent the barrenness of every thing in this world, and its incapacity of producing any solid or substantial happiness, are useful.—Those speculations also which show the bright side of things, and lay forth those innocent entertainments, which are to be met with among the several objects that encompass us, are no less beneficial," Spect. vol. v. No. 393. Upon the plan of these observations, the preceding and following reflections are formed.

and adore that beneficent Being, "who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice."

How charming to rove abroad at this sweet hour of prime! to enjoy the calm of nature, to tread the dewy lawns, and taste the unrifled freshness of the air!

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds.*

What a pleasure do the sons of sloth loose! Little, ah! little is the sluggard sensible how delicious an entertainment he foregoes, for the poorest of all animal gratifications.†

The greyness of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy streaks tinges the fleeces of the firmament; till at length the dappled aspect of the east is lost in one ardent and boundless blush.—Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame to see so many supinely stretched on their drowsy pillows? Shall man be lost in luxurious ease? Shall man waste these precious hours in idle slumbers! while the vigorous sun is up, and going on his Maker's errand? while all the feathered choir are hymning their Creator, and paying their homage in harmony?—No. Let him heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by adding the rational strains of devotion. Let him improve the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling with the rising odours the more refined breath of praise.

It is natural for man to look upward,‡ to throw his first glance upon the objects that are above him.

Strait toward heav'n my wondering eyes I turned,
And gaz'd awhile the ample SKY.§

Prodigious theatre! where lightnings dart their fire, and thunders utter their voice; where tempests spend their rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large!—O! the greatness of that mighty hand, which meteth out this amazing circumference with a span! Oh! the immensity of that wonderful Being, before whom this unmeasurable extent is no more than a point! And, oh! (thou pleasing thought!) the unsearchable riches of that mercy which is greater than the heavens! (Psal. cviii. 4.) is more enlarged and extensive, in its gracious exercise than these illimitable tracts of air, and sea, and firmament! which pardons crimes of the most enormous size, and the most horrid aggravations: pardons them in consideration of the Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeness and the utmost readiness! more readily, if it were possible, than this all-surrounding expanse admits, within its circuit, a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of sand.

Come hither, then, ye awakened trembling sinners. Come* weary and heavy laden with a sense of your iniquities. Condemn yourselves. Renounce all reliance on any thing of your own. Let your trust be in the tender mercy of God, for ever and ever.

In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, (Psal. xix. 4.) Behold him coming forth from the chambers of the east. See! the clouds, like floating curtains, are thrown back at his approach. With what refulgent majesty does he walk abroad! How transcendently bright is his countenance, shedding day and inexhaustible light through the universe! Is there a scene, though finished by the most elaborate and costly refinements of art, "comparable to these illustrious solemnities of opening sunshine? Before these all the studied pageantry of the theatre, the glittering economy of an assembly, or even the heightened ornaments of a royal palace, hide their diminished heads, and shrink into nothing."—I have read of a person so struck with the splendours of this noble luminary, that he imagined himself made on purpose to contemplate its glories. O! that Christians would adopt this persuasion, and transfer it to the Sun of Righteousness! Thus applied, it would cease to be a chimerical notion, and become a most important truth. For sure I am, it is the supreme happiness of the eternal state. And therefore may well be the ruling concern of this present life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

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* Milt. Par. Lost. Book iv. line 641.

† See! how revelation and reason, the scriptures, and the classics, unanimously exhort to this most beneficial practice. They both invite us to early rising, by the most engaging motives, and the most alluring representations.

Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth, Song vii. 11, 12.

Luciferi primo cum sidere, frigida rura
Garpamus, dum mane novum dum gramina canent,
Et ros in tenera pecori gratissimus herba est.
Virg. Georg. III.

‡ Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.—*Ovid.*

§ Milt. Par. Lost, book viii. line 257.

* The lines which follow are admirably descriptive of the spirit and practice hinted above. In them desire pants; prayer wrestles; and faith, as it were, grasps the prize:—I take leave to transplant them into this place; and I could wish them a better, a more conspicuous situation than even their own or their native soil. Their native soil is no other than the lamentations of a sinner, written by Mr. Sternhold. Notwithstanding the unpromising genius of the performance, I think we may challenge the greatest masters to produce any thing more spirited and importunate; more full of nature, or more flushed with life.

Mercy, good LORD, mercy I crave;
This is the total sum;
For mercy, LORD, is all my suit;
LORD, let thy mercy come.

The short sentences;—not a single copulative;—the frequent repetition of the Divine name;—the almost incessant reiteration of the blessing, so passionately desired, and inexpressibly needed:—This is the genuine language of ardour; these are beauties obvious to every eye, and cannot fail either to please the judicious taste, or to edify the gracious heart.

—Nor do I stand alone in this opinion. The very best judge of whatever is valuable in science, or perfective of our nature; a judge who formed his taste on the maxims of paradise, and received the finishings of his education in the third heavens; this judge determines to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. He possessed, in his own person, the finest, the most admired accomplishments; yet pronounces them no better than dung, in comparison of the super-eminent excellency of this saving knowledge. (Phil. iii. 8.)

Methinks I discern a thousand admirable properties in the sun. It is certainly the best material emblem of the Creator. There is more of God in its lustre, energy, and usefulness, than in any other visible being. To worship it as a deity was the least inexcusable of all the heathen idolatries. One scarce can wonder, that fallen reason should mistake so fair a copy for the adorable original. No comparison in the whole book of sacred wisdom, pleases me more than that which resembles the blessed Jesus, to yonder regent of the day;* who now advances on his azure road, to scatter light and dispense gladness through the nations.

What were all the realms of the world, but a dungeon of darkness, without the beams of the sun? All their fine scenes, hid from our view, lost in obscurity.—In vain we roll around our eyes in the midnight gloom. In vain we strive to behold the features of amiable nature. Turn whither we will, no form or comeliness appears. All seems a dreary waste, an undistinguished chaos, till the returning hours have unbarred the gates of light, and let forth the morn. Then what a prospect opens! the heavens are paved with azure, and strewed with roses. A variety of the liveliest verdures array the plain. The flowers put on a glow of the richest colours. The whole creation stands forth, dressed in all the charms of beauty. The ravished eye looks round, and wonders.

And what had been the condition of our intellectual nature, without the great Redeemer, and his divine revelation?—Alas! what absurd and unworthy apprehensions did the Pagan sages form of God! What idle dreams, what childish conjectures, were their doctrines of a future state!—How did the bulk even of that favoured nation, the Jews, weary themselves in very vanity, to obtain peace and reconciliation with their offended Jehovah! till Jesus arose upon our benighted minds, and brought life and immortality to light: till He arose, to enlighten the wretched Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.

Now, we no longer cry out with a restless impatience, Where is God my Maker? for we are allowed to contemplate the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, we no longer inquire, with an unsatisfied solicitude, "which is the way to bliss?" because Jesus has marked the path, by his shining example; and left us an unerring clue in his holy word.—Now, we have no more reason to proceed with misgiving hearts in our journey to eternity, or to ask anxiously as we go, "Who will roll away the stone and open the everlasting doors? Who will remove the flaming sword, and give us admission into the delights of paradise?" For it is done, all done by the Captain of our salvation. Sin he has expiated, by the unblemished sacrifice of himself. The law he has fulfilled, by his perfect obedience. The sinner he transforms, by his sanctifying spirit.—In a word, he hath both presented us with a clear discovery of good things to come; and administered to us an abundant entrance into the final enjoyment of them.

Whenever, therefore, we bless God for the circling seasons, and revolving day, let us adore—thankfully adore—him, for the more precious appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, and his glorious gospel. Without which, we should have been groping even to this hour, in spiritual darkness, and the shadow of death; without which we must have wandered in a maze of inextricable uncertainties; and have "stumbled upon the dark mountains" of error, till we fell into the bottomless pit of perdition.

Without that grand enlivening principle, what were this earth, but a lifeless mass? a rude lump of inactive matter? The trees could never break forth into leaves, nor the plants spring up into flowers. We should no more behold the meadows mantled over with green, nor the vallies standing thick with corn. Or, to speak in the beautiful language of a prophet, (Hab. iii. 17.) "No longer would the fig-tree blossom, nor fruit be in the vine: The labour of the olive would fail, and the fields could yield no meat: The flocks must be cut off from the fold, and there would be no herd in the stalls.—The sun darts its beams among all the vegetable tribes, and paints the spring, and enriches the autumn. This pierces to the roots of the vineyard and the orchard; and sets afloat these fermenting juices, which, at length, burst into floods of wine, or bend the boughs with a mellow load.—Nor are its favours confined to the upper regions, but distributed into the deepest recesses of creation. It penetrates the beds of metal, and finds its way to the place of sapphires. It tinctures the seeds of gold that are ripening into ore; and throws a brilliancy into

* Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings. Mal. iv. 2.

the water of the diamond, that is hardening on its rocks. In short, the beneficial agency of this magnificent luminary is inexpressible. It beautifies and impregnates universal nature. "There is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Just in the same manner were the rational world dead in trespasses and sins, without the reviving energy of Jesus Christ. He is "the resurrection and the life:" the overflowing fountain of the one, and the all-powerful cause of the other. The second Adam is a quickening spirit, and all his saints live through him. He shines upon their affections, and they shoot forth into heavenly graces, and abound in the fruits of righteousness. Faith unfeigned, and love undissembled, those noblest productions of the renewed nature, are the effect of his operation on the mind. Not so much as one divine disposition could spread itself, not one Christian habit unfold and flourish, without the kindly influences of his grace.

As there is no fruitfulness, so likewise no cheerfulness, without the sun.*—When that auspicious sovereign of the day diffuses the mildness of his morning-splendour, he creates an universal festival. Millions of glittering insects awake into existence and bask in his rays. The birds start from their slumbers, and pour their delighted souls in harmony. The flocks, with bleeting accents hail the welcome blessing. The herds, in lowing murmurs, express their hoarser acclamations. The valleys ring with rural music; the hills echo back the artless strains. All that is vocal, joins in the general choir; all that has breath, exults in the cheering influence:—Whereas, was that radiant orb extinguished, a tremendous gloom would ensue, and horror insupportable. Nay, let it only be eclipsed for a few minutes, and all nature assumes an air of sadness. The heavens put on a kind of mourning. The most sprightly animals hang down their dejected heads. The songsters of the grove are struck dumb. Howling beasts roam abroad for prey; ominous birds come forth and screech; the heart of man fails, or a sudden pang seizes the foreboding mind.—So, when Christ hides away his face, when faith loses sight of that consolation of Israel! how gloomy are the prospects of the soul! Our God seems to be a consuming fire, and our sins cry loudly for vengeance. The thoughts bleed inwardly, the Christian walks heavily; all without is irksome, all within is disconsolate. Lift up then, most gracious Jesus, thou nobler day-spring from on high; O lift up the light of thy countenance upon thy people! Reveal the fulness of thy mediatorial sufficiency; make clear our title to this great salvation: and thereby impart

> What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
> The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy.
> *Pope's Eth. Ep.*

In one instance more, let me pursue the similitude. The sun, I observe, pours his lustre all around, to every distance, and in every direction. Profusely liberal of his gifts, he illuminates and cheers all the ends of the earth, and the whole compass of the skies. The east reddens with his rising radiance, and the western hills are gilded with his streaming splendours. The chilly regions of the north are cherished by his genial warmth, while the southern tracts glow with his fire.—Thus are the influences of the Sun of Righteousness, diffusive and unconfined. The generations of old felt them, and generations yet unborn will rejoice in them. The merits of his precious death extended to the first, and will be propagated to the last ages of mankind. May they, ere long, visit the remotest climates, and darkest corners of the earth! Command thy gospel, blessed Jesus, thy everlasting gospel, to take the wings of the morning, and travel with yonder sun. Let it fly upon strong pinions among every people, nation, and language; that where the heat scorches, and the cold freezes, thou mayest be known, confessed, and adored; that strangers to thy name, and enemies to thy doctrine, may be enlightened with the knowledge, and won to the love of thy truth! O! may that best of eras come; that wished-for period advance, when all the ends of the world shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations worship before him! (Psal. xxii. 27.)

From the heavens we retire to the earth.—Here the drops of dew like so many liquid crystals sparkle upon the eye.* How brilliant, and unsullied, is their lustre! How little inferior to the proud stone, which irradiates a monarch's crown? They want nothing but solidity and permanency to equal them with the finest treasures of the jeweller's casket.—But here, indeed, they are greatly deficient; short-lived ornaments, possessed of little more than a momentary radiance. The sun that lights them up, will soon exhale them. Within another hour, we may "look for their place, and they shall be away." O! may every good resolution of mine, and of my flocks; may our united breathings after God, not be like these transient decorations of the morning,

* "The sun, which is as the great soul of the universe, and produces all the necessaries of life, has a particular influence in cheering the mind of man, and making the heart glad."—*Spect. Vol. v. No. 387.*

* Now morn, her rosy steps in eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl.—
Milton.

but like the substantial glory of the growing day! The one shines more and more with augmented splendours: while the other, having glittered gaily for a few moments, disappear, and are lost.

How sensibly has this dew refreshed the vegetable kingdoms! The fervent heat of yesterday's sun had almost parched the face, and exhausted the sweets of nature. But what a sovereign restorative are these cooling distillations of the night! How they gladden and invigorate the languishing herbs! Sprinkled with these reviving drops, their verdure deepens; their bloom is new-flushed: their fragrance, faint or intermitted, becomes potent and copious.—Thus does the ever blessed Spirit revive the drooping troubled conscience of a sinner. When that almighty Comforter sheds his sweet influence on the soul, displays the all-sufficient sacrifice of a divine Redeemer, and "witnesses with our spirit," that we are interested in the Saviour, and, by this means are children of God; then what a pleasing change ensues! Former anxieties are remembered no more. Every uneasy apprehension vanishes. Soothing hopes and delightful expectations succeed. The countenance drops its dejected mien; the eyes brighten with a lively cheerfulness, while the lips express the heartfelt satisfaction in the language of thanksgiving and the voice of melody.—In this sense, merciful God, be as the dew unto Israel! "Pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing." And, O! let not my fleece be dry, while heavenly benediction descends upon all around.

Who can number these pearly drops? They hang on every hedge; they twinkle from every spray, and adorn the whole herbage of the field. Not a blade of grass, not a single leaf, but wears the watery pendants. So vast is the profusion, that it baffles the arithmetician's art.—Here let the benevolent mind contemplate and admire that emphatical scripture, which from this elegant similitude describes the increase of the Messiah's kingdom. The royal prophet, speaking of Christ, and foretelling the success of his religion, has this remarkable expression,* "The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning;" that is, As the morning is the mother of dews; produces them, as it were, from a prolific womb; and scatters them with the most lavish abundance, over all the surface of the earth, so shall thy seed be. O thou everlasting Father! by the preaching of thy word, shall such an innumerable race of regenerate children be born unto thee, and prove an ornament and a blessing to all ages. Millions, millions of willing converts from every nation under heaven, shall crowd into thy fa-

* Psalm cx. 3. The most exact translation of this difficult passage, is I apprehend as follows: Prae rore utere aurorae, tibi est res juventutis vel prolis tuæ. *i. e.* The dew of thy birth is larger, more copious, than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning.—I cannot acquiesce in the new version, because that disjoins the womb of the morning from the dew of thy birth; whereas they seem to have a clear affinity, and a close connexion. The womb of the morning is, with the utmost pertinency applied to the conception and production of dews; agreeably to a delicate line, in that great master of just description and lively painting, Mr. Thomson.

The meek eyd morn appears, mother of dews.
Summer.

We meet with a fine expression in the book of Job, which may serve to confirm this remark, and may illustrate the propriety of the phrase used in this connexion; "Hath the rain a father, or who hath begotten the drops of dew?" It seems the oriental writers delighted to represent the dew as a kind of birth, as the offspring of the morning. And if so, surely there could be no image in the whole compass of the universe better adapted to the Psalmist's purpose, or more strongly significant of those multitudes of proselytes, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, by the powerful energy of his word and spirit. Upon this supposition the whole verse describes

The willing subjection,
The gracious accomplishments,
And the vast number,
} of Christ's converts.

q. d. In the day of thy power, when thy glorious gospel shall be published in the world, and accompanied with marvellous efficacy,—in that memorable period, thy people discontinuing the former oblations, commanded under the Mosaic law, shall devote themselves as so many living sacrifices to thy honour, not constrained by force, but charmed with thy excellency, they shall come in volunteers to thy service, and be free-will-offerings in thy church.—Neither shall they be "empty vines," or bare professors; but shall walk in all the beauties of holiness, and bring forth such amiable fruit, as will adorn the doctrine they embrace.—What is still more desirable, they shall be as numerous as they are willing and holy. Born to thee in numbers, immense and inconceivable, exceeding even the countless myriads of dew-drops, which are begotten by the night, and issue from the womb of the recent morning.

By this interpretation, the text, I think, is cleared of its obscurity, and appears both truly sublime, and perfectly just.

May I be pardoned the digression, and acquitted from presumption, if on this occasion, I take leave to animadvert upon what seems harsh and unnatural in the common exposition of the last verse of this psalm? All the commentators (as many at least as I have consulted) inform their readers, that to drink of the brook in the way, signifies to undergo sufferings and death; which, in my opinion, is a construction extremely forced, and hardly supportable; altogether remote from the import of such poetical forms of diction usual among the eastern nations. In those sultry climes, nothing could be more welcome to the traveller than a brook streaming near his paths. To quench his thirst and lave his feet in the cooling current, was one of the greatest refreshments imaginable, and re-animated him to pursue his journey. For which reason, among others, brooks are a very favourite image with the inspired penman; used to denote a situation fertile and delightful, or a state of pleasure and satisfaction; but never, that I can recollect, to picture out the contrary condition of tribulation and distress.

The water-floods, indeed, in the sacred writings, often represent some imminent danger or grievous affliction. But then they are not—streams so calm, that they keep within their banks, and glide quietly by the traveller's footsteps; so clear that they are fit for the way-faring man's use, and invite his lips to a draught; both which notions are plainly implied in the text. They are rather boisterous billows, bursting over a ship, or dashing themselves with dreadful impetuosity upon the shore; or, sweeping inundations, which bear down all before them, and drown the neighbouring country. Besides, in these instances of horror, we never find the words—He shall drink; which conveys a pleasing idea (unless when it relates to a cup, filled with bitter, intoxicating, or impoisoned liquors; a case quite different from that under con-

mily, and replenish thy church ; till they become like the stars of the sky, or the sands of the sea, for multitude ; or even as numberless as these fine spangles, which now cover the face of nature.—Behold then, ye obstinately wicked, though you " are not gathered, yet will the Saviour be glorious." His design shall not miscarry, nor his labour prove abortive, though you render it of none effect with regard to yourselves. Think not that Immanuel will want believers, or heaven inhabitants, because you continue incorrigible. No: the Lamb that was slain, will " see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," in a never-failing series of faithful people below, and an immense choir of glorified saints above ; who shall form his retinue, and surround his throne, in shining and triumphant armies, such as no man can number

Here I was reminded of the various expedients which Providence, unsearchably wise, uses to fructify both the material and intellectual world.—Sometimes you shall have impetuous and heavy showers, bursting from the angry clouds. They lash the plains, and make the rivers foam. A storm brings them, and a deluge follows them.—At other times these gentle dews are formed in the serene evening air ; they steal down by slow degrees, and with insensible stillness ; so subtile that they deceive the nicest eye ; so silent that they escape the most delicate ear ; and when fallen, so very light, that they neither bruise the tenderest, nor oppress the weakest flower,—very different operations ! yet each concurs in the same beneficial end ; and both impart fertility to the lap of nature.

So, some persons have I known reclaimed from the unfruitful works of darkness, by violent and severe means. The Almighty addressed their stubborn hearts, as he addressed the Israelites at Sinai, with lightning in his eyes, and thunder in his voice. The conscience, smit with a sense of guilt, and apprehensive of eternal vengeance, trembled through all her powers ; just as that strong mountain tottered to its centre. Pangs of remorse, and agonies of fear, preceded their new birth. They were reduced to the last extremities, almost overwhelmed with despair, before they found rest in Jesus Christ.—Others have been recovered from a vain conversation, by methods more mild and attractive. The Father of spirits applied himself to their teachable minds, in " a still and small voice." His grace came down, as the rain into a fleece of wool ; or, as these softening drops, which now water the earth. The kingdom of God took place in their souls, without noise or observation. They passed from death unto life, from a carnal to a regenerate state, by almost imperceptible advances. The transition resembled the growth of corn ; was very visible when affected ; though scarce sensible, while accomplishing.—O thou Author and Finisher of our faith, recal us from our wanderings, and re-unite us to thyself ! Whether thou alarm us with thy terrors, or allure us with thy smiles ; whether thou drive us with the scourge of conviction, or draw us with the cords of love ; let us, in any wise, return to thee ; for thou art our supreme good ; thou art our only happiness.

Before I proceed further, let me ascend the terrace, and take one survey of the neighbouring country.—What a prospect rushes upon my sight ! How vast ! how various ! how " full and plenteous with all manner of store !" Nature's whole wealth ! —What a rich and inexhaustible magazine is here, furnishing subsistence for every creature ! Methinks I read in these spacious volumes, a most lively comment upon that noble celebration of the divine beneficence, He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.

> These are thy glorious works, Parent of good !
> Almighty ! Thine this universal frame,
> Thus wondrous fair ! Thyself how wondrous then.
> *Milton.*

The fields are covered deep, and stand thick with corn. They expand the milky grain to the sun, in order to receive from his beams a more firm consistence, and a golden hue ; that they may be qualified to fill the barns of the husbandman with plenty, and his heart with gladness.

Yonder lie the meadows, smoothed into a perfect level ; decorated with an embroidery of the gayest flowers, and loaded with*

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sideration,) but either, such words as import terror and astonishment, or else to rush upon, to overwhelm, and even to bury under the waves.

Upon the whole, may not the passage more properly allude to the influences of the Holy Ghost? which were communicated in unmeasurable degrees to our great High Priest, and were in fact the cause of his surmounting all difficulties.—These are frequently represented by waters: " Whoso believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." The enjoyment of them is described by drinking; " He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst."—Then the sense may run in this well-connected and perspicuous manner. It is asked, How shall the Redeemer be able to execute the various and important offices foretold in the preceding parts of the psalm; the Prophet replies, He shall drink of the brook in the way. He shall not be left barely to his human nature, which must unavoidably sink under the tremendous work of recovering a lost world, but, through the whole course of his incarnate state, through the whole administration of his mediatorial kindgom, shall be supported with omnipotent succours. He shall drink at the brook of Almighty power, and travel on in the greatness of an uncreated strength.—Therefore shall he lift up his head. By this means shall he be equal to the prodigious task, and superior to all opposition. By this means, shall he be thoroughly successful in whatever he undertakes, and greatly triumphant over all his enemies.

* ——Injussa virescunt
Gramina. *Virg.*

spontaneous crops of herbage; which, converted into hay, will prove a most commodious provision for the barrenness of winter; will supply with fodder our serviceable animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed by frosts or buried in snows.—A winding stream glides along the flowery margin, and receives the image of the bending skies, and waters the root of many a branching willow. It is stocked, no doubt, with variety of fish, which afford a solitary diversion to the angler, and nourish for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element, to maintain the finny nations: it also carries cleanliness, and dispenses fruitfulness, wherever it rolls the crystal current.

The pastures with their verdant mounds, chequer the prospect, and prepare a standing repast for our cattle. There "our oxen are made strong to labour, and our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands." There the horse acquires vigour, for the dispatch of our business; and speed, to expedite our journeys. From thence the kine bring home their udders distended with one of the richest and healthiest liquors in the world.

On several spots a grove of trees, like some grand colonnade, erects its towering head. Every one projects a friendly shade for the beasts, and creates an hospitable lodging for the birds. Every one stands ready, to furnish timber for a palace, masts for a navy; or with a more condescending courtesy, fuel for our hearths.—One of them seems skirted with a wild uncultivated heath; which, like well-disposed shades in painting, throws an additional lustre on the more ornamented parts of the landscape. Nor is its usefulness, like that of a foil, relative only, but real. There several valuable creatures are produced, and accommodated without any expense or care of ours. There likewise spring abundance of those herbs, which assuage the smart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever; which impart floridity to our circulating fluids, add a more vigorous tone to our active solids, and thereby repair the decays of our enfeebled constitutions.

Nearer the houses we perceive an ample spread of branches! not so stately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual services. A little while ago, I beheld them; and all was one beauteous, boundless waste of blossoms. The eye marvelled at the lovely sight, and the heart rejoiced in the prospect of autumnal plenty. But now the blooming maid is resigned for the useful matron; the flower is fallen, and the fruit swells out on every twig.—Breathe soft, ye winds! O, spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blast! Let the pear-tree suckle her juicy progeny, till they drop into our hands and dissolve in our mouths. Let the plumb hang unmolested upon her boughs, till she fatten her delicious flesh, and cloud her polished skin with blue. And as for the apples, that stapple commodity of our orchards, let no injurious shocks precipitate them immaturely to the ground; till revolving suns have tinged them with a ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquisite flavour. Then, what copious hoards, of what burnished rinds, and what delightful relishes, will replenish the store-room! Some, to present us with an early entertainment, and refresh our palates amidst the sultry heats; some, to borrow ripeness from the falling snows, and carry autumn into the depths of winter; some, to adorn the salver, make a part of the dessert, and give an agreeable close to our feasts:* others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood, which, mellowed by age, may sparkle in the glass, with a liveliness and delicacy little inferior to the blood of the grape.

I observe several small inclosures, which seem to be apprehensive of some hostile visit from the north; and therefore, are defended, on that quarter, by a thick wood or a lofty wall. At the same time, they cultivate an uninterrupted correspondence with the south, and throw open their whole dimensions to its friendly warmth. One, in particular, lies within the reach of a distinguishing view, and proves to be a kitchen-garden. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may resemble the pomp of courts, or the ensigns of royalty, is banished from this humble community. None of the productions of the olitory affect finery, but all are habited with perfect decency. Here those celebrated qualities are eminently united, the utmost simplicity with the exactest neatness.†

A skilful hand has parcelled out the whole ground into narrow beds, and intervening alleys. The same discreet management has assigned to each verdant family a peculiar and distinct abode. So that there is no confusion amidst the greatest multiplicity; because every individual is associated with propriety, and all the tribes are ranged with regularity. If it be pleasing to behold their orderly situation, and their modest beauties; how much more delightful, to consider the advantages they yield! What a fund of choice accommodations is here! what a source of wholesome dainties! and all for the enjoyment of man. Why does the parsley, with her frizzled locks, shag the border; or, why the celery, with her whitening arms, perforate the mold, but to render his soups savoury? The asparagus shoots

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* ——Abovo
Usque ad mala——*Hor.*

† Simplex munditiis.—*Hor.*

his tapering stems to offer him the first fruits of the season; and the artichoke spreads its turgid top, to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the cucumber* creep into the sun; and, though basking in its hottest rays, they secrete for their master, and barrel up for his use the most cooling juices of the soil. The beans stand firm, like files of embattled troops; the peas rest upon their props, like so many companies of invalids; while both replenish their pods with the fatness of the earth, on purpose to pour it on their owner's table.—Not one species among all this variety of herbs is a cumberer of the ground. Not a single plant but it is good for food, or some way salutary. With so beneficent an economy are the several periods of their ministrations settled, that no portion of the year is left destitute of nourishing esculents. What is still more obliging, every portion of the year affords such esculents as are best suited to the temperature of the air, and the state of our bodies. Why then should the possessor of so valuable a spot envy the condition of kings,† since he may daily walk amidst rows of peaceable and obsequious, though mute subjects. Every one of which tenders him some agreeable present, and pays him a willing tribute, such as is most happily adapted both to supply his wants, and to regale his taste; to furnish him at once with plenty and with pleasure.

At a distance, one descries the mighty hills. They have their huge ridges among the clouds; and look like the barriers of kingdoms or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their surface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treasures! treasures lodged fast in the quarries, or sunk deep in the mines. From thence industry may draw her implements, to plough the soil, to reap the grain, and procure every necessary convenience. From thence, art may fetch her materials to rear the dome, to swell the organ, and form the noblest ornaments of politer life.

On another side, the great deep terminates the view. There go the ships; there is that leviathan; and there, in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation. This is the capacious cistern of the universe, which admits as into a deep receptacle, and distributes as from a reservoir, whatever waters the whole globe. There is not a fountain that gushes in the unfrequented desert, nor a rivulet that flows in the remotest continent, nor a cloud that swims in the highest regions of the firmament, but is fed by this all-replenishing source. The ocean is the grand vehicle of trade, and the uniter of distant nations. To us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports the harvest of every climate, and renders our island the centre of traffic, but also as it secures us from foreign invasion, by a sort of impregnable entrenchment.*

Methinks the view of this profuse munificence inspires a secret delight, and kindles a disinterested good-will. While the "little hills clap their hands," and the luxuriant "vallies laugh and sing," who can forbear catching the general joy? who is not touched with lively sensations of pleasure? While the everlasting Father is scattering blessings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodness, who does not feel his breast overflowing with a diffusive benevolence? My heart, I must confess, beats high with satisfaction, and breathes out congratulatory wishes upon all the tenants of these rural abodes: "Peace be within your walls, as well as plenteousness around your dwellings." Live ye highly favoured; live sensible of your benefits, and thankful to your benefactor. Look round upon these prodigiously large incomes of the fruitful soil, and call them (for you have free leave) all your own. —Only let me remind you of one very important truth, let me suggest, and may you never forget that you are obliged to Christ Jesus for every one of these accommodations, which spring from the teeming earth, and the smiling skies. For,

1. Christ† made them, when they were

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* Virgil, with great conciseness, and equal propriety, describes the cucumber——

——Tortusque per herbam
Cresceret in ventrem cucumis——*Georg. IV.*

Milton has (if we admit Dr. Bently's alteration, which is, I think, in this place, unquestionably just) almost translated the Latin poet,

——Forth crept
The swelling gourd.—*Par. Lost, B. 7. l. 320.*

† Hic rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum
Lilia verbenasque premens, vescumque papaver.
Regnum æquebat opes animis; seraque revertens
Nocte domum, dapibus mensas onerabat inemptis.
Vir. Georg. IV.

* Whose rampart was the sea. Nah. iii. 8.

I hope this little excursion into the country will not be looked upon as a departure from my subject; because a rural view, though no essential part of a garden, is yet a desirable appendage, and necessary to complete its beauty.—As usefulness is the most valuable property which can attend any production, this is the circumstance chiefly touched upon in the survey of the landscape. Though every piece of this extensive and diversified scene is cast in the most elegant mould, yet nothing is calculated merely for show and parade. You see nothing formed in the taste of the ostentatious obelisk, or insignificant pomp of the pyramid. No such idle expenses were admitted into that consummate plan, which regulated the structure of the universe. All the decorations of nature are no less advantageous than ornamental; such as speak the Maker infinitely beneficent, as well as incomparably magnificent.

† When I ascribe the work of creation to the Son, I would by no means be supposed to with-hold the same honour from the eternal Father, and ever-blessed Spirit. The acts of those inconceivably glorious persons are, like their essence, undivided and one. But I choose to state the important point in this manner, because this is the manifest doctrine of the new Testament, is the express belief of our church, and a most noble peculiarity of the gospel revelation.—I

not.—He fetched them up from utter darkness, and gave them both their being and their beauty. He created the materials of which they are composed, and moulded them into this endless multiplicity of amiable forms, and useful substances. He arrayed the heavens with a vesture of the mildest blue, and clothed the earth in a livery of the gayest green; his pencil streaked, and his breath perfumed whatever is beautiful or fragrant in the universe. His strength set fast the mountains; his goodness garnished the vales; and the same touch which healed the leper wrought the whole visible system into this complete perfection.

2. Christ recovered them when they were forfeited.—By Adam's sin, we lost our right to the comforts of life, and fruits of the ground: his disobedience was the most impious and horrid treason against the King of kings. Consequently his whole patrimony became confiscated; as well the portion of temporal good things, settled upon the human race during their minority; as. that everlasting heritage reserved for their enjoyment when they should come to full age. But the "seed of the woman," instantly interposing, took off the attainder, and redeemed the alienated inheritance. The first Adam being disinherited, the second Adam was appointed heir of all things,* visible as well as invisible; and we hold our possession of the former, we expect an instatement in the latter, purely by virtue of our alliance to him, and our union with him.

3. Christ upholds them, which would otherwise tumble into ruin.—By him says the oracle of inspiration, all things consist.* His finger rolls the seasons round, and presides over all the celestial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every spring of vegetative nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation rests upon his mighty arm, and receives the whole harmony of its motion from his unerring eye.—This habitable globe, with all its rich appendages, and fine machinery, could no more continue, than they could create themselves. Start they would into instant confusion, or drop into their primitive nothing, did not his power support, and his wisdom regulate them every moment. In conformity to his will, they subsist steadfast and invariable in their orders; and wait only for his sovereign nod, to "fall away like water that runneth apace."

4. Christ actuates them,† which would otherwise be lifeless and insignificant.—Pensioners they are, constant pensioners on his bounty; and borrow their all from his fulness. He only has life; and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all sufficiency. Does the grape refresh you with its enlivening juices? It is by a warrant received, and virtue derived, from the Redeemer. Does bread strengthen your heart, and prove the staff of your life? Remember, that it is by the Saviour's appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with his melody, when the "time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the nightingale is heard in our land." You taste his goodness in the luscious fig, the melting peach, and the musky flavour of the apricot. You smell his sweetness in the opening honey-suckle, and every odoriferous shrub. Could these creatures speak for themselves they would, doubtless, disclaim all sufficiency of their own, and ascribe the whole honour to their Maker.—"We are servants," would they say, "of him who died for you. Cisterns only, dry cisterns in ourselves, we transmit to mortals no more than the uncreated fountain transfuses unto us. Think not, that from any ability of our own, we

choose it also, because I would take every opportunity of inculcating and celebrating the divinity of the Redeemer: a truth which imparts an unutterable dignity to Christianity; a truth, which lays an immoveable foundation for all the comfortable hopes of a Christian; a truth which will render the mystery of our redemption, the wonder and delight of eternity; and with this truth every one will observe, my assertion is inseparably connected.

If any one questions, whether this be the doctrine of our church, let the creed, which we repeat in our most solemn devotions, determine his doubt; "I believe," says that form of sound words, "in one Lord Jesus Christ, very God of very God, by whom all things were made."—If it be farther inquired, from whence the Nicene fathers derived this article of their faith? I answer, from the writings of the beloved disciple, who lay on the Saviour's bosom; and of that great apostle who had been caught up into the third heaven. John i. 3. Col. i. 16.

* Heb. i. 2.—In this sense, at least, Christ is the Saviour of all men. The former and latter rain; the precious fruits of the earth, food to eat, and raiment to put on;—all these he purchased, even for his irreclaimable enemies. They eat of his bread, who lift up their heel against him.

We learn from hence, in what a peculiar and endearing light the Christian has to contemplate the things that are seen. Heathens might discover an eternal power and infinite wisdom, in the structure of the universe; heathens might acknowledge a most stupendous liberality, in the unreserved grant of the whole fabric, with all its furniture, to the service of man; but the Christian should ever keep in mind his forfeiture of them, and the price paid to redeem them. He should receive the gifts of indulgent providence, as the Israelites received their law from the hand of a mediator; or rather, to him they should come, not only issuing from the stores of an unbounded bounty; but swimming (as it were) in that crimson tide, which streamed from Immanuel's veins.

* Col. i. 17. I beg leave to recommend St. Chrysostom's pertinent and beautiful note upon the passage; by which it will appear, that the sentiment of these sections is not merely a private opinion, but the avowed belief of the primitive church.

† John v. 17. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work;" or, I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation.—Thus the words are paraphrased by a masterly expositor, who has illustrated the life of our blessed Lord, in the most elegant taste of criticism, with the most amiable spirit of devotion, and without any mixture of the malignant leaven or low singularities of a party. See the Family Expositor, Vol. I. sect. 47.

furnish you with assistance, or administer to your comfort. It is the divine energy, the divine energy alone, that works in us, and does you good.—We serve you, O ye sons of men, that you may love him who placed you in these stations. O! love the Lord, therefore, all ye who are supported by our ministry; or we shall groan with indignation and regret at your abuse of our services. (Rom. viii. 22.)—Use us, and welcome; for we are yours, if ye are Christ's. Crop our choicest beauties; rifle all our treasures, accommodate yourselves with our most valuable qualities; only let us be incentives to gratitude, and motives to obedience."

Having surveyed the spacious sky, and sent a glance round the inferior creation, it is time to descend from this eminence, and confine my attention to the beautiful spot below.—Here nature, always pleasing, every-where lovely, appears with peculiar attractions. Yonder she seems dressed in her dishabile; grand, but irregular. Here she calls in her hand-maid, art; and shines in all the delicate ornaments which the nicest cultivation is able to convey. Those are her common apartments, where she lodges her ordinary guests; this is her cabinet of curiosities, where she entertains her intimate acquaintance.—My eye shall often expatiate over those scenes of universal fertility; my feet shall sometimes brush through the thicket, or traverse the lawn, or stroll along the forest-glade; but to this delightful retreat shall be my chief resort. Thither will I make excursions; but here will I dwell.

If, from my low procedure, I may form an allusion to the most exalted practices, I would observe, upon this occasion, that the celebrated Erasmus, and our judicious Locke, having trod the circle of the sciences, and ranged through the whole extent of human literature, at length betook themselves solely to the Bible. Leaving the sages of antiquity, they sat incessantly at the feet of Jesus. Wisely they withdrew from that immense multiplicity of learning, from those endless tracts of amusing erudition, where noxious weeds are mixed with wholesome herbs: where is generally a much larger growth of prickly shrubs, than of fruitful boughs. They spent their most mature hours in those hallowed gardens, which God's own wisdom planted, which God's own Spirit watereth, and in which God's own Son is continually walking; where he meeteth those that seek him, and revealeth to them the glories of his person, and the riches of his goodness.

Thus would I finish the remainder of my days! Having just tasted what they call the politer studies, I would now devote my whole application to the lively oracles. From other pursuits, I might glean, perhaps, a few scattered ears of low, of lean, of unsatisfactory instruction. From this, I trust to reap a harvest of the sublimest truths, the noblest improvements, and the purest joys.* Waft me then, O! waft my mind to Sion's consecrated bowers. Let my thoughts perpetually rove through the awfully-pleasing walks of inspiration. Here grow those heaven-born plants, the trees of life and knowledge, whose ambrosial fruits we now may "take, and eat, and live for ever." Here flow those precious streams of grace, and righteousness, whose living waters "whosoever drinks, shall thirst no more." And what can the fables of Grecian song, or the finest pages of Roman eloquence,—what can they exhibit, in any degree comparable to these matchless prerogatives of revelation!—Therefore, though I should not dislike to pay a visit now and then to my heathen masters, I would live with the prophets and apostles. With those I would carry on some occasional correspondence: but these should be my bosom-friends, my inseparable companions, "my delight, and my counsellors."

What sweets are these, which so agreeably salute my nostrils! They are the breath of the flowers, the incense of the garden.—How liberally does the jessamine dispense her odoriferous riches! How deliciously has the woodbine embalmed this morning walk! The air is all perfume.—And is not this another most engaging argument to forsake the bed of sloth? Who would lie dissolved in senseless slumbers, while so many breathing sweets invite him to a feast of fragrancy! Especially considering that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties. A fugitive treat they are, prepared only for the wakeful and industrious; whereas, when the sluggard lifts his heavy eyes, the flowers will droop, their fine scents be dissipated, and instead of this refreshing humidity, the air will become a kind of liquid fire.

With this very motive, heightened by a representation of the most charming pieces of morning scenery, the parent of mankind awakes his lovely consort. There is such a delicacy in the choice, and so much life in the description of these rural images, that I cannot excuse myself, without repeating the whole passage.—Whisper it some friendly genius, in the ear of every one, who is now sunk in sleep, and lost to all those refined gratifications!

> Awake—The morning shines, and the fresh field
> Calls you—Ye lose the prime, to mark how spring
> The tender plants, how blows the citron grove:
> What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
> How nature paints her colours; how the bee
> Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweets.†

* Quicquid docetur, veritas; quicquid præcipitur bonitas; quicquid promittitur felicitas.

† Milt. Par. Lost. Book V. line 29.

How delightful is this fragrance! It is distributed in the nicest proportion; neither so strong as to oppress the organs; nor so faint as to elude them.—We are soon cloyed at a sumptuous banquet; but this pleasure never loses its poignancy, never palls the appetite.—Here luxury itself is innocent! or rather in this case, indulgence is incapable of excess.—This balmy entertainment, not only regales the sense, but cheers the very soul?* and instead of clogging elates its powers. It puts me in mind of that ever memorable sacrifice, which was once made in behalf of offending mortals. I mean the sacrifice of the blessed Jesus, when he offered up himself unto God "for a sweet smelling savour." Such the Holy Spirit styles that wonderful oblation; as if no image in the whole sensible creation was so proper to give us an idea of the ineffable satisfaction, which the Father of mercies conceived from that unparalleled atonement, as the pleasing sensations which such rich perfumes are capable of raising. "Thousands of rams, and ten thousand of rivers of oil," from an apostate world; the most submissive acknowledgments, added to the most costly offerings, from men of defiled hands, and unclean lips; what could they have effected? A prophet represents the "high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity," turning himself away from such filthy rags; turning himself away with disdainful abhorrence as from the noisome steam of a dunghill. (Amos v. 21, 22.)—But in Christ's immaculate holiness, in Christ's consummate obedience, in Christ's most precious blood-shedding, with what an unimaginable complacency does justice rest satisfied, and vengeance acquiesce!—All thy works, O thou surety for ruined sinners! all thy sufferings, O thou slaughtered Lamb of God! as well as all thy garments, O thou Bridegroom of thy church! smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia! (Psal. xlv. 9.) They are infinitely more grateful to the eternal Godhead, than the choicest exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the spicy east can be to the human nostrils.

As the altar of old sanctified the gift; so this is the great propitiation, which recommends the obnoxious persons, and unprofitable services of the believing world. In this may my soul be interested! By this it may be reconciled to the Father!—There is such a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My most profound adorations, and sincere acts of religion, must not presume to challenge a reward, but humbly implore forgiveness.† Renouncing therefore, myself in every instance of duty; disclaiming all shadow of confidence in any deeds of my own,* may I now and evermore be accepted through the Beloved!

What colours, what charming colours are here? These so nobly bold; and those so delicately languid. What a glow is enkindled in some! what a gloss shines upon others! In one, methinks I see the ruby, with her bleeding radiance; in another, the sapphire, with her sky-tinctured blue; in all, such an exquisite richness of dyes, as no other set of paintings in the universe can boast.†—With what a masterly skill is every one of the varying tints disposed! Here they seem to be thrown on with an easy dash of security and freedom; there they are adjusted by the nicest touches of art and accuracy. Those which form the ground, are always so judiciously chosen, as to heighten the lustre of the superadded figures; while the verdure of the impalement, or the shadings of the foliage, impart new liveliness to the whole. Indeed, whether they are blended or arranged, softened or contrasted, they are manifestly under the conduct of a taste that never mistakes, a felicity that never falls short of the very perfection of elegance.—Fine, inimitably fine, is the texture of the web, on which these shining treasures are displayed. What are the labours of the Persian looms, or the boasted commodities of Brussels, compared with these curious manufactures of nature? Compared with these, the most admired chintzes would lose their reputation; even superfine cambrics appear coarse as canvass in their presence.

What a cheering argument does our Saviour derive from hence, to strengthen our affiance in God! He directs us to learn a lesson of heaven depending faith, from every

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* Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart. Prov. xxvii. 9.

† A writer of distinguished superiority, thus addresses the great observer of actions, and searcher of hearts, and vindicates my sentiments, while he so justly and beautifully utters his own.

Look down, great God, with pity's softest eye,
On a poor breathing particle in dust.
His crimes forgive; forgive his virtues too,
Those smaller faults, half converts to the right.
Night-Thoughts, No. ix.

* See pages 44 and 45, in the second edition of a most candid and evangelical little treatise, called Christianity the Great Ornament of Human Life.—"If Christians happily avoid the dangerous extreme, and too often fatal rock of a dead fruitless faith on the one hand, he (*i. e.* Satan) will endeavour, by all kinds of plausible insinuations, to split them on the opposite, viz. spiritual pride, and ostentation, and dependence on their works, as if these were the meritorious or procuring causes of all true peace, hope, consolation, and divine acceptance;—Now, this self-dependence may be ranked among the most dangerous of the infernal politics, because the fatal potion lies deep and too often undiscerned."

† ——Who can paint
Like Nature! Can imagination boast,
Amid his gay creation, hues like these?
And can he mix them with that matchless skill,
And lay them on so delicately fine,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In ev'ry bud that blows?—*Thom. Spring.*

lord that wings the air, and from every flower that blossoms in the field. If Providence, with unremitted care, supports those inferior creatures, and arrays these in sensible beings with so much splendour; surely he will in no wise withhold from his elect children, "bread to eat, and raiment to put on."—Ye faithful followers of the Lamb, dismiss every low anxiety, relating to the needful sustenance of life. He that feeds the ravens from an inexhaustible magazine, he that paints the plants with such surpassing elegance; in short, he that provides so liberally, both for the animal and vegetable parts of his creation, will not, cannot, neglect his own people. Fear not little flock, ye peculiar objects of Almighty love; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom. (Luke xii. 32.) And if he freely gives you an everlasting kingdom hereafter, is it possible to suppose that he will deny you any necessary conveniencies here?

One cannot forbear reflecting in this place, on the too prevailing humour of being fond and ostentatious of dress.* What an abject and mistaken ambition is this. How unworthy the dignity of immortal, and the wisdom of rational beings! Especially since these little productions of the earth have indisputably the pre-eminence in such outward embellishments—Go, clothe thyself with purple and fine linen; trick thyself up in all the gay attire which the shuttle or the needle can furnish; yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the native elegance of a common daisy* eclipses all this elaborate finery.—Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious princess, on her coronation day, in all the splendour of royal apparel; couldst thou equal even Solomon, in the height of his magnificence and glory; yet would the meanest among the flowery populace outshine thee; every discerning eye would give the preference to these beauties of the ground†—Scorn then to borrow thy recommendations from a neat disposition of threads and a curious arrangement of colours. Assume a becoming greatness of temper; let thy endowments be of the immortal kind; study to be all-glorious within; be clothed with humility; wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.‡ To say all in a word, put on the Lord Jesus Christ; (Rom. xiii. 14.) let his blood be sprinkled upon thy conscience, and it shall be whiter than the virgin-snow; let his righteousness, like a spotless robe, adorn thy inner man, and thou shalt be amiable even in the most distinguishing eye of God. Let his blessed Spirit dwell in thy heart, and under his sanctifying operations thou shalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

These are real excellencies; truly noble accomplishments these. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified; and thou wilt not find a rival in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. These will exalt thee far above the low pretensions of lace and embroidery. These will prepare thee to stand in the beatific presence, and to take thy seat among the angels of light.

What an enchanting situation is this! One can scarce be melancholy within the atmosphere of flowers. Such lively hues, and delicious odours, not only address themselves agreeably to the senses; but touch, with a surprising delicacy, the sweetest movements of the mind;

> ——— to the heart inspiring
> Vernal delight and joy.§—*Milton, book* iv.

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* Mr. Addison has a fine remark on a female warrior celebrated by Virgil. He observes, that with all her other great qualities, this little foible mingled itself. Because, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondness for a rich and splendid suit of armour betrayed her into ruin. In this circumstance our critic discovers a moral concealed; this he admires as a neat, though oblique satire, on that trifling passion.—*Spec. vol.* I, *No.* 15.

I would refer it to the judicious reader, whether there is not a beauty of the same kind, but touched with a more masterly hand, in the song of Deborah—Speaking of Sisera's mother, the sacred eucharistic ode represents her as anticipating, in her fond fancy the victory of her son; and indulging the following soliloquy.—Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey? to Sisera a prey of divers colours; a prey of divers colours of needle-work; of divers colours of needle-work on both sides; meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?—She takes no notice of the signal service which her hero would do to his country, by quelling so dangerous an insurrection. She never reflects on the present acclamations, the future advancement, and the eternal renown, which are the tribute usually paid to a conqueror's merit. She can conceive, it seems, nothing greater than to be clad in an embroidered vesture; and to trail along the ground a robe of the richest dyes. This is, in her imagination, the most lordly spoil he can win; the most stately trophy he can erect.—It is also observable, how she dwells upon the trivial circumstance; reiterating it again and again. It has so charmed her ignoble heart, so entirely engrossed her little views, that she can think of nothing else, speak of nothing else, and can hardly ever desist from the darling topic.—Is not this a keen, though delicately couched censure, on that poor, contemptible, grovelling taste, which is enamoured with silken finery, and makes the attributes of a butterfly the idol of its affections?

How conspicuous is the elevated and magnificent spirit of that venerable mother in Israel, when viewed in comparison with the low, the despicable turn of this Canaanitish lady!—Such strong and beautiful contrasts, are, I think, some of the most striking excellencies of poetic painting; and in no book are they more frequently used, or expressed with greater life, than in the sacred volumes of inspiration.

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* Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,
They neither know to spin, nor care to toil;
Yet with confess'd magnificence deride
Our mean attire and impudence of pride.—*Prior.*

† Mr. Cowley, with his usual brilliancy of imagination, styles them stars of earth.

‡ How beautifully does the prophet describe the furniture of a renewed and heavenly mind, under the similitude of a rich and complete suit of apparel! "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Isa. lxi. 10.

§ "I would have my reader endeavour to moralize this natural pleasure of the soul, and to improve this

How often have I felt them dissipate the gloom of thought, and transfuse a sudden gaiety through the dejected spirit! I cannot wonder, that kings descend from their thrones, to walk amidst blooming ivory and gold; or retire from the most sumptuous feast, to be recreated with the more refined sweets of the garden. I cannot wonder that queens forego, for a while, the compliments of a nation, to receive the tribute of the parterre; or withdraw from all the glitter of a court, to be attended with the more splendid equipage of a bed of flowers.—But, if this be so pleasing, what transporting pleasure must arise from the fruition of uncreated excellency! O! what unknown delight to enter into thy immediate presence, most blessed Lord God! to see thee,* thou King of Heaven and Lord of glory, no longer "through a glass darkly, but face to face!" to have all thy goodness, all thy greatness, shine before us; and be made glad for ever with the brightest discovery of thy perfections, with the ineffable joy of thy countenance.

This we cannot bear, in our present imperfect state. The effulgence of unveiled divinity would dazzle a mortal sight. Our feeble faculties would be overwhelmed with such a fulness of superabundant bliss; and must lie oppressed under such "an exceeding great, eternal weight of glory." But, "when this corruptible hath put on incorruption," the powers of the soul will be greatly invigorated; and these earthly tabernacles will be "transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body." Then, though (Isa. xxiv. 23.) "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed," when the Lord of hosts is revealed from heaven; yet shall his faithful people be enabled to see him as he is (1 John iii. 2.)

Here then, my wishes, here be fixed: be this your determined and invariable aim; here, my affections, here give a loose to your whole ardour; cry out in the language of inspiration, This one thing have I desired of the Lord, which with incessant earnestness, I will require, that I may dwell in the celestial house of the Lord all the days of my future life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, (Psal. xxvii. 4.) and to contemplate with wonder and adoration,—with unspeakable and everlasting rapture,—all the attributes of the incomprehensible Godhead.

Solomon, a most penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how highly mankind is charmed with the fine qualities of flowers, has figured out the blessed Jesus, that "fairest among ten thousand," by these lovely representatives. He styles Him* the rose of Sharon and the lilly of the vallies:† like the first, full of delights and communicable graces; like the last, exalted in majesty, and complete in beauty. In that sacred pastoral, he ranges the creation; borrows its most finished forms, and dips his pencil in its choicest dyes, to present us with a sketch of the amiableness of his person! his amiableness, who is the light of the world; the glory of his church; the only hope, the sovereign consolation of sinners; and exalted, infinitely exalted, not only above the noblest comparison, but even above all blessing and praise." May I also make the same heavenly use of all sublunary enjoyments! Whatever is pleasurable or charming below, let it raise my desire to those sublime delights which are above; which will yield, not partial, but perfect felicity; not transient, but never-ending satisfaction and joy.—Yes, my soul, let these beauties in miniature always remind thee of that glorious person in whom "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Let these little emanations teach thee to thirst after the eternal fountain. O! may the creatures be the constant clue to the Creator! For this is a certain truth, and deserves thy frequent recollection, thy most attentive consideration, that the whole compass of finite perfection is only a faint ray,‡ shot from that immense source, is only a small drop, derived from that inexhaustible ocean of all good.

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vernal delight, as Milton calls it, into a Christian virtue. When we find ourselves inspired with this pleasing instinct, this secret satisfaction and complacency, arising from the beauties of the creation, let us consider to whom we stand indebted for all these entertainments of sense, and who it is that thus opens his hand, and fills the world with good.—Such an habitual disposition of mind consecrates every field and wood; turns an ordinary walk into a morning or evening sacrifice: and will approve those transient gleams, which naturally brighten up and refresh the soul on such occasions, into an inviolable and perpetual state of bliss and happiness."

Spectator, vol. v. No. 364.

* Isaiah represents the felicity of the righteous, in the everlasting world, by this elegant and amiable image: Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty. Milton touches the same subject with wonderful elevation and majesty of thought. They

——— walk with God,
High in salvation and the climes of bliss.
Words which, like the fiery car, almost transport our affections to those glorious abodes. Isa. xxxiii. 17.

Milton, xix. v. 707.

* Song ii 1,
Malus ut arboribus decori est, ut vitibus uvæ
Utque rosæ campis, ut liliæ vallibus albæ,
Sic Christus decus omne suis———

† By the lilly of the vallies, I apprehend, is meant, not the flower which commonly passes under that denomination, and is comparatively mean: but the grand, majestic garden lilly; growing in a rich irriguous soil, where it flourishes in the most ample manner and arrives at the highest perfection. The circumstance of the vallies, added by the sacred writer, is significant, not of the species, but of the place.—This is by far the grandest interpretation, and most exactly suitable to the spiritual sense; which intimates that the blessed Jesus delights to dwell, by the communications of the Spirit, in humble hearts.—Lillium vallibus guadens.

‡ ——— Thou sittest above all heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

Milton, book v

What a surprising variety is observable among the flowery tribes! How has the bountiful hand of Providence diversified these nicest pieces of his workmanship! and added the charms of an endless novelty to all their other perfections?—Because a constant uniformity would soon render the entertainment tiresome or insipid; therefore, every species exhibits something new. The fashion spreads not from family to family; but every one has a mode of its own, which is truly original. The most cursory glance perceives an apparent difference, as well as a peculiar delicacy, in the airs and habits, the attitude and lineaments of every distinct class.

Some rear their heads with a majestic mien; and overlook, like sovereigns or nobles, the whole parterre. Others seem more moderate in their aims, and advance only to the middle stations; a genius turned for heraldry might term them the gentry of the border. While others, free from all aspiring views, creep unambitiously on the ground, and look like the commonalty of the kind.—Some are intersected with elegant stripes, or studded with radiant spots. Some affect to be genteelly powdered, or neatly fringed; while others are plain in their aspect, unaffected in their dress, and content to please with a naked simplicity. Some assume a monarch's purple; some look most becoming in the virgin's white; but black, doleful black, has no admittance into the wardrobe of spring. The weeds of mourning would be a manifest indecorum, when nature holds an universal festival. She would now inspire none but delightful ideas, and therefore always makes her appearance in some amiable suit.* Here stands a warrior clad with crimson; there sits a magistrate, robed in scarlet; and yonder struts a pretty fellow, that seems to have dipped his plums in the rainbow, and glitters in all the gay colours of that resplendent arch. Some rise into a curious cup, or fall into a set of beautiful bells; some spread themselves in a swelling tuft, or crowd into a delicious cluster.—In some, the predominant stain softens by the gentlest diminutions, till it has even stole away from itself. The eye is amused at the agreeable delusion: and we wonder to find ourselves insensibly decoyed into quite a different lustre. In others, you would think, the fine tinges were emulous of pre-eminence: disdaining to mingle, they confront one another with the resolution of rivals, determined to dispute the prize of beauty; while each is improved, by the opposition, into the highest vivacity of complexion.

How manifold are thy works, O Lord! (Psal. civ. 24.) Multiplied, even to prodigy, Yet in wisdom, consummate wisdom, hast thou made them all.—How I admire the vastness of the contrivance, and the exactness of the execution! Man, feeble man, with difficulty accomplishes a single work; hardly, and after many efforts, does he arrive at a tolerable imitation of some one production of nature. But the Almighty Artist spoke millions of substances into instantaneous being, the whole collection wonderfully various, and each individual perfectly complete.—Repeated experiments generally, I might say always, discover errors or defects in our happiest inventions: nay, what wins our approbation at the present hour or in this particular place, is very probably, in some remote period, or some distant clime, treated with contempt. Whereas these fine structures have pleased every taste, in every country, for almost six thousand years. Nor has any fault* been detected in the original plan, nor any room left for the least improvement upon the first model. All our performances, the more minutely they are scanned, the more imperfect they appear. With regard to these delicate objects, the more we search into their properties, the more we are ravished with their graces; they are sure to disclose fresh strokes of the most masterly skill, in proportion to the attention with which they are examined.

Nor is the simplicity of the operation less astonishing than the accuracy of the workmanship, or the infinitude of the effects. Should you ask, "Where, and what are the materials that beautify the blooming world? What rich tints; what splendid dyes; what stores of shining crayons, stand by the heavenly limner, when he paints the robe of nature?" It is answered, his powerful pencil needs no such costly apparatus. A single principle, under his conducting hand, branches out into an immensity of the most varied and most finished forms. The moisture of the earth, and of the circumanbient air, passed through proper strainers, and disposed in a range of pellucid tubes; this performs all the wonders, and produces all the beauties of vegetation. This creeps along the fibres of the low spread moss, and climbs to the very tops of the lofty waving cedars. This, attracted by the root, and circulating through invisible canals, this bursts into gems, expands itself into leaves, and clothes the forest with all its verdant honours.—This one† plain and simple cause, gives birth to all the charms

* —— Nune formosissi muannus —*Virgil.*

* Eccl. iii. 14. I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.

† "When every several effect has a particular separate cause, this gives no pleasure to the spectator,

which deck the youth and maturity of the year. This blushes in the early hepatica, and flames in the late advancing poppy. This reddens into blood in the veins of the mulberry; and attenuates itself into leafen gold, to create a covering for the quince. This breathes in all the fragrant gales of our garden, and weeps odorous gum in the groves of Arabia—So wonderful is our Creator in counsel, and so excellent in working. (Isa. xxviii. 29.)

In a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almost every individual. Scarce any two are turned and tinctured exactly alike; each allows himself a little peculiarity in his dress, though all belong to one family; so that they are various, and yet the same.—A pretty emblem this of the smaller differences between protestant Christians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation, without prejudice to sound faith, or real holiness: just as the drapery, on these pictures of the spring, may be formed after a variety of patterns without blemishing their beauty, or altering their nature. Be it so then, that in some points of inconsiderable consequence, several of our brethren dissent; yet let us all live amicably and sociably together, for we harmonize in principles, though we vary in punctilios. Let us join in conversation, and intermingle interests; discover no estrangement of behaviour, and cherish no alienation of affection. If any strife subsist, let it be to follow our divine Master most closely, in humility of heart, and unblameableness of life; let it be to serve one another, most readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendship. Thus shall we be united, though distinguished; united in the same grand fundamentals, though distinguished by some small circumstantials; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though distinguished by some slighter peculiarities of sentiment.

Between Christians, whose judgments disagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worship, I apprehend there is no more essential difference than between flowers which bloom from the same kind of seed, but happen to be somewhat diversified in the mixture of their colours.—Whereas, if one denies the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and degrades the incarnate God to the meanness of a mere creature: if another cries up the worthiness of human works, and depreciates the alone meritorious righteousness of the glorious Mediator; if a third addresses the incommunicable honours to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the saint;—these are errors extremely derogatory to the Redeemer's dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people; against these to remonstrate, against these to urge every argument, and use every dissuasive, bespeaks not the censorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind.—Whereas to stand neuter and silent, while such principles are propagated, would be an instance of criminal remissness, rather than of Christian moderation.—For the persons, we will not fail to maintain a tender compassion; we will not cease to put up earnest intercessions: we will also acknowledge and love whatever is excellent and amiable in their character. Yet we dare not subscribe their creed; we must not secrete our strong reasons; we cannot remit our assiduous but kind endeavours, if by any means we may reconcile them to a more scriptural belief, and a purer worship.*

Another remarkable circumstance, recommending the flowery creation is their regular succession. They make not their appearance all at once, but in an orderly rotation. While a proper number of these obliging retainers are in waiting, the others abscond, but hold themselves in a posture of service, ready to take their turn, and fill each his respective station, the instant it becomes vacant.—The snow-drop, foremost of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen soil, in order to present her early compliments to her Lord; dressed in the robe of innocency she steps forth, fearless of danger; long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles are pendant on our houses.—Next, peeps out the crocus, but cautiously, and with an air of timidity. She hears the howling blasts, and skulks close to her low situation. Afraid she seems to make large excursions from her root, while so many ruffian winds are abroad and scouring along the ether.—Nor is the violent blast, in this shining embassy of the year; which, with all the embellishments that would grace a royal garden, condescends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briers. Freely and without any solicitation, she distributes the bounty of her emissive sweets; while herself, with an exemplary humility,

as not discovering contrivance. But that work is beheld with admiration and delight, as the result of deep counsel, which is complicated in its parts, and yet simple in its operations, where a great variety of effects are seen to arise from one principle operating uniformly.'—*Abernethy on the Attributes.*

* In some former editions, I expressed myself, on this point unwarily and harshly. But my meaning, and real sentiments, were no other than those represented above.—The reader, from such unguarded intimations, might too naturally be led to conclude, that the author avows, and would stir up, a spirit of persecution. But this is a method of dealing with opponents in religious doctrines, which he disclaims as absurd, and abhors as iniquitous. He is for no force, but that of rational conviction, for no constraint but that of affectionate persuasion. Thus, if you please, compel them to come in. Luke xiv. 23.

retires from sight, seeking rather to administer pleasure than to win admiration.* Emblem, expressive emblem, of those modest virtues which delight to bloom in obscurity, which extend a cheering influence to multitudes, who are scarce acquainted with the source of their comforts! Motive, engaging motive, to that ever-active beneficence, which stays not for the importunity of the distressed, but anticipates their suit, and prevents them with the blessings of its goodness!—The poor polyanthus, that lately adorned the border with her sparkling beauties, and transplanted into our windows, gave us a fresh entertainment, is now no more. I saw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay, till at length she expired, and dropt into her grave. Scarce have we sustained this loss, but in comes the auricula, and more than retrieves it; arrayed she comes in a splendid variety of amiable forms! with an eye of crystal, and garments of the most glossy satin; exhaling perfume, and powdered with silver. A very distinguished procession this! the favourite care of the florist! Scarce one among them but is dignified with a character of renown, or has the honour to represent some celebrated toast. But these also, notwithstanding their illustrious titles, have exhausted their whole stock of fragrance, and are mingled with the meanest dust. —Who could forbear grieving at their departure, did not the tulips begin to raise themselves on their fine wands, or stately stalks? They flush the parterre with one of the gayest dresses that blooming nature wears. Did ever beau or belle make so gaudy an appearance, in a birth-night suit. Here one may behold the innocent wantonness of beauty! here she indulges a thousand freaks, and sports herself in the most charming diversity of colours; yet I should wrong her, were I to call her a coquet, because she plays her lovely changes, not to enkindle dissolute affections, but to display her Creator's glory. Soon arises the anemone, encircled at the bottom with a spreading robe, and rounded at the top into a beautiful dome. In its loosely-flowing mantle, you may observe a noble negligence; in its gently bending tufts, the nicest symmetry. I would term it the fine gentleman of the garden; because it seems to have learned the singular address of uniting simplicity with refinement, of reconciling art with ease. The same month has the merit of producing the ranunculus: All bold and graceful, it expands the riches of its foliage; and acquires by degrees the loveliest enamel in the world. As persons of intrinsic worth disdain the superficial arts of recommendation practised by fops; so this lordly flower scorns to borrow any of its excellence from powders and essences. It needs no such attractives to render it the darling of the curious, being sufficiently engaging, from the elegance of its figure, the radiant variety of its tinges, and a certain superior dignity of aspect. Methinks nature improves in her operations: her latest strokes are most masterly. To crown the collection, she introduces the carnation, which captivates every eye with a noble spread of graces, and charms another sense with a profusion of exquisite odours. This single flower has centered in itself the perfections of all the preceding; the moment it appears, it so commands our attention, that we scarce regret the absence of the rest. The gilly-flower, like a real friend, attends you through all the vicissitudes and alterations of the season. While others make a transient visit only, this is rather an inhabitant than a guest in our gardens; adds fidelity to complaisance.

It is in vain to attempt a catalogue of these amiable gifts: there is an endless multiplicity in their characters, yet an invariable order in their approaches. Every month, almost every week, has its peculiar ornaments; not servilely copying the works of its predecessor, but forming, still forming, and still executing some new design. So lavish is the fancy, yet so exact is the process of nature.

Here let me stand a while, to contemplate this distribution of flowers, through the several periods of the year.—Were they all to blossom together, there would be at once a promiscuous throng, and at once a total privation; we should scarce have an opportunity of adverting to the dainty qualities of half, and must soon lose the agreeable company of them all. But now, since every species has a separate post to occupy, and a distinct interval for appearing, we can take a leisurely and minute survey of each succeeding set. We can view and review their forms; enter into a more intimate acquaintance with their charming accomplishments, and receive all those pleasing services which they are commissioned to yield.—This remarkable piece of economy is productive of another very valuable effect. It not only places in the most advantageous light every particular community, but is also a sure provisionary resource against the frailty of the whole nation; or, to speak more truly, it renders the flowery tribes a sort of immortal corps,* whose successionary attendance never fails. For,

* Prodesse quam conspici.

* In allusion to the celebrated practice of the Persian kings, "who maintained for their life-guard a body of troops called Immortal; because it perpetually subsisted; for as soon as any of the men died, another was immediately put into his place."
Rollin's Ancient Hist. vol. ii.

though some are continually dropping, yet by this expedient, others are as continually rising, to beautify our borders, and prolong the entertainment.

What goodness is this, to provide such a series of gratifications for mankind! both to diversify, and perpetuate the fine collation; to take care, that our paths should be in a manner incessantly strewed with flowers.—And what wisdom to bid every one of these insensible beings know the precise juncture of their coming forth! insomuch that no actor on a stage can be more exact in performing his part; can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

Who emboldens the daffodil to venture abroad in February, and to trust her flowery gold with inclement and treacherous skies? Who informs the various tribes of fruit-bearing blossoms, that vernal suns and a more genial warmth, are fittest for their delicate texture? Who teaches the clove to stay, till hotter beams are prepared, to infuse a spicy richness into her odours, and tincture her complexion with the deepest crimson?—Who disposes these beautiful troops into such orderly bodies, retarding some and accelerating others? Who has instructed them to file off, with such perfect regularity, as soon as the duty of their respective station is over? And when one detachment retires, who gives the signal for another immediately to advance? Who but that unerring Providence, which from the highest thrones of angels, to the very lowest degrees of existence, orders all things in "number, weight, and measure!"

These, O my soul, are the regulations of that most adorable, that most beneficent Being, who bowed the heavens, came down to dwell on earth, and united the frailty of thy mortal nature, to all the glories of his Godhead. All the honour of this admirable establishment belongs to thy Ransom, thy Surety, thy Saviour. To Him it belongs, who sustained the vengeance which thou hadst deserved, and wast doomed to suffer: who fulfilled the obedience, which thou wast obliged, but unable to perform, and who humbled himself (stupendous, ineffable, loving-kindness!) humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross.—He formed this vast machine, and adjusted its nice dependencies. The pillars, that support it, the embellishments that adorn it, and the laws that govern it, are the result of his unsearchable counsels. Oh! the heights of his majesty, and the depths of his abasement!

Which shall we admire most, his essential greatness, or his free grace? He created the exalted seraph, that sings in glory; and every the minutest insect, that flutters in air, or crawls in dust. He marks out a path for all those globes of light, which travel the circuit of the skies; and disdains not to rear the violet from its lowly bed, or to plait the daisy which dresses our plains. So grand are his operations, yet so condescending his regards!—If summer, like a sparkling bride, is brilliant and glorious in her apparel (what is this but a feeble reflection of his uncreated effulgence? If autumn, like a munificent host, opens her stores, and gives us all things richly to enjoy; what is this, but a little taste of his inexhaustible liberality? If thunders roar, you hear the sound of his trumpet; if lightnings glare, you see the launching of his glittering spear; if "the perpetual hills be scattered and the everlasting mountains bowed," you behold a display—No says the prophet, you have rather the hiding of his power.* So immense is his power, so uncontrollable, and inconceivable, that all these mighty works are but a sketch, in which more is concealed than discovered.

Thus, I think, we should always view the visible system with an evangelical telescope, (if I may be allowed the expression) and with an evangelical microscope; regarding Christ Jesus as the great projector and architect, who planned, and executed the amazing scheme. Whatever is magnificent or valuable, tremendous or amiable, should ever be ascribed to the Redeemer. This is the Christian's natural philosophy. With regard to this method of considering the things that are seen, we have an inspired apostle for our preceptor and precedent. Speaking of Christ, he says, "Thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of

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* Hab. iii. 4. Nothing can be more magnificently conceived, than the imagery of this whole chapter; and upon the foot of our interpretation, nothing was ever more delicately and nobly turned, than the sentiment of this clause. Other senses of the passage, I acknowledge, may be assigned with equal propriety: But none, I think, can be imagined so majestic and sublime. As the original will fairly admit of it; as it carries no disagreement with the context; and expresses a most important, as well as undoubted truth; I hope I may be permitted to use it at least by way of accommodation.—Especially, as it suggests one of the finest mottos imaginable, wherewith to inscribe all the visible productions of the Creator's hand.—When struck with astonishment we consider their grandeur, beauty, and consummate perfections; let us, in justice to their Author, apply the exalted reflection of this sacred ode; "In all these is the hiding rather than an adequate display of his matchless power. Though they challenge our praise, and surpass our comprehension; yet are they by no means the utmost exertions, but rather some slighter essays of omnipotent skill."—Milton, relating the overthrow of the fallen angels, introduces a grand circumstance, not much unlike the preceding. Messiah, unaided and alone, had utterly routed an innumerable host of apostate spirits. This was great and marvellous. But to create a juster idea of the illustrious conqueror, our poet beautifully adds,

Yet half his strength he put not forth!

If we forget to make the same remark, when we contemplate God in his works, we must necessarily form very scanty conceptions of that Supreme Being before whom all nations are as a "drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance."

the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands."—Did we carefully attend to this leading principle, in all our examinations of nature, it would doubtless be a most powerful means of enkindling our love and strengthening our faith.* For when I look round upon millions of noble substances, and carry with me this transporting reflection, "The Maker of them all expired on a cross for me;" how can I remain any longer indifferent? Must not the coldest heart begin to glow with gratitude?—When I survey an immensity of the finest productions imaginable; and remember that the Author of them all is "my righteousness, and my redemption;" how can I choose but repose the most cheerful confidence in such a Mediator?

Let me add one more remark upon the admirable adjustment of every particular, relating to these fine colonies planted in the parterre.—With such accuracy and correctness is their structure finished, that any the least conceivable alteration would very much impair their perfection. Should you see, for instance, the nice disposition of the tulip's attire fly abroad, disorderly and irregular, like the flaunting woodbine; should the jessamine rear her diminutive head, on those grand columns which support the hollyhock; should the erect and manly aspect of the piony hang down with a pensive air like the flexile bells of the hyacinth; should that noble plainness which distinguishes the lily, be exchanged for the glittering fringes which edge the pink, or the gaudy stains which bedrop the iris; should those tapering pillars which arise in the middle of its vase, and tipt with golden pendants, give such a lustre to the surrounding pannels of alabaster,—should those sink and disappear, like the chives which cover the heart of the anemone:—In many of these cases, would not the transposition be fantastical and awkward, in all to the apparent prejudice of every individual.

Again, with regard to the time of their appearing, this circumstance is settled by a remarkable foresight and precaution. What would become of the sailor, if, in very stormy weather, he should raise a lofty mast, and crowd it with all his canvas? Such would be the ill effect, if the most stately species of flowers should presume to come abroad in the blustering months. Ah! how would they rue the imprudent boldness! Therefore, those only that shoot the shortest stems, and display the smallest spread of leaves, or, if you please, carry the least sail, are launched amidst the blowing seasons. How injudiciously would the perfumer act, if he should unseal his finest essences, and expose them to the northern winds, or wintery rains! Our blooming artists of the aromatic profession, at least the most delicate among them, seem perfectly aware of the consequences of such a procedure. Accordingly, they postpone the opening of their odoriferous treasures till a serener air, and more unclouded skies,* grant a protection to their amiable traffic, till they are under no more apprehensions of having their spicy cells rifled by rude blasts, or drowned in incessant showers.

What a striking argument is here for resignation, unfeigned resignation, to all the disposals of Providence! Too often are our dissatisfied thoughts apt to find fault with divine dispensations. We tacitly arraign our Maker's conduct, or question his kindness with regard to ourselves; we fancy our lot not so commodiously situated, or our condition not so happily cir-

* The apostles, I observe, delight to use this method of displaying the honours of the Redeemer, and establishing the faith of his people.—The beloved disciple, teaching that most precious doctrine, "of a Lamb slain to take away the sins of the world," in order to evince the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for this blessed purpose, affirms, that all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing, no, not so much as one single being made, John i. 3.—St. Paul, preaching the same glad tidings to the Colossians, and expressly maintaining that we have Redemption through his blood; seems to foresee an objection of this kind; "To expiate transgressions against an infinite Majesty, is a most prodigious act; it must cost vastly more than any common surety can pay, to redeem a sinful world. What reason have we to believe that Jesus is equal to this mighty undertaking?" All possible reason, replies the apostle, from the dignity of his person, for he is the image of the invisible God, and from the greatness of his works, for by him all things were made. Consider the operations of his hands, and you cannot doubt the atoning efficacy of his death, Col. i. 15, 16.—The author of the epistle to the Hebrews falls exactly into the same train of arguing; declaring that Christ Jesus has purged our sins by the sacrifice of himself: he proves his ample ability for this tremendous office from his essential excellence, because he is the brightness of his Father's glory) and from his admirable works, because he made the worlds, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power, Heb. i. 2, 3.—Which truth, as it is so important in itself, of such signal comfort to Christians, and so particularly insisted on by the inspired writers, I hope I shall need no apology for an attempt to illustrate and enforce it, in a kind of evangelical descant upon Creation, annexed to these Reflections.

* Casimir, in a very poetical manner, addresses himself to the dormant rose, and most prettily invites her to venture abroad, by the mention of these two circumstances.

Siderum sacros imitata vultus,
Quid latos dudum, Rosa? Delicatum
Effere tersis caput, O tepentis Filia cœli.

Jam tibi nubes fugiunt aquosæ,
Quas fugant albis Zephyri, quadrigis;
Jam tibi mulcet Boream jocantis. Aura Favoni.

Child of the summer! charming rose!
No longer in confinement lie;
Arise to light, thy form disclose,
Rival the spangles of the sky.

The rains are gone, the storms are o'er;
Winter retires to make thee way;
Come then, thou sweetly blushing flow'r!
Come, lovely stranger, come away.

The sun is dress'd in beaming smiles,
To give thy beauties to the day;
Young zephyrs wait with gentlest gales,
To fan thy bosom as they play.

cumstanced as if we had been placed in some other station of life.—But let us behold this exquisitely nice regulation of the minutest plants, and be ashamed of our repining folly. Could any fibre in their composition be altered, or one line in their features be transposed, without clouding some of their beauties? Could any fold in their vestments be varied, or any link in their orderly succession, be broken without injuring some delicate property? And does not that all-seeing eye, which preserves so exact a harmony among these pretty toys, maintain as watchful a care over his rational creatures? Does he choose the properest season for the cowslip to arise, and drink the dews? And can he neglect the concerns, or misjudge the conveniencies of his sons and daughters? He, who has so completely disposed whatever pertains to the vegetable economy, that the least diminution or addition would certainly hurt the finished scheme, does, without all peradventure, preside, with equal attention, over the interests of his own people.

Be still then, thou uneasy mortal,* know that God is unerringly wise; and be assured, that amidst the great multiplicity of beings, he does not overlook thee. Thy Saviour has given me authority to assert, that thou art of far superior value in the estimation of omnipotence than all the herbage of the field. If his sacred will ordains sickness for thy portion, never dare to imagine, that uninterrupted health would be more advantageous. If he pleases to withhold, or take away children, never presume to conclude, that thy happiness is blasted, because thy hopes of an increasing family are disappointed. He that marshals all the starry host, and so accurately arranges every the meanest species of herbs; He orders all the peculiarities, all the changes of thy state, with a vigilance that nothing can elude, with a goodness that endureth for ever. Bow thy head, therefore, in humble acquiescence: rest satisfied that whatever is, by the appointment of Heaven,† is right, is best.

Among all the productions of the third creating day, this of flowers seems to be peculiarly designed for man. Man has the monopoly of this favour; it is conferred upon him by a sort of exclusive charter. See the imperial crown, splendid and beautifully grand! See the tube rose, delicate and languishingly fair! See all the pomp and glory of the parterre, where paint and perfume do wonders. Yet the inferior animals are neither smit with their beauties, nor regaled with their odours: The horse never stands still to gaze upon their charms; nor does the ox turn aside to browse upon their sweets. Senses they have to discern these curious objects in the gross, but no taste to distinguish or relish their fine accomplishments.—Just so, carnal and unenlightened men may understand the literal meaning of Scripture, may comprehend the evidences of its divine inspiration, yet have no relish of the heavenly truths it teaches, no ardent longing for the spiritual blessings it offers, and see "no form or comeliness" in the Saviour it describes, so as to render him the supreme desire of their souls.

The chief end of these beautiful appearances, philosophers say, is to enfold and cherish the embryo seed; or to swathe the tender body during its infant state. But, whatever is the chief end of nature, it is certain she never departs from the design of administering delight to mankind.* This is inseparably connected with her other views.—Were it only to secure a reproductive principle, what need of such elegant complications? Why so much art employed, and so many decorations added? Why should vestments be prepared richer than brocades, more delicate than lawns, and of a finer glow

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* Permittas ipsis expandere numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris.
Nam pro jucundis aptissima quæque dabunt dii;
Carior est illis homo, quam sibi.—*Juven.*

Since all the downward tracts of time
God's watchful eye surveys;
O! who so wise to choose our lot,
And regulate our ways?

Since none can doubt his equal love,
Unmeasurably kind;
To his unerring gracious will
Be ev'ry wish resign'd.

Good when he gives, supremely good,
Nor less, when he denies;
Ev'n crosses, from his sov'reign hand,
Are blessings in disguise.

† Whatever is, is right.—If Mr. Pope understands the maxim according to the limitation expressed above, he speaks a most undeniable and glorious truth. But if that great poet includes whatever comes to pass through the wild and extravagant passions of men, surely no thinking person, at least no Christian, can accede to his opinion. What God orders is wise, beyond all possibility of correction, and good, above all that we can ask or think. His decrees are the result of infinite discernment, and his dispensations the issues of unbounded benevolence. But man, fallen man, is hurried away by his lusts, into a thousand irregularities which are deplorably evil in themselves, and attended with consequences manifestly pernicious to society.—Let the sentiment, therefore, be restrained to the disposals of Heaven, and I must readily subscribe it. But if it be extended to the conduct of men, and the effects of their folly, I think myself obliged to enter my protest against it. For whatever kindles the divine indignation—is cause of final ruin to the author—is strictly forbidden by God's holy word, is contrary to the whole design of his revealed will, and the very reverse of his essential attributes. This cannot possibly be right. This is most undoubtedly wrong. Omnipotence, indeed, can overrule it, and deduce good from it; but the very notion of overruling, supposes it to be absolutely wrong in itself.

* "We find that the most important parts in the vegetable world, are those which are the most beautiful. These are the seeds by which the several races of plants are propagated and continued, and which are always lodged in flowers or blossoms. Nature seems to hide her principal design, and to be industrious in making the earth gay and delightful, while she is carrying on her great work, and intent upon her own preservation."—*Spectator*, vol. v. No. 387.

than the most admired velvets? If the great mother had no other aim than barely to accommodate her little offspring, warm flannel, or homely fustian, would have served her turn; served it full as well as the most sumptuous tissue, or all the furniture of the mercer's shop.

Evident then it is, that flowers were endued with such enchanting graces for the pleasure of man. In pursuance of this original intention, they have always paid their court to the human race; they still seem particularly solicitous of recommending themselves to our regard. The finest of each species crowd about our habitations, and are rarely to be seen at a distance from our abodes. They thrive under our cultivating hand and observing eye; but degenerate and pine away, if unregarded by their lord.—To win his attention, and deck his retreats, they hide their deformities under ground, and display nothing but the most graceful forms and engaging colours, to his sight. To merit a farther degree of his esteem, the generality of them dispense a delightful perfume. What is still more obliging, they* reserve their richest exhalations to embalm his morning and evening walks.† Because he usually chooses those cool hours to recreate himself among their blooming ranks; therefore, at these hours, they are most lavish of their fragrance, and breathe out their choicest spirits.

O man, greatly beloved by the Creator! the darling of Providence! thou art distinguished by his goodness; distinguish thyself also by thy gratitude. Be it thy one undivided aim to glorify him, who has been at so much expense to gratify thee!—While all these inferior creatures in silent eloquence, declare the glory of God, do thou lend them thy tongue. Be thou the high-priest of the mute creation; let their praises become vocal in thy songs.—Adore the supreme Benefactor, for the blessings he showers down upon every order of beings; adore him for numberless mercies, which are appropriated to thyself; but above all, adore him, for that noble gift of a rational and immortal soul.—This constitutes us masters of the globe, and gives us the real enjoyment of its riches. This discovers ten thousand beauties, which otherwise had been lost; and renders them both a source of delights, and a nursery of devotion.—By virtue of this exalted principle, we are qualified to admire our Maker's works, and capable of bearing his illustrious image; bearing his illustrious image, not only when these ornaments of the ground have resigned their honours, but when the great origin of day is extinguished in the skies, and all the flaming orbs on high are put out in obscure darkness.—Then to survive, to survive the ruins of one world, and to enjoy God—to resemble God—to be "filled with all the fulness of God," in another:—what a happiness, what an inestimable happiness is this! Yet this is thy privilege, (barter it not for trifles of an hour!) this is thy glorious prerogative, O man!

O! the goodness, the exuberant goodness, of our God! I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I pass to another consideration.—How much should we think ourselves obliged to a generous friend, who should build a stately edifice, purely for our abode*! but how greatly would the

* ——— The flow'rs,
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserv'd from night, and kept for thee in store.
Milton.

† The twining jessamine, and the blushing rose,
With lavish grace their morning-scents disclose:
The smelling tub'rose and jonquil declare
The stronger impulse of an evening air.
Prior's Sol.

* I cannot persuade myself that the comparison is stretched beyond proper bounds, when carried to this pitch. It is my steadfast opinion, that the world, at least this lower world, with its various appurtenances, was intended purely for man: that it is appropriated to him; and that he (in subordination to God's glory) is the end of its creation. Other animals, it is true, partake of the Creator's benefits, but then they partake, under the notion of man's domestics, or on the foot of retainers to; as creatures which bear some relation to his service, and some way or other contribute to his good, so that still he is the centre of the whole; or, as our incomparable Milton, equally master of poetry and divinity, expresses himself, All things live for man.—*Par. Lost*, book xi. ver. 161.

Mr. Pope, in his Ethic Epistles, is pleased to explode this tenet, as the height of pride and a gross absurdity. For my part, I see no reason for such a charge. With all submission to so superior a genius, it seems very remote from pride, to be duly sensible of favours vouchsafed, to contemplate them in all the extent of their munificence, and acknowledge them accordingly. I should rather imagine, that to contract their size, when they are immensely large; to stint their number, when they are altogether innumerable, that such a procedure savours more of insensibility, than our hypothesis of presumption, and has more in it of ingratitude than that of arrogance.

And how can it be deemed an absurdity, to maintain that God gave us a world for our possession, when it is our duty to believe that he gave us his only Son for our propitiation? Sure, it can be neither difficult nor extravagant to suppose, that he designed the habitable globe, with its whole furniture, for our present use, since he withheld not his only child Jesus, but freely delivered him up for our final salvation.

Upon the whole, I cannot but conclude, that the attempt of our famous poet, is neither kind with regard to his fellow creatures, nor grateful with regard to his Creator; neither is his scheme, in fact, true. The attempt not kind, with regard to man, because it robs him of one of the most delightful and ravishing contemplations imaginable. To consider the great Author of existence as having me in his eye when he formed universal nature, as contriving all things with an immediate view to the exigences of my particular state; and making them all in such a manner as might be most conducive to my particular advantage; this must occasion the strongest satisfaction, whenever I cast a glance on the objects that surround me. Not grateful with regard to God, because it has the most direct tendency to diminish our sense of his kindness, and, by that means, to throw a damp upon our gratitude. It teaches us to look upon ourselves as almost lost among a crowd of other beings, or regarded only with an occasional and incidental beneficence, which must certainly weaken the disposition, and indeed slacken the ties, to the most adoring thankful-

obligation be increased, if the hand that built should also furnish it! and not only furnish it with all that is commodious and comfortable, but ornament it also with whatever is splendid and delightful! This has our most indulgent Creator done in a manner infinitely surpassing all we could wish or imagine.

The earth is assigned us for a dwelling—The skies are stretched over us, like a magnificent canopy dyed in the purest azure; and beautified, now with pictures of floating silver, now with colourings of reflected crimson.—The grass is spread under us as a spacious carpet, wove with silken threads of green, and damasked with flowers of every hue.—The sun, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the etherial vault; and pours effulgence all the day, to enlighten our paths.—When night approaches, the moon takes up the friendly office; and the stars are kindled in twinkling myriads, to cheer the darkness with their milder lustre, not to disturb our repose by too intense a glare.—The clouds, besides the rich paintings they hang around the heavens, act the part of a shifting screen; and defend us, by their seasonable interposition, from the scorching beams of summer. May we not also regard them as the great watering pots of the globe, which, wafted on the wings of the wind, dispense their moisture* evenly through the universal garden; and fructify with their showers, whatever our hand plants?—The fields are our exhaustless granary.—The ocean is our vast reservoir.—The animals spend their strength to dispatch our business; resign their clothing to replenish our wardrobe; and surrender their very lives to provide for our tables.—In short, every element is a store-house of conveniences, every season brings us to choicest productions; all nature is our caterer.—And which is a most endearing recommendation of these favours, they are as lovely as they are useful. You observe nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in beauty's fairest robe,* and regulated by proportion's nicest rule. The whole scene exhibits a fund of pleasures to the imagination, at the same time that it more than supplies all our wants.†

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that rebellest against thy Maker. He surrounds thee with unnumbered benefits, and follows thee with an effusion of the richest, noblest gifts. He courts thy affections, he solicits thy gratitude, by liberalities which are never intermitted, by a bounty which knows no limits.—Most blessed Lord, let this thy goodness, thy unwearied goodness, lead us to repentance. Win us to thyself, thou fountain of felicity. by these sweet inducements. Draw us to our duty, thou God of our salvation, by these "cords of love."

What a living picture is here of the beneficial effects of industry! By industry and cultivation, this neat spot is an image of Eden. Here is all that can entertain the eye, or regale the smell.‡ Whereas without cultivation, this sweet garden had been a desolate wilderness; vile thistles had made it loathsome, and tangling briers inaccessible. Without cultivation, it might have been a nest for serpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But the spade and pruning knife, in the hand of industry, have improved it into a sort of terrestrial paradise.

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ness. To which I apprehend we may justly add, neither is the scheme, in fact, true. For, not to mention what might be urged from the sure word of revelation, this one argument appears sufficiently conclusive. The world began with man, the world must cease with man; consequently, the grand use, the principal end of the world is, to subserve the interests of man. It is, on all sides, agreed, that the edifice was erected when man was to be furnished with an habitation, and that it will be demolished, when man has no further need of its accommodations. When he enters into the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, the earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." From which it seems a very obvious and fair deduction, that man is the final cause of this inferior creation.

So that I think my readers and myself, privileged (not to say, on the principles of gratitude, obliged) to use those lovely lines of our author, with a propriety and truth, equal to their elegance and beauty:

> For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
> Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flow'r!
> Annual, for me, the grape, the rose, renew
> The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
> For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
> For me, health gushes from a thousand springs.
> *Eth. Ep.* i. ver. 139.

* This circumstance, amidst abundance of other delicate and edifying remarks upon the wonders of nature, is finely touched in the philosophical transactions recorded in the book of Job, chap. xxxviii. 15.—Who hath divided the water-course for the overflowing of waters? The Hebrew is so pregnant and rich with sense, that no translation can do it justice. The following paraphrase, perhaps, may represent the principal ideas comprehended in the expressive original: Who hath branched out, and with admirable judgment, disposed a variety of aqueducts for that immense collection of waters which float in the sky? Who distributes those pendulous floods through all the borders of the earth? distributes them not in dreadful cataracts, or promiscuous gluts of rain, but in kindly drops of refreshing showers, with as much regularity and economy, as if they were conveyed by pipes from a conduit?—To whom shall we ascribe that niceness of contrivance, which now emits, now restrains them; sometimes drives their humid train to one place, and sometimes to another; dispenses them to this soil in larger, to that in smaller communications: and, in a word, so manages the mighty fluid, that every spot is supplied in exact proportion to its wants, none destroyed by an undistinguished deluge.

* Perhaps it was from such an observation that the Greeks, those critical and refined judges of things, expressed the mundane system, by a word which signifies beauty.

† "Those several living creatures, which are made for our service, or sustenance, at the same time either fill the woods with music, furnish us with game, or raise pleasing ideas in us by the delightfulness of their appearance. Fountains, lakes, and rivers, are as refreshing to the imagination as to the soil through which they pass."—*Spectator*, vol. v. No. 387.

‡ Omnis copia narium.—*Horace*

How naturally does this lead our contemplation, to the advantages which flow from a virtuous education, and the miseries which ensue from the neglect* of it!—The mind, without early instruction, will, in all probability, become like the "vineyard of the sluggard." If left to the propensities of its own depraved will, what can we expect, but the most luxuriant growth of unruly appetites, which, in time may break forth in all manner of scandalous irregularities? What!—but that anger, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroseness; peevishness, like a stinging nettle, render the conversation irksome and forbidding; avarice, like some choaking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and the hands to oppress; revenge, like some poisonous plant, replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breasts, and meditate mischief to its neighbour; while unbridled lusts, like swarms of noisome insects, taint each rising thought, and render "every imagination of the heart only evil continually."—Such are the usual products of savage nature! such the furniture of the uncultivated soul!

Whereas, let the mind be put under the "nurture and admonition of the Lord;" let holy discipline clear the soil; let sacred instruction sow it with the best seed; let skill and vigilance dress the rising shoots, direct the young ideas how to spread, the wayward passions how to move—then, what a different state of the inner-man will quickly take place; charity will breathe her sweets, and hope expand her blossoms; the personal virtues display their graces, and the social ones their fruits:† the sentiments become generous; the carriage endearing, the life honourable and useful.‡

O! that governors of families and masters of schools would watch, with a conscientious solicitude, over the morals of their tender charge! What pity is it that the advancing generations should lose these invaluable endowments through any supineness in their instructors!—See! with what assiduity the curious florist attends his little nursery; he visits them early and late, furnishes them with the properest mould, supplies them with seasonable moisture, guards them from the ravages of insects, screens them from the injuries of the weather, marks their springing buds, observes them attentively through their whole progress, and never intermits his anxiety, till he beholds them blown into full perfection.—And shall a range of painted leaves, which flourish to-day, and to-morrow fall to the ground,—shall these be tended with more zealous application than the exalted faculties of an immortal soul!

Yet trust not in cultivation alone. It is the blessing of the almighty Husbandman which imparts success to such labours of love. If God "seal up the bottles of heaven," and command the clouds to withhold their fatness, the best manured plot becomes a barren desert. And if He restain the dew of his heavenly benediction, all human endeavours miscarry; the rational plantation languishes; our most pregnant hopes from youths of the most promising genius prove abortive. Their root will be as rottenness, and their blossoms will go up as dust. (Isa. v. 24.) Therefore, let parents plant, let tutors water, but let both look up to the Father of spirits for the desired increase.

On every side, I espy several budding flowers. As yet they are like bales of superfine cloth from the packer's warehouse. Each is wrapt within a strong inclosure, and its contents are tied together by the firmest bandages. So that all their beauties lie concealed, and all their sweets are locked up.—Just such is the niggardly wretch, whose aims are all turned inward, and meanly terminated upon himself, who makes his own private interest or personal pleasure, the sole centre of his designs, and the scanty circumference of his actions.

Ere long, the searching beams will open these silken folds, and draw them into graceful expansion. Then what a lovely blush will glow in their cheeks; and what a balmy odour exhale from their bosoms! So, when divine grace shines upon the mind, even the churl becomes bountiful; the heart of stone is taken away, and a heart of flesh, a heart susceptible of the softest, most compassionate emotions, is introduced in its stead. O! how sweetly do the social affections dilate themselves, under so benign an influence! Just like those disclosing gems, under the powerful eye of day. The tender regards are no longer confined to a single object, but extend themselves into a generous concern for mankind, and shed liberal refreshments on all within their reach.*

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* Neglectis urenda filix inascitur agris.—*Horace.*

† This transformation of the heart, and renewal of the life, are represented in scripture, by similitudes very nearly allied to the image used above—God, by his sanctifying Spirit, will make the soul as a watered garden. Under the operation of this divine principle, the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. Wherever it exerts the refining and ennobling energy, "instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir-tree; and, instead of the brier, the myrtle-tree," Jer. xxxi. 12. Isa. xxxv. 1, and lv. 13.

‡ ——— A teneris assuescere tanti est!—*Virg.*

The principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of small moment, but of the utmost consequence imaginable. They not only give a transient or superficial tincture to our first appearance in life, but most commonly stamp the form of our whole future conduct, and even of our eternal state.

* The prophet, describing the charitable temper, very beautifully says, "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry!"—This, I think may not improperly be illustrated by the circumstances observed above. The

Arise then, thou Sun of Righteousness; arise with healing under thy wings; and transfuse thy gentle, but penetrating ray through all our intellectual powers. Enlarge every narrow disposition, and fill us with a diffusive benevolence. Make room in our breasts for the whole human race, and teach us to love all our fellow-creatures for their amiable Creator's sake. May we be pleased with their excellencies, and rejoice in their happiness, but feel their miseries as our own, and with a brother's sympathy, hasten to relieve them.

Disposed at proper distances, I observe a range of strong and stately stalks. They stand like towers along the walls of a fortified city, or rise like lofty spires amidst the group of houses. They part at the top into several pensile spiky pods, from each of which we shall see a fine figure displacing itself; rounded into a form which constitutes a perfect circle; spread wide open, into the most frank and communicative air; and tinged with the colour, which is so peculiarly captivating to the miser's eye.

But the property I chiefly admire, is its passionate fondness for the sun. When the evening shades take place, the poor flower droops, and folds up its leaves. It mourns all the long night, and pines amidst the gloom, like some forlorn lover, banished from the object of his affections. No sooner does providence open "the eye-lids of the morning," but it meets and welcomes the returning light;* courts and caresses it all the day; nor ever loses sight of the refulgent charmer, so long as he continues above the horizon. In the morning, you may perceive it presenting a golden bosom to the east; at noon, it points upward to the middle sky; in the evening, follows the same attractive influence to the west.

Surely nature is a book, and every page rich with secret hints. To an attentive mind, the garden turns preacher, and its blooming tenants are so many lively sermons. What an engaging pattern, and what an excellent lesson have we here! So, let the redeemed of the Lord look unto Jesus, (Heb. xii. 2.) and be conformed to their beloved. Let us all be heliotropes (if I may use the expression) to the Sun of Righteousness. Let our passions rise and fall, take this course or that, as his word determines, as his holy example guides. Let us be so accommodated, both to his commanding and providential will, as the wax is turned to the imprinted seal; or, as the aspect of this enamoured flower, to the splendid star which creates our day.

In every enjoyment, O thou watchful Christian, look unto Jesus; receive it as proceeding from his love, and purchased by his agonies.* In every tribulation look unto Jesus; mark his gracious hand, managing the scourge, or mingling the bitter cup; attempering it to a proper degree of severity; adjusting the time of its continuance; and ready to make these seeming disasters productive of real good. In every infirmity and failing, look unto Jesus, thy merciful high priest, pleading his atoning blood, and making intercession for transgressors. In every prayer look unto Jesus, thy prevailing advocate, recommending thy devotions, and "bearing the iniquity of thy holy things." (Exod. xxviii. 38.) In every temptation, look unto Jesus, the author of thy strength, and captain of thy salvation, who alone is able to lift up the hands which hang down, to invigorate the enfeebled knees, and make thee more than conqueror over all thy enemies; but especially when the hour of thy departure approaches; when "thy flesh and thy heart fail;" when all the springs of life are irreparably breaking, then look unto Jesus with a believing eye.† Like expiring Stephen, behold him standing at the right hand of God, on purpose to succour his people in this their last extremity. Yes, my Christian friend, when thy journey through life is finished, and thou art arrived on the very verge of immortality; when thou art just launched out into the invisible world, and all before thee is vast eternity; then, O then, be sure to look steadfastly unto Jesus! "See by faith the Lord's Christ." View him as the only way (John xiv. 6.) to the everlasting mansions, as the only door (John x. 9.) to the abodes of bliss.

Yonder tree, which faces the south, has something too remarkable to pass without observation. Like the fruitful though feeble vine, she brings forth a large family of branches, but, unable to support them herself, commits them to the tuition of a sunny wall. As yet the tender twigs have scarce gemmed their future blossoms. However, I may anticipate the well known productions, and picture to myself the passion-flower, which will, in due time, with a long and copious succession, adorn the boughs.

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opening of those buds into a large and extensive spread, is a pretty portrait of the amplitude of a generous heart, which cannot shut up its compassion, or remain unconcerned at any human calamity. The freeness and copiousness with which the expanded flowers are continually pouring out their choicest essences, may represent the various acts of an unwearied liberality, together with those endearing words, and that cordial affection, which embalm, as it were, a gift, double its value; and constitute, what the sacred penman styles, drawing out the soul, Deprompseris animam tuam, Isa. lviii. 10.

* ——— Illa suum, quamvis radice tenetur,
Vertitur ad Solem. ——— *Ovid.*

* He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to his throne;
There's not a gift his hand bestows
But cost his heart a groan.— *Watts.*

† "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," Isa. xiv. 22.

I have read, in a Latin author, of flowers inscribed with the names of kings;* but here is one emblozened with the marks of the bleeding Prince of Life. I read in the inspired writings, of apostolic men, who bore about in their bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus; (2 Cor. iv. 10.) but here is a blooming religioso, that carries apparent memorials of the same tremendous and fatal catastrophe. Who would have expected to find such a tragedy of woe exhibited in a collection of the most delicate delights? or to see Calvary's horrid scene pourtrayed on the softest ornaments of the garden? Is nature then actuated by the noble ambition of paying commemorative honours to her agonizing Sovereign? Is she kindly officious to remind forgetful mortals of that miracle of mercy, which it is their duty to contemplate, and their happiness to believe? Or, is a sportive imagination my interpreter; and all the supposed resemblance, no more than the precarious gloss of fancy? Be it so; yet even fancy has her merit, when she sets forth, in such pleasing imagery, the crucified Jesus. Nor shall I refuse a willing regard to imagination herself, when she employs her creative powers to revive the sense of such unparalleled love, and prompt my gratitude to so divine a friend.

That spiral tendril, arising from the bottom of the stalk, is it a representation of the scourge which lashed the Redeemer's unspotted flesh, and inflicted those stripes by which our souls are healed! Or, is it twisted for the cord which bound his hands in painful and ignominious confinement; those beneficent hands, which were incessantly stretched out to unloose the heavy burdens, and to impart blessings of every choice kind?—Behold the nails which were drenched in his sacred veins, and rivetted his feet to the accursed tree; those beautiful feet,† which always went about doing good; and travelled far and near, to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation. See the hammer, ponderous and massy, which drove the rugged iron through shivering nerves, and forced a passage for those dreadful wedges, between the dislocated bones. View the thorns, which encircled our royal Master's brow, and shoot their keen afflictive points into his blessed head. O the smart! the racking smart! when, instead of the triumphal laurel, or the odoriferous garland, that pungent and ragged wreath was planted on the meek Messiah's forehead! when violent and barbarous blows of the strong Eastern cane,* struck the prickly crown, and fixed every thorn deep in his throbbing temples.† There stand the disciples, ranged in the green empalement; and forming a circle round the instruments of their great Commander's death. They appear like so many faithful adherents, who breathe a gallant resolution, either of defending their Lord to the last extremity, or of dropping honourably by his side. But did they give such proofs of zeal and fidelity in their conduct, as their steady posture, and determined aspect, seem to promise? Alas! what is all human firmness, when destitute of succours from above, but an expiring vapour? What is every saint, if unsupported by powerful grace, but an abandoned traitor! Observe the glory delineated in double rays, grand with imperial purple, and rich with ætherial blue. But, ah! how incapable are threads, though spun by summer's finest hand, though dyed in snows, or dipped in heaven, to display the immaculate excellency of his human, or the ineffable majesty of his divine nature! Compared with these sublime perfections, the most vivid assemblage of colours fades into an unmeaning flatness; the most charming effects of light and shade are not only mere daubings, but an absolute blank.

Among all the beauties which shine in sunny robes, and sip the silver dews, this, I think, has the noblest import, if not the finest presence. Were they all to pass in review, and expect the award of superiority from my decision, I should not hesitate a moment. Be the prize assigned to this amiable candidate, which has so eminently distinguished, and so highly dignified herself, by bearing such a remarkable resemblance to the "righteous Branch, the Plant of renown."‡ While others appoint it a place in the parterre, I would transplant the passion flower, or rather transfer its sacred significancy to my heart. There let it bloom, both in summer and in winter;

* Dic, quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
Nascantur flores?——*Virg.*

† "How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation!" Isa. lii. 7.

* They took the reed, says the sacred historian, and smote him on the head; "and so, as it were, nailed down the thorns into his forehead and temples, and occasioned thereby exquisite pain, as well as a great effusion of blood."—*Family Expositor*, vol. ii. sect. 188.—"It is most probable," adds the same judicious critic, "this was a walking-staff, which they put into his hand as a sceptre; for a blow with a slight reed would scarce have been felt, or have deserved a mention in a detail of such dreadful sufferings."

† The smart attending this unparalleled piece of contempt and barbarity, must be inexpressibly severe; not only on account of the many painful punctures made in the flesh, but principally, because of the periosteum, an exquisitely sensible tegument of the bones, lying in those parts very near the external skin, must receive a multitude of terrible wounds, the anguish of which could not fail of being inflamed to an excess of rage, by the continuance of so many thorny lancets, in that extremely tender membrane; which, in such a case,

——— Trembling alive all o'er,
Must smart and agonize at every pore.

‡ So the blessed Jesus is described. Jer. xxiii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 29.

bloom in the most impressive characters, and with an undecaying lustre. That I also may wear,—wear on my very soul, the traces of Immanuel, pierced for my sins, and bruised for my transgressions. That I also may be crucified with Christ, (Gal. ii. 20.) at least in penitential remorse, and affectionate sympathy. That I may know the fellowship of his sufferings, (Phil. iii. 10.) and feel all my evil affections wounded by his agonies, mortified by his death.

There is another subject of the verdant kingdom, which, on account of its very uncommon qualities, demands my particular notice. One so extremely diffident in her disposition, and delicate in her constitution, that she dares not venture herself abroad in the open air, but is nursed up in the warmth of a hot-bed, and lives cloistered in the cells of a green-house. But the most curious peculiarity is, that of all her kindred species, she alone partakes of perceptive life; at least, advances nearest to this more exalted state of being, and may be looked upon as the link which connects the animal and the vegetable world. A stranger observing her motions, would almost be induced to suspect that she is endued with some inferior degrees of consciousness and caution: For, if you offer to handle this sensitive plant, she immediately takes the alarm, hastily contracts her fibres, and, like a person under apprehensions of violence, withdraws from your finger in a kind of precipitate disorder. Perhaps the beauty of her aspect might be sullied, or the niceness of her texture discomposed, by the human touch. Therefore, like a coy virgin, she recedes from all unbecoming familiarities, and will admit no such improper, if not pernicious freedoms.

Whatever be the cause of this unusual effect, it suggests an instructive admonition to the Christian. Such should be our apprehensive timorous care with regard to sin, and all, even the most distant approaches of vice. So should we avoid the very appearance of evil, and stand aloof from every occasion of falling. If sinners entice, if forbidden pleasures tempt, or if opportunity beckon, with the gain of injustice in her hand, O! turn from the gilded snare; touch not the beauteous bane; but fly, fly with haste, fly without any delay, from the bewitching ruin. Does anger draw near with her lighted torch, to kindle the flame of resentment in our breasts? Does flattery ply our ears with her enchanting and intoxicating whispers? would discontent lay her leaden hand upon our temper, and mould into our minds her sour leaven, in order to make us a burden to ourselves, and unamiable to others? Instantly let us divert our attention from the dangerous objects; and not so much endeavour to antidote as to shun the moral contagion. Let us revolve in our meditations that wonderful meekness of our distressed Master, which, amidst the most abusive and provoking insults, maintained an uniform tenor of unshaken serenity. Let us contemplate that prodigious humiliation, which brought him, from an infinite height above all worlds, to make his bed in the dust of death. Let us soothe our jarring, our uneasy passions, with the remembrance of that cheerfulness and resignation, which rendered him in the deepest poverty, unfeignedly thankful, and under the heaviest tribulations, most submissively patient.

Harbour not, on any consideration, the betrayer of your virtue. Always maintain a holy sensibility of soul. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to every beguiling solicitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart, give it no entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parley with the enemy, is to open a door for destruction. Our safety consists in flight; and, in this case, suspicion is the truest prudence; fear, the greatest bravery. Play not on the brink of the precipice; flutter not around the edges of the flame. Dally not with the stings of death. But reject, with a becoming mixture of solicitude and abhorrence, the very first insinuations of iniquity as cautiously as the smarting sore shrinks even from the softest hand, as constantly as this jealous plant recoils the approaching touch.*

Not long ago, these curious productions of the spring were coarse and misshapen roots. Had we opened the earth, and beheld them in their seed, how uncouth and contemptible had their appearance been! But now they are the boast of nature, the delights of the sons of men, finished patterns for enamelling and embroidery, outshining even the happiest strokes of the pencil. They are taught to bloom, but

* The prophet Isaiah, in an elegant and lively description of the upright man, says, "He shaketh his hands from holding of bribes;" and, I may add, from practising any kind of iniquity. The image, exceedingly beautiful and equally expressive, both illustrates and enforces the doctrine of this whole section. —Shaketh his hands, just as a person would do, who happens to have burning coals fall into his lap, or some venomous creature fastening upon his flesh. In such a case, none would stand a moment to consider, or to debate with himself the expediency of the thing, he would instantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance, instantly endeavour to disengage himself from the clinging mischief. Isa. xxxiii. 15.

I have represented the danger of not extinguishing immediately the very first sparks of temptation, in a variety of views. Because a proper behaviour in this conjuncture, is of such vast importance to the purity, the safety, and the comfort of our minds. Because I had the royal moralist in my eye, who, deterring his pupils from the path of the wicked, cries with an air of deep concern, and in the language of vehement importunity, cries, Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away. How strongly is the counsel urged, by being so frequently repeated, in such a remarkable diversity of concise and abrupt, consequently of forcible and pressing admonitions Prov. iv. 15.

with a very inferior lustre,* in the richest tapestries and most magnificent silks. Art never attempts to equal their incomparable elegancies; but places all her merit in copying after these delicate originals. Even those who glitter in silver, or whose clothing is wrought of gold, are desirous to borrow additional ornaments from a sprig of jessamine, or a little assemblage of pinks.

What a fine idea may we form from hence, of the resurrection of the just, and the state of their re-animated bodies! As the roots even of our choicest flowers, when deposited in the ground, are rude and ungraceful; but when they spring up into blooming life, are most elegant and splendid; so the flesh of a saint, when committed to the dust, alas! what is it? A heap of corruption; a mass of putrefying clay. But when it obeys the great arch-angel's call, and starts into a new existence, what an astonishing change ensues! what a most ennobling improvement takes place! That which was sown in weakness is raised in all the vivacity of power. That which was sown in deformity, is raised in the bloom of celestial beauty. Exalted, refined, and glorified, it will shine "as the brightness of the firmament," when it darts the inimitable blue, through the fleeces,—the snowy fleeces, of some cleaving cloud.

Fear not, then, thou faithful Christian; fear not, at the appointed time, to descend into the tomb. Thy soul thou mayest trust with thy omnipotent Redeemer, who is Lord of the unseen world; "who has the keys of hell and of death." Most safely thou mayest trust thy better part, in those beneficent hands, which were pierced with nails, and fastened to the ignominious tree, for thy salvation. With regard to thy earthly tabernacle be not dismayed: it is taken down only to be rebuilt upon a diviner plan, and in a more heavenly form. If it retires into the shadow of death, and lies immured in the gloom of the grave, it is only to return from a short confinement to endless liberty. If it falls into dissolution, it is in order to rise more illustrious from its ruins; and wear an infinitely brighter face of perfection and of glory.†

Having now made my panegyric, let me next take up a lamentation for these loveliest productions of the vegetable world. For I foresee their approaching doom: Yet a little while, and all these pleasing scenes vanish; yet a little while, and all the sweets of the breathing, all the beauties of the blooming spring are no more. Every one of these amiable forms must be shrivelled to deformity, and trodden to the earth.—Significant resemblance this of all-created beauty. All flesh is grass; like the green herbage liable and prone to fade. Nay, all the goodliness thereof, its fine accomplishments, and what the world universally admires, is as the flower of the field, (Isa. xl. 6.) which looses its gloss, decays, and perishes more speedily than the grass itself. Behold, then, ye brightest among the daughters of Eve; behold yourselves in this glass. See the charms of your Persian eclipsed, by the lustre of these little flowers, and the frailty of your state represented by their transient glories.* A fever may scorch those polished veins; a consumption may emaciate the dimpling cheeks; and a load of unexpected sorrows depress those lively spirits. Or, should these disasters, in pity, spare the tender frame; yet age, inexorable age, and wrinkles will assuredly come at last; will wither all the fine features, and blast every sprightly grace.

Then, ye fair, when those sparkling eyes are darkened, and sink in their orbs, when they are rolling in agonies, and swimming in death,—how will you sustain the affliction? how will you repair the loss? Apply your thoughts to religion; attend to the one thing needful. Believe in, and imitate the blessed Jesus; then shall your souls mount up to the realms of happiness, when the well-proportioned clay is mingled with its mean original. The light of God's countenance will irradiate, with matchless and consummate perfection, all their exalted faculties. Cleansed entirely from every dreg of corruption, like some unsullied

* The cowslip smiles in brighter yellow drest,
Than that which veils the nubil virgin's breast!
A fairer red stands blushing in the rose,
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestment flows.
Prior.

† The wise, the just, the pious, and the brave,
Live in their deaths, and flourish from the grave,
Grain hid in earth, repays the peasant's care,
And ev'ning suns set but to rise more fair

* The reader will excuse me, if I imitate rather than translate the following lines from Theocritus; if I vary one image, add another, and give a new turn to the whole.

When snows descend, and robe the fields
In winter's bright array;
Touch'd by the sun the lustre fades,
And weeps itself away.

When spring appears; when violets blow,
And shed a rich perfume,
How soon the fragrance breathes its last,
How short-liv'd is the bloom!

Fresh in the morn the summer rose
Hangs with'ring ere 'tis noon,
We scarce enjoy the balmy gift,
But mourn the pleasure gone.

With gliding fire, an ev'ning star
Streaks the autumnal skies,
Shook from the sphere, it darts away,
And in an instant dies.

Such are the charms that flush the cheek,
And sparkle in the eye;
So, from that lovely finish'd form
The transient graces fly.

To this the seasons, as they roll,
Their attestations bring;
They warn the fair; their ev'ry round,
Confirms the truth I sing.

mirror, they will reflect the complete image of their Creator's holiness. O! that you would thus dress your minds, and prepare for the immortal state! Then from shining among your fellow-creatures on earth, you shall be translated, to shine around the throne of God. Then from the sweetness of our life, and the delight of our eyes here below, you shall pass, by an easy transition, into angels of light; and become "an everlasting excellency, the joy of all generations." Yes; ye flowery nations ye must all decay. Yonder lily that looks like the queen of the gay creation; see, how gracefully it erects its majestic head! What an air of dignity and grandeur ennobles its aspect! For elevated mien, as well as for incomparable lustre, justly may it be preferred to the magnificent monarch of the east. (Mat. vi. 29.) But all stately, and charming as it is, it will hardly survive a few more days; that unspotted whiteness must quickly be tarnished, and the snowy form defiled in the dust.

As the lily pleases with the noble simplicity of its appearance, the tulip is admired for the gaiety and multiplicity of its colours. What a profusion of dyes adorn its painted cup! Its tinges are so glowing, its contrasts so strong, and the arrangement of them both so elegant and artful!—It was lately the pride of the border, and the reigning beauty of the delightful season. As exquisitely fine as the rainbow, and almost as extremely transient; it spread for a little moment its glittering plumage, but has now laid all its variegated and superior honours down. Those radiant stripes are blended, alas! rudely blended, with common mould.

To a graceful shape and blooming complexion, the rose adds the most agreeable perfume. Our nostrils make it repeated visits, and are never weary of drinking in its sweets. A fragrance so peculiarly rich and reviving transpires from its opening tufts, that every one covets its acquaintance. How have I seen even the accomplished Clarissa, for whom so many votaries languish, fondly caressing this little flower. That lovely bosom, which is the seat of innocence and virtue; whose least excellency it is to rival the delicacy of the purest snows, among a thousand charms of its own, thinks it possible to adopt another from the damask rose-bud.—Yet even this universal favourite must fail. Its native balm cannot preserve it from putrefaction. Soon, soon must it resign all those endearing qualities, and hang neglected on its stem, or drop despised to the ground.

One could wish, methinks, these most amiable of the inanimate race, a longer existence, but in vain, they fade almost as soon as they flourish; within less than a month their glories are extinct. Let the sun take a few more journeys through the sky; then visit this enchanting walk, and you will find nothing but a wretched wilderness of ragged or naked stalks.—But (my soul exults in the thought) the garment of celestial glory which shall ere long array the re-animated body, will never wax old, the illustrious robes of a Saviour's consummate righteousness, which are appointed to deck the justified spirit, are incorruptible and immortal. No moth can corrode their texture, no number of ages sully their brightness. The light of day may be quenched, and all the stars sink in obscurity; but the honours of "just men made perfect" are subject to no diminution, inextinguishing and unfading is the lustre of their crown.

Yes, ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—Winter, like some enraged and irresistible conqueror, that carries fire and sword wherever he advances, that demolishes towns, depopulates countries, spreads slaughter and desolation on every side; so, just so, will Winter with his savage and unrelenting blasts invade this beautiful prospect. The storms are gathering, and the tempest mustering their rage to fall upon the vegetable kingdoms. They will ravage through the dominions of nature, and plunder her riches and lay waste her charms.—Then ye trees, must ye stand stript of your verdant apparel; and ye fields be spoiled of your waving treasures. Then the earth, disrobed of all her gay attire, must sit in sables, like a disconsolate widow. The sun too, who now rides in triumph round the world, and scatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look faintly from the windows of the South; and, casting a short glance on our dejected world, will leave us to the uncomfortable gloom of tedious nights.—Then these pretty choristers of the air will chant no more to the gentle gales; the lark, the linnet, and all the feathered songsters abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. The harmony of the woods is at an end; and silence, (unless it be interrupted by howling winds) sullen silence sits brooding upon the boughs which are now made vocal by a thousand warbling throats.

But (sweet recollection! ravishing expectation!) the songs of saints in light never admit a pause for sadness. All heaven will resound with the melody of their gratitude; and all eternity echo to their triumphal acclamations. The hallelujahs of that world, and the harmonious joy of its inhabitants, will be as lasting as the divine perfections they celebrate.—Come then, holy love, and tune my heart, descend, celestial fire, and touch my tongue, that I may stand ready to strike up and bear my part, in that great hosanna, that everlasting hymn.

Yes, yes, ye flowery nations, ye must all decay. And, indeed, could you add the

strength of an oak, or the stability of a pyramid,* to all the delicacy of your texture; yet short, exceeding short, even then, would your duration be. For I see that all things come to an end. The pillars of nature are tottering; the foundations of the round world are falling away; the "heavens themselves wax old like a garment." But, amidst these views of general ruin, here is our refuge; this is our consolation; we know that our Redeemer liveth. Thy years, blessed Jesus, shall not fail. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art still the same; the same most excellent and adorable person; the same omnipotent and faithful friend, the same all-sufficient and inestimable portion. O! may we but partake of thy merits, be sanctified by thy grace, and received into thy glory! Then, perish if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is splendid in the skies expire, and all that is amiable in nature be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation be turned again into one indistinguishable void, one universal blank. Yet, if God be ours, we shall have enough; if God be ours, we shall have all and abound;† all that our circumstances can want, or our wishes crave, to make us inconceivably blessed and happy: blessed and happy not only through this little interval of time, but through the unmeasurable revolutions of eternity.

The sun is now come forth in his strength, and beats fiercely upon my throbbing pulse. Let me retire to yonder inviting arbour. There the woodbine retains the lucid drop; there the jessamines, which line the verdant alcove, are still impearled, and deliciously wet with dews. Welcome, ye refreshing shades! I feel, I feel your cheering influence. My languid spirits revive; the slackened sinews are new strung; and life bounds brisker through all her crimson channels.

Reclined on this mossy couch, and surrounded by this fragrant coolness, let me renew my aspirations to the ever-present Deity. Here let me remember, and imitate, the pious Augustine, and his mother Monica; who, being engaged in discourse on the beauties of the visible creation, rose by these ladders to the glories of the invisible state, till they were inspired with the most affecting sense of their supereminent excellency, and actuated with the most ardent breathings after their full enjoyment. Insomuch that they were almost wrapt up into the bliss they contemplated; and scarce "knew whether they were in the body or out of the body."

When tempests toss the ocean, when plaintive signals of distress are heard from the bellowing deep, and melancholy tokens of shipwreck come floating on the foaming surge; then how delightful to stand safe on shore, and hug one's self in conscious security!* When a glut of waters burst from some mighty torrent, rushes headlong over all the neighbouring plains, sweeps away the helpless cattle, and drives the affrighted shepherd from his hut; then, from the top of a distant eminence, to descry the danger we need not fear: how pleasing! Such, methinks, is my present situation. For now, the sun blazes from on high; the air glows with his fire, the fields are rent with chinks; the roads are scorched to dust; the woods seem to contract a sickly aspect, and a russet hue; the traveller, broiled as he rides, hastens to his inn, and intermits his journey; the labourer, bathed in sweat, drops the scythe, and desists from his work; the cattle fly to some shady covert, or else pant and toss under the burning noon. Even the stubborn rock, smit with the piercing beams, is ready to cleave. All things languish beneath the dazzling deluge. While I shall enjoy a cool hour, and calm reflection amidst the gloom of this bowery recess which scarce admits one speck of sunshine.

Thus may both the flock and their shepherd, dwell beneath the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. (Psal. xci. 1.) Then, though the pestilence† walketh in darkness, and the sickness destroyeth at noon-day; though thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right hand, we need fear no evil; either the destroying angel shall pass over our houses, or else he shall dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy, which, instead of hurting us,

* I know not any performance, in which the transitory nature of these most durable monuments of human grandeur, is hinted with such a modest air of instruction, or their hideous ruin described in such a pomp of pleasing horror, as in a small but solemn picturesque and majestic poem, entitled, The Ruins of Rome, written by the Rev. Mr. Dyer, whom the reader (if he has the pleasure of perusing that beautiful piece) will easily perceive to have taken his draughts from the originals themselves, as nothing but the sight of those magnificent remains could have inspired his lines with such vivacity. As a specimen of the work, and a confirmation of the remark suggested above, I take leave to transcribe the following passage:—

——— The pilgrim oft,
At dead of night, 'mid his orison hears
Aghast the voice of time-disparting tow'rs,
Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd,
Rattling around, loud thundering to the moon.

† His and the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.
Night Thoughts, No. iv.

* As Lucretius gave the hint for these observations, so he assigns the reason of the pleasure specified. It arises, not from the consideration of another's misery; this would argue the rankest malevolence; but from the agreeable contemplation of our own personal safety, which while we view the circumstances that are pernicious to others, but harmless to ourselves, is not a little heightened by the contrast. —Suava mari magno, &c.

† This was written when a very infectious and mortal distemper raged in the neighbourhood.

shall work for our good.—Then, though profaneness and infidelity, far more malignant evils, breathe deadly contagion, and taints the morals of multitudes around us; yet if the great Father of spirits hide us in the hollow of his hand, we shall bold fast our integrity and be faithful unto death.

Let then, dearest Lord, O let thy servant, and the people committed to his care, be received into thy protection. Let us take sanctuary under that tree of life, erected in thy ignominious cross; let us fly for safety to that City of Refuge, opened in thy bleeding wounds. These shall be a sacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. Thy dying merits and perfect obedience, shall be to our souls as rivers of water in a dry place, or as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. (Isa. xxxii. 2.)

But most of all, in that last tremendous day, when the heavens are rent asunder and wrapt up like a scroll; when thy almighty arm shall arrest the sun in his career, and dash to pieces the structure of the universe; when the dead, both small and great, shall be gathered before the throne of thy glory; and the fates of all mankind hang on the very point of a final irreversible decision—then, blessed Jesus, let us be owned by thee, and we shall not be ashamed: defended by thee, and we shall not be afraid. O may we, at that awful and unutterable important juncture, be covered with the wings of thy redeeming love; and we shall behold all the horrible convulsions of expiring nature with composure, with comfort! We shall even welcome the dissolution of all things, as the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. (Acts iii. 19.)

There are, I perceive, who still attend the flowers; and in defiance of the sun, ply their work on every expanded blossom. The bees I mean, that nation of chemists! to whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable secret, of enriching themselves without impoverishing others; who extract the most delicious syrup from every fragrant herb, without wounding its substance, or diminishing its odours.—I take the more notice of these ingenious operators, because I would willingly make them my pattern.* While the gay butterfly flutters her painted wings, and sips a little fantastic delight only for the present moment; while the gloomy spider, worse than idly busied, is preparing his insidious nets for destruction, or sucking venom even from the most wholesome plants; this frugal community are wisely employed in providing for futurity, and collecting a copious stock of the most balmy treasures.—And oh! might these meditations sink into my soul! would the God who suggested each heavenly thought, vouchsafe to convert it into an established principle to determine all my inclinations and regulate my whole conduct! I should then gather advantages from the same blooming objects, more precious than your golden stores, ye industrious artists, I also should go home laden with the richest sweets and the noblest spoil, though I crop not a leaf nor call a single flower my own.

Here I behold assembled in one view, almost all the various beauties, which have been severally entertaining my imagination. The vistas struck through an ancient wood, or formed by rows of venerable elms, conducting the spectator's observation to some remarkable object, or leading the traveller's footsteps to this delightful seat.—The walls enriched with fruit trees, and faced with a covering of their leafy extensions, I should rather have said, hung with different pieces of nature's noblest tapestry:—The walks neatly shorn, and lined with verdure, or finely smoothed and coated with gravel:—The alleys arched with shades to embower our noon-tide repose, or thrown open for the free accession of air, to invite us to our evening recreation:—The decent edgings of box, which inclose like a plain selvage each beautiful compartment, and its splendid figures:—The shapely evergreens and flowery shrubs which strike the eye, and appear with peculiar dignity in this distant situation:—The basin with its crystal fount, floating in the centre, and diffusing an agreeable freshness through the whole:—The waters falling from a remote cascade, and gently murmuring as they flow along the pebbles:—These added to the rest, and all so disposed that each recommends and endears each, renders the whole a most sweet ravishing scene, of order and variety, of elegance and magnificence.

From so many lovely prospects clustering upon the sight, it is impossible not to be reminded of heaven, that world of bliss, those regions of light, where the Lamb that was slain, manifests his beatific presence, and his saints live for evermore. But, O! what pencil can sketch out a draught of that goodly land! what colours or what style can express the splendours of Immanuel's kingdom? Would some celestial hand draw aside the veil but for a moment, and permit us to throw a single glance on those divine abodes, how would all sublunary possessions become tarnished in our eyes, and grow flat upon our taste? A glimpse, a transient glimpse of those unutterable beatitudes, would captivate our souls, and ingross all their faculties. Eden itself, after such a vision, would

* ——Ego apis matine
More modoque
Grata carpentis thyma.—*Hor.*

appear a cheerless desert, and all earthly charms, intolerable deformity.

Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God. (Psalm lxxxvii. 2.) Volumes have been written, and those by inspired men, to display the wonders of thy perfections. All that is rich and splendid in the visible creation, has been called in to aid our conceptions and elevate our ideas. But indeed no tongue can utter, no pen can describe, no fancy can imagine, what God of his unbounded munificence, has prepared for them that love him.—Seeing then, that all terrestrial things must come to a speedy end, and there remaineth a rest, such a blissful and everlasting rest for the people of God, let me never be too fondly attached to my present satisfactions. Weaned from whatever is temporal, may I maintain a superior indifference for such transitory enjoyments, but long, long earnestly for the mansions that are above; the paradise "which the Lord hath planted and not man." Thither may I transmit the chief of my conversation, and from thence expect the whole of my happiness. Be that the sacred powerful magnet, which ever influences my heart, ever attracts my affections. There are such transcendent glories, as eye has not seen; there are such transporting pleasures, as ear has not heard; there is such a fulness of joys, as the thought of man cannot conceive.

Into that consummate felicity, those eternal fruitions, permit me, Madam, to wish you in due time, an abundant entrance; and to assure you that this wish is breathed with the same sincerity and ardour, for my honoured correspondent, as it is MADAM, for

Your most obedient, &c.

J. HERVEY.

A

DESCANT

UPON

CREATION.

If the reader please to look back on page 42, he will find me engaged by a promissory note, to subjoin a Descant upon Creation.

To know the love of Christ, to have such a deep apprehension of his unspeakable kindness as may produce in our hearts an adoring gratitude and an unfeigned faith; this, according to St. Paul's estimate, is the highest and happiest attainment in the sacred science of Christianity. (Eph. iii. 19.) What follows is an attempt to assist the attentive mind, in learning a line or two of that best and greatest lesson. It introduces the most conspicuous parts of the visible system, as so many prompters to our dull affections; each suggesting a hint adapted to the important occasion, and suited to its respective character.

Can there be a more powerful incentive to devout gratitude, than to consider the magnificent and delicate scenes of the universe, with a particular reference to Christ as the Creator?—Every object viewed in this light, will surely administer incessant recruits to the languishing lamp of divine love. Every production in nature will strike a spark into the soul, and the whole creation concur to raise the smoking flax into a flame.

Can any thing impart a stronger joy to the believer, or more effectually confirm his faith in the crucified Jesus, than to behold the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament showing his handy-work? Surely, it must be matter of inexpressible consolation to the poor sinner to observe the honours of his Redeemer, written with sunbeams over all the face of the world.

We delight to read an account of our incarnate Jehovah, as he is revealed in the book of Moses and the prophets, as he is displayed in the writings of the evangelists and apostles. Let us also endeavour to see a sketch of his perfections as they stand delineated in that stately volume, where every leaf is a spacious plain,—every line, a flowing brook,—every period, a lofty mountain.

Should any of my readers be unexercised in such speculations, I beg leave (in pursuance of my promise) to present them with a specimen; or to offer a clue, which may possibly lead their minds into this most improving and delightful train of thinking.

Should any be inclined to suspect the solidity of the following observations, or to condemn them, as the voice of rant, and the lawless flight of fancy; I must entreat such persons to recollect that the grand doctrine, the hinge on which they all turn, is warranted and established by the unanimous testimony of the inspired penmen, who frequently celebrate Immanuel, or Christ Jesus as the great almighty cause of all, assuring us, that all things were created by him and for him, and that in him all things consist.*

On such a subject, what is wonderful, is far from being extravagant. To be wonderful is the inseparable characteristic of God and his works; especially of that most distinguished and glorious event of the divine works, Redemption; so glorious, that "all the miracles in Egypt, and the marvellous acts in the field of Zoan," all that the Jewish annals have recorded, or the human ear has heard; all dwindle into trivial events, are scarce worthy to be remembered in comparison of this infinitely grand and infinitely gracious transaction. (Isa. xliii. 18.) Kindled therefore into pleasing astonishment by such a survey, let me give full scope to my meditations, let me pour out my whole soul on the boundless subject; not much regarding the limits, which cold criticism, or colder unbelief might prescribe.

O ye angels that surround the throne; ye princes of heaven, "that excel in strength," and are clothed with transcendent brightness; he, who placed you in those stations of exalted honour, and dignified your nature with such illustrious endowments; he, whom you all obey, and all adore; he took not on him the angelic form, but was made flesh, and found in fashion as a man; like us wretched mortals, he partook of weariness, of pain, and of all our infirmities, sin only excepted; that we might one day be raised to your sublime abodes, be adopted into your blissful society: and join with your transported choir in giving glory to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. (Rev. v. 13.)

O ye heavens! whose azure arches rise immensely high, and stretch immeasurably wide; stupendous amphitheatre! amidst whose vast expansive circuit, orbs of the most dreadful grandeur are perpetually running their amazing races; unfathomable depths of ether! where worlds unnumbered float, and to our limited sight, worlds unnumbered are lost;—he who adjusted your dimensions with his span, and formed the magnificent structure with his word; he was once wrapt up in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger;—that the benefits accruing to his people through his most meritorious humiliation, might have no other measure of their value than immensity, might run parallel in their duration with eternity.

Ye stars! that beam with inextinguishable brilliancy through the midnight-sky; oceans of flames and centres of worlds, through seemingly little points of light!—he who shone with essential effulgence, innumerable ages before your twinkling tapers were kindled; and will shine with everlasting majesty and beauty, when your places in the firmament shall be known no more; He was involved for many years in the deepest obscurity, lay concealed in the contemptible city Nazareth, lay disguised under the mean habit of a carpenter's son;—that he might plant the heavens, (Isa. li. 16.) as it were, with new constellations, and array these clods of earth, these houses of clay, with a radiancy far superior to yours, a radiancy which will adorn the very heaven of heavens, when you shall vanish away like smoke,* or expire as momentary sparks from the smitten steel.

Comets! that sometimes shoot into the illimitable tracts of ether, farther than the discernment of our eye is able to follow, sometimes return from the long, long excursion, and sweep our affrighted hemisphere with your enormous fiery train; that sometimes make near approaches to the sun, and burn almost in his immediate beams; sometimes retire to the remotest distance, and freeze for ages in the excessive rigours of winter;—he, who at his sovereign pleasure withdraws the blazing wonder, or leads forth the portentous stranger, to shake terror over guilty kingdoms;—he was overwhelmed with the most shocking amazement, and plunged into the deepest anxiety; was chilled with apprehensions of fear, and scorched by the flames of avenging

* Col. i. 16, 17. Before my reader enter upon the following Descant he is desired to puruse the note, P. 41.

* Alluding to a passage in Isaiah, which is I think grand and elevated beyond all comparison,—"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment; and they that dwell therein shall die like the feeble insect; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation shall not be abolished." Isa. li. 6.—With the great Vitringa, I translate the words not in like manner, but like the feeble insect, which renders the period more complete, the sense more emphatical, and is more agreeable to the genius of the sacred original.

wrath;—that I, and other depraved rebellious creatures, might not be eternally agitated with the extremes of jarring passions, opposite, yet on either side tormenting, far more tormenting to the soul than the severest degrees of your heat and cold to the human sense.

Ye planets! that, winged with unimaginable speed, traverse the regions of the sky, sometimes climbing millions and millions of miles above, sometimes descending as far below the great axle of your motions; ye, that are so minutely faithful to the vicissitudes of day and night, so exactly punctual in bringing on the changes of your respective seasons;—he, who launched you at first from his mighty arm; who continually impels you with such wonderful rapidity, and guides you with such perfect regularity; who fixes "the habitation of his holiness and his glory," infinite heights above your scanty rounds; he once became a helpless infant, sojourned in our inferior world, fled from the persecutor's sword, and wandered as a vagabond in a foreign land; that he might lead our feet into the way of peace: that he might bring us aliens near to God; bring us exiles home to heaven.

Thou sun! inexhaustible source of light, and heat, and comfort; without whose presence an universal gloom would ensue, and horror insupportable; who, without the assistance of any other fire, sheddest day through a thousand realms; and not confining thy munificence to realms only, extendest thy enlightening influences to surrounding worlds; prime cheerer of the animal, and great enlivener of the vegetable tribes; so beautiful in thyself, so beneficial in thy effects, that erring heathens addressed thee with adorations, and mistook thee for thy Maker;—he, who filled thy orb with a profusion of lustre, lustre in its direct emanations, insufferably bright, but rebated by reflection, delightfully mild; he before whom thy meridian splendours are but a shade; whose love transfused into the heart, is infinitely more exhilarating, than even thy sweet and clear shining after the rain;—he divested himself of his all-transcending distinctions, and drew a veil over the effulgence of his divinity; that by speaking to us face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend, he might dispel our intellectual darkness; "his visage was marred," (Isa. liii. 14.) and he became the scorn of men, the outcast of the people, that by this manifestation of his unutterably tender regard for our welfare, he might diffuse many a gleam of joy through our dejected minds; that in another state of things, he might clothe even our fallen nature with the honours of that magnificent luminary; and give all the righteous to shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.

Thou moon! that walkest among the host of stars, and in thy lucid appearance, art superior to them all: fair ruler of the night! sometimes half restoring the day with thy waxing brightness; sometimes waning into dimness, and scarcely scattering the nocturnal gloom; sometimes covered with sackcloth, and alarming the gazing nations;—he, who dresses thy opaque globe in beaming, but borrowed silver; he whose dignity is unchangeable, underived, and all his own, he vouchsafed to wear a body of clay; he was content to appear as in a bloody eclipse, shorn of his resplendent beams, and surrounded with a night of horror, which knew not one reviving ray.—Thus has he empowered his church, and all believers, to tread the moon under their feet; (Rev. xii. 1.) hence inspired with the hope of brighter glory, and of more enduring bliss, are they enabled to triumph over all the vain anxieties and vainer amusements, of this sublunary, precarious, mutable world.

Ye thunders! that, awfully grumbling in the distant clouds, seem to meditate indignation, and form the first essays of a far more frightful peal; or, suddenly bursting over our heads, rend the vault above, and shake the ground below, with the hideous horrid crash; ye that send your tremendous vollies from pole to pole, startling the savage herds, (Psalm xxix. 8.) and astonishing the human race;—he, who permits terror to sound her trumpet, in your deep, prolonged, enlarging, aggravated roar; he uttered a feeble infantile cry in the stable, and strong expiring groans on the accursed tree,—that he might, in the gentlest accent, whisper peace to our souls, and at length tune our voices to the melody of heaven.

O ye lightnings! that brood and lie couchant in the sulphurous vapours, that glance with forked fury from the angry gloom, swifter and fiercer than the lion rushes from his den, or open into vast expansive sheets of flame, sublimely waved over the prostrate world, and fearfully lingering in the frighted skies; ye that formerly laid in ashes the licentious abodes of lust and violence, that will ere long set on fire the elements, and co-operate in the conflagration of the globe; he who kindles your flash, and directs you when to sally, and where to strike; he who commissions your whirling bolts, whom to kill and whom to spare; he resigned his sacred person to the most barbarous indignities; submitted his beneficent hands to the ponderous hammer, and the piercing nail; yea, withheld not his heart, his very heart, from the stab of the executioner's spear; and instead of flashing confusion on his outrageous tormentors; instead of striking them dead to the earth, or plunging them into the depths of hell with his frown; he cried—in

his last moments, and with his agonizing lips, he cried—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!" O! what a pattern of patience for his saints! What an object of admiration for angels! What a constellation of every mild, amiable, and benign virtue, shining in this hour of darkness, with ineffable splendour and beauty!* Hence, hence it is, that we are not trembling under the lightnings of mount Sinai; that we are not blasted by the flames of divine vengeance, or doomed to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Ye frowning wintry clouds! oceans pendant in the air, and burdening the winds; he in whose hand you are an overflowing scourge; or, by whose appointment, an arsenal† of warlike stores; he who opens your sluices, and a flood gushes forth to destroy the fruits of the earth, and drown the husbandman's hopes; who mould you into frozen balls, and you are shot, linked with death,‡ on the troops of his enemies; He, instead of discharging the furiousness of his wrath upon his guilty head, poured out his prayers, poured out his sighs, poured out his very soul, for me and my fellow transgressors, that by virtue of his inestimable propitiation, the overflowings of divine good will might be extended to sinful men: that the skies might pour down righteousness, and peace on her downy wings, peace with her balmy blessings, descend to dwell on earth.

Ye vernal clouds! furls of finer air, folds of softer moisture, he who draws you in copious exhalations from the briny deep, orders you to leave every distasteful quality behind, and become floating fountains of sweetest waters; he who dissolves you into gentle rain, and dismisses you in fruitful showers, who kindly commissions you to drop down fatness as you fall, and to scatter flowers over the field: He, in the unutterable bitterness of his spirit, was without any comforting sense of his almighty Father's presence; he, when his bones were burnt up like a fire-brand, had not one drop of that sacred consolation, which on many of his afflicted servants, has been distilled as the evening dews, and has "given songs in the night" of distress:—that, from this unallayed and inconsolable anguish of our all-gracious master, we, as from a well of salvation, might derive large draughts of spiritual refreshment.

Thou grand etherial bow! whose beauties flush the firmament, and charm every spectator; he, who paints thee on the fluid skirts of the sky, who decks thee with all the pride of colours, and bends thee into that graceful and majestic figure, at whose command thy vivid streaks sweetly rise, or swiftly fade:—He, through all his life, was arrayed in the humble garb of poverty; and, at his exit, wore the gorgeous garment of contempt, insomuch, that even his own familiar friends, ashamed or afraid to own him, "hid, as it were, their faces from him"* to teach us a becoming disdain for the unsubstantial and transitory glitter of all worldly vanities; to introduce us, in robes brighter than the tinges of thy resplendent arch, even in the robes of his own immaculate righteousness, to introduce us before that august and venerable throne, which the peaceful rainbow surrounds, surrounds as a pledge of inviolable fidelity and infinite mercy.

Ye storms and tempests! which vex the continent, and toss the seas, which dash

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* One can hardly forbear animadverting upon the disingenuous temper, and perverse taste of Celsus, who attempts to turn this most distinguishing and ornamental part of our Lord's life, into ridicule and reproach.—Having spoken of Christ as despitefully used, and arrayed in a purple robe, crowned with thorns, and holding, by way of mock majesty, a reed instead of a sceptre (for he enters into all these circumstances, which is a testimony to the truth even from the mouth of an enemy;) he adds, "Why in the name of wonder, does he not, on this occasion at least, act the God? Why does he not deliver himself from this shocking ignominy, or execute some signal vengeance on the authors of such injurious and abusive insults, both of himself and his Father?"—Why, Celsus, because he was meekness and gentleness itself; whereas your deities were slaves to their own turbulent and resentful passions; because they were little better than savages in human shape, who too often made a merit of slaughter, and took a horrid pride in spilling blood: while Christ was the Prince of Peace, and came not to destroy men's lives, but to save: because any madman on earth, or fury from hell, is capable of venting his rage; but who amidst such unsufferable provocations and barbarities; who, having in his own hand the power to rescue himself, the power to avenge himself, could submit to all with an unruffled serenity of patience, and not only not be exasperated, but overcome in so triumphant a manner, evil with good? None but Christ! None but Christ! This was compassion worthy of a God, clemency and charity truly divine!

Therefore the calumny raised by the same virulent objector, in another place, carries its own confutation, or rather falls with a weight of infamy on his dunghill deities, while it bears a most honourable testimony to the majestic and invincible meekness of our Saviour. Says he to the Christian, *ibid.* p. 404. "You indeed take upon you to deride the images of our deities, but if Bacchus himself, or Hercules, had been present, you would not have dared to offer such an affront; or if you had been so presumptuous, would have severely smarted for your insolence; whereas, they who tormented the very person of your God, and even extended him with mortal agony on the cross, suffered no effects of his displeasure."

† Juvenal seems to consider the clouds under the same character, in that beautiful line:

Quicquid hybent telorum armamentaria cœli.—*Sat.* 13.

‡ Job has informed us for what purpose the magazines of the firmament are stocked with hail.—That they may be ready against the day of battle and war, Job xxxviii. 23. Joshua has recorded what terrible slaughter has been made by these missile weapons of the Almighty, Josh. x. 11.—But the most dreadful description of this great ordnance of the heavens, is given us in Rev. xvi. 21. There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.

* Isa. liii. 3. "Fuit tanquam aliquis, a quo quisque faciem occultaret." He was as some flagitious and abandoned wretch, from whom every one, disdaining such a character, and disclaiming such an acquaintance, studiously hid his face.

navies on the rocks, and drive forests from their roots; he whose breath rouses you into such resistless fury, and whose nod controls you in your wildest career; he, who holds the rapid and raging hurricane in straitened reins, and walks, dreadfully serene, on the very wings of the wind: He went, all meek and gentle, like a lamb to the slaughter for us; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.—Thus are we instructed to bear, with decent magnanimity, the various assaults of adversity, and to pass with a becoming tranquillity of temper, through all the rude blasts of injurious treatment. Thus are we delivered from the unutterable fiercer storms of incensed and inexorable justice; from the "fire, the brimstone, and the horrible tempest, which will be the final portion of the ungodly."

Thou pestilence! that scatterest ten thousand poisons from thy baleful wings; tainting the air, and infecting the nations; under whose malignant influence, joy is blasted, and nature sickens; mighty regions are depopulated, and once crowded cities are left without inhabitants.—He, who arms thee with inevitable destruction, and bids thee march before his angry countenance,* to spread desolation among the tents of the wicked, and be the forerunner of far more fearful indignation: He, in his holy humanity, was arraigned as a criminal; and though innocence itself, yea, the very pattern of perfection, was condemned to die, like the most execrable miscreant; as a nuisance to society, and the very bane of the public happiness, he was hurried away to execution, and hammered to the gibbet; —that, by his blood, he might prepare a sovereign medicine to cure us of a more fatal distemper, than the pestilence which walketh in darkness, or the sickness which destroyeth at noon-day; that he might himself say to our last enemy, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hos. xiii. 14.)

Heat! whose burning influence parches the Lybian wilds; tans into soot the Ethiopian's complexion, and makes every species of life pant, and droop, and languish; cold, whose icy breath glazes yearly the Russian seas, often glues the frozen sailor to the cordage, and stiffens the traveller into a statue of rigid flesh: He who sometimes blends you both, and produces the most agreeable temperature, sometimes suffers you to act separately, and rage with intolerable severity; that King of heaven, and controller of universal nature, when dwelling in a tabernacle of clay, was exposed to chilling damps, and smitten by sultry beams; the stars, in their midnight watches, heard him pray; and the sun in his meridian fervours saw him toil. Hence are our frozen hearts dissolved into a mingled flow of wonder, love, and joy; being conscious of a deliverance from those insufferable flames, which, kindled by divine indignation, burn to the lowest hell.

Thou ocean, vast world of waters! He, who sunk that capacious bed for thy reception, and poured the liquid element into unfathomable channels; before whom, all thy foaming billows, and floating mountains, are as the small drop of a bucket; who, by the least intimation of his will swells thy fluid kingdoms in wild confusion, to mingle with the clouds; or reduces them in calm composure to slumber on the shore; he, who once gave thee a warrant to overwhelm the whole earth, and bury all its degenerate inhabitants in a watery grave; but has now laid an everlasting embargo on thy boisterous waves, and bound thee, all fierce and madding as thou art, in chains stronger than adamant, yet formed of despicable sand: and all the waves of vengeance and wrath, of tribulation and anguish, passed over HIS crucified body, and HIS agonizing soul; that we might emerge from those depths of misery, from that abyss of guilt, into which we were plunged by Adam's fall, and more irretrievably sunk by our own transgressions; that at the last, we might be restored to that happy world, which is represented, in the vision of God, as having "no sea," (Rev. xxi. 1.) to denote its perpetual stability, and undisturbed serenity.

Ye mountains! that overlook the clouds, and project a shade into distant provinces; everlasting pyramids of nature, not to be shaken by conflicting elements; not to be shattered by the bolts of thunder, nor impaired even by the ravages of time; he, who bid your ridges rise high, and your foundation stand so fast; he, in whose scale you are lighter than dust; in whose eyes you are less than nothing;—He sunk beneath a load of woes—woes unsupportable, but not his own; when he took our iniquities upon himself, and heaved the more than mountainous burden from a guilty world.

Ye verdant woods! that crown our hills, and are crowned yourselves with leafy honours; ye humble shrubs, adorned in spring with opening blossoms; and fanned in summer by gentle gales; ye that in distant climes, or in cultivated gardens, breathe out spicy odours, and embalm the air with delightful perfumes. He—your all-glorious and ever-blessed Creator's head, was encircled with the thorny wreath, his face was defiled with contumelious spitting, and his body bathed in a bloody sweat, that we might wear the crown—the crown of glory which fadeth not away, and live for ever-

* Before him went the pestilence, Hab. iii. 5.

more surrounded with delights as much surpassing yours, as yours exceed the rugged desolations of winter.

Thou mantling vine! He, who hangs on thy slender shoots, the rich, transparent, weighty cluster; who, under thy unornamented foliage, and amidst the pores of thy otherwise worthless boughs, prepares the liquor,—the refined and exalted liquor, which cheers the nations, and fills the cup of joy; trees, whose branches are elevated and waving in air; or diffused, in easy confinement, along a sunny wall: He, who bends you with a lovely burden of delicious fruits, whose genial warmth beautifies their rind, and mellows their taste;—He, when voluntarily subject to our wants, instead of being refreshed with your generous juices, or regaled with your luscious pulp, had a loathsome potion of vinegar, mingled with gall, addressed to his lips:—that we might sit under the shadow of his merits with great tranquillity and the utmost complacency; that, ere long, being admitted into the paradise of God, we might eat of the tree of life, (Rev. ii. 7.) and drink new wine with him in his Father's kingdom.

Ye luxuriant meadows! He, who without the seedman's industry, replenishes your irriguous lap with never-failing crops of herbage, and enamels their cheerful green with flowers of every hue; ye fertile fields!—He, who blesses the labours of the husbandman, enriches your well-tilled plains with waving harvests, and calls forth the staff of life from your furrows; he, who causes both meadows and fields to laugh and sing, for the abundance of plenty;—He was no stranger to corroding hunger, and parching thirst; he alas! ate the bitter bread of woe, and had "plenteousness of tears to drink;"—that we might partake of richer dainties than those which are produced by the dew of heaven, and proceed from the fatness of the earth; that we might feed on "the hidden manna," and eat the bread which giveth life—eternal life—unto the world.

Ye mines! rich in golden ore, or bright with veins of silver; that distribute your shining treasures as far as winds can waft the vessel of commerce, which bestow your alms on monarchs, and have princes for your pensioners:—Ye beds of gems, toy-shops of nature! which form, in dark retirement, the glittering stone; diamonds, that sparkle with a brilliant water; rubies, that glow with a crimson flame; emeralds, dipped in the freshest verdure of spring; sapphires, decked with the fairest drapery of the sky; topaz, emblazed with dazzling yellow; amethyst, empurpled with the blushes of the morning:—He, who tinctures the metallic dust, and consolidates the lucid drop; he, when sojourning on earth, had no riches but the riches of disinterested benevolence, had no ornament, but the ornament of unspotted purity. Poor he was in his circumstances, and mean in all his accommodations, that we might be rich in grace, and "obtain salvation with eternal glory;" that we might inhabit the new Jerusalem, that splendid city, whose streets are paved with gold, whose gates are formed of pearl, and the walls garnished with all manner of precious stones. (Rev. xxi. 19, 21.)

Ye gushing fountains! that trickle potable silver through the matted grass; ye fine transparent streams! that glide in crystal waves, along your fringed banks; ye deep and stately rivers! that wind and wander in your course, to spread your favours wider, that gladden kingdoms in your progress, and augment the sea with your tribute:—He who supplies all your currents from his own overflowing and inexhaustible liberality; he, when his nerves were racked with exquisite pain, and his blood inflamed by a raging fever, cried, I THIRST, and was denied (unparalleled hardship!) in this his great extremity, was denied the poor refreshment of a single drop of water;—that we, having all-sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good work; might be filled with the fulness of spiritual blessings here, and hereafter be satisfied with that fulness of joy which is at God's right hand for evermore.

Ye birds! cheerful tenants of the boughs, gaily dressed in glossy plumage, who wake the morn, and solace the groves, with your artless lays: inimitable architects, who, without rule or line, build your pensile structure with all the nicety of proportion; you have each his commodious nest, roofed with shades, and lined with warmth, to protect and cherish the callow-brood:—but he, who tuned your throats to harmony, and taught you that curious skill; he was a man of sorrows and had not where to lay his head,—had not where to lay his head, till he felt the pangs of dissolution, and was laid in the silent grave;—that we, dwelling under the wings of Omnipotence, and resting in the bosom of infinite love, might spend an harmonious eternity in "singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

Bees! industrious workmen, that sweep with busy wing, the flowery garden, and search the blooming heath, and sip the mellifluous dews,—strangers to idleness!—that ply, with incessant assiduity, your pleasing task, and suffer no opening blossom to pass unexplored, no sunny gleam to slip away unimproved: most ingenious artificers; that cling to the fragrant buds, drain them of their treasured sweet, and extract, (if I may so speak,) even the odoriferous souls of herbs, and plants, and flowers;—you, when you have completed your work, have collected, refined, and securely lodged the

ambrosial stores; when you might reasonably expect the peaceful fruition of your acquisitions, you, alas! are barbarously destroyed, and leave your hoarded delicacies to others, leave them to be enjoyed by your very murderers. I cannot but pity your hard destiny!—How then should my bowels melt with sympathy, and my eyes flow with tears,* when I remember, that thus, thus it fared with your and our incarnate Maker! After a life of the most exemplary and exalted piety, a life filled with offices of beneficence, and labours of love: He was, by wicked hands, crucified and slain: he left the honey of his toil, the balm of his blood, and the riches of his obedience, to be shared among others; to be shared even among those who too often crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

Shall I mention the animal,† which spins her soft, her shining, her exquisitely fine silken thread! whose matchless manufactures lend an ornament to grandeur, and make royalty itself more magnificent. Shall I take notice of the cell, in which, when the gaiety and business of life are over, the little recluse immures herself, and spends the remainder of her days in retirement? Shall I rather observe the sepulchre, which, when cloyed with pleasure, and weary of the world, she prepares for her own interment; or how, when a stated period is elapsed, she wakes from a death-like inactivity; breaks the inclosure of her tomb; throws off the dusky shroud; assumes a new form; puts on a more sumptuous array; and from an insect creeping on the ground, becomes a winged inhabitant of the air?—No, this is a poor reptile, and therefore unworthy to serve as an illustration, when any character of the Son of God comes under consideration. But let me correct myself. Was not Christ (to use the language of his own blessed Spirit) a worm, and no man? (Psalm xxii. 6.) In appearance such, and treated as such.—Did not he also bequeath the fine linen of his own most perfect righteousness, to compose the marriage-garment* for our disarrayed and defiled souls? Did he not, before his flesh saw corruption, emerge triumphant from the grave; and not only mount the lower firmament, but ascend the heaven of heavens; taking possession of those sublime abodes in our name, and as our forerunner.

Ye cattle! that rest in your inclosed pastures; ye beasts! that range the unlimited forests; ye fish! that rove through trackless paths of the sea; sheep! clad in garments, which when left by you, are wore by kings; kine! who feed on verdure, which, transmuted in your bodies, and strained from your udders, furnishes a repast for queens; lions! roaring after your prey; leviathan! taking your pastime in the great deep: with all that wing

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* Canst thou, ungrateful man, his torments see,
Nor drop a tear for him who poured his blood for thee? *Pitt's Poems.*

† No one, I hope, will be offended at my introducing, on such an occasion, creatures of so low a rank, since even the volumes of inspiration seem to lend me the sanction of their sacred authority. As they disdain not to compare the blessed Jesus to a door, a highway, &c. And perhaps, all comparisons which respect a being of infinite dignity, are not only mean, but equally mean and unworthy.

I am sensible, likewise, that in this paragraph, and some others, all the circumstances are not completely correspondent. But if, in some grand particulars the redition answers to the description, this I trust will be sufficient for my purpose, and satisfactory to my readers.—Perhaps it would be no mistaken caution, to apply the same observation to many of the beautiful similitudes, parables, and allegories used by our Lord: such as the brazen serpent, the unjust steward, the thief in the night, &c. which, if scrupulously sifted, or rigorously strained, for an entire coincidence in every circumstance, must appear to great disadvantage, and lead into palpable inconveniencies.

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* This, and several other hints, interspersed throughout this work, refer to the active and passive righteousness of Christ, imputed to believers for their justification. Which in the opinion of many great expositors, is the mystical and the most sublime meaning of the wedding-garment, so emphatically and forcibly recommended by the teacher sent from God, (Matth. xxii. 11.) A doctrine, which some of those who honour my Meditations with a perusal, probably may not receive with much, if any approbation. I hope the whole performance may not be cashiered for one difference of sentiment; and I beg that the sentiment itself may not hastily be rejected without a serious hearing. For I have the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with a gentleman of good learning and distinguished sense, who had once as strong prepossessions against this tenet, as can well be imagined. Yet now he not only admits it as a truth, but embraces it, as the joy of his heart, and cleaves to it as the rock of his hopes.

A clear and cogent, Treatise, entitled, Submission to the righteousness of God, was the instrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment,—in which he has been happily confirmed by the authority of the most illustrious names, and the works of the most eminent pens, that ever adorned our church and nation,—in this number, are Bishop Jewel, one of our great reformers; and the other venerable compilers of our homilies; Archbishop Usher, that oracle of universal learning; Bishop Hall, the devout and sprightly orator of his age; the copious and fervent Bishop Hopkins; the singularly good and unaffected Bishop Beveridge; that everlasting honour of the bench of judicature, Lord Chief Justice Hales; the nervous, florid, and persuasive Dean Stanhope; the practical and perspicuous Mr. Burkitt; and to summon no other evidence, that matchless genius Milton, who in various parts of his divine poem, inculcates this comfortable truth; and in one passage, represents it under the very same image, which is made use of above, Book X. l. 222.

I had almost forgot to mention that the Treatise, entitled Submission, &c. was written by Mr. Benjamin Jenks; whose book of devotions has deservedly passed through eleven editions, is truly admirable for the sublimity, spirituality, and propriety of the sentiments, as well as for the concise form, and pathetic turn of the expression.—Whose book of meditations, though no less worthy of general acceptance, has, for a considerable time, been almost unknown and extinct. But it is now revived, and is lately republished in two octavo volumes, by Mr. James Rivington. For which service he has my thanks, and I flatter myself he will have the thanks of the public; as I am persuaded, could religion and virtue speak, he would have their acknowledgments also. Since few Treatises are more happily calculated to represent religion in its native beauty, and to promote the interests of genuine virtue.—On which account, I trust, the candid will excuse me, and the judicious will not condemn me, even though the recommendation of those devotions and of these meditations may appear to be a digression from my subject.

the firmament, or tread the soil, or swim the wave :—He, who spreads his ever-hospitable board; who admits you all to be his continual guests; and suffers you to want no manner of thing that is good;—He was destitute, afflicted, tormented; He endured all that was miserable and reproachful, in order to exalt a degenerate race, who had debased themselves to a level with the beasts that perish, unto seats of distinguished and immortal honour, in order to introduce the slaves of sin, and heirs of hell, into mansions of consummate and everlasting bliss.

Surely, the contemplation of such a subject, and the distant anticipation of such a hope, may almost turn earth into heaven, and make even inanimate nature vocal with praise. Let it then break forth from every creature. Let the meanest feel the inspiring impulse; let the greatest acknowledge themselves unable, worthily to express the stupendous goodness.

Praise him, ye insects that crawl on the ground! who though high above all height, humbled himself to dwell in dust. Birds of the air, waft on your wings and warble in your notes, his praise, who though Lord of the celestial abodes, while sojourning on earth, wanted a shelter, commodious as your nests.—Ye rougher world of brutes, join with the gentle songsters of the shade, and howl to him your hoarse applause; who breaks the jaw-bones of the infernal lion; who softens into mildness the savage disposition; and bids the wolf lie down, in amicable agreement with the lamb. Bleat out, ye hills; let broader lows be responsive from the vales: ye forests catch, and ye rocks retain the inarticulate hymn; because Messiah the prince feeds his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs with his arm; he carries them in his bosom; and gently leads those that are with young. (Isa. xl. 11.) Wave, ye stately cedars, in sign of worship, wave your branching heads to him, who meekly bowed his own, on the accursed tree.—Pleasing prospects, scenes of beauty, where nicest art conspires with lavish nature, to form a paradise below, lay forth all your charms, and in all your charms confess yourselves a mere blank compared with his amiableness, who is the "fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely."—Drop down, ye showers, and testify as you fall; testify of his grace, which descends more copiously than the rain, distils more sweetly than the dew.—Let sighing gales breathe, and murmuring rivulets flow; breathe and flow in harmonious consonance to him, whose spirit is far more reviving than the cooling breeze, who is himself the fountain of living waters.

Ye lightnings! blaze to his honour, ye thunders sound his praise, while reverberating clouds return the roar, and bellowing oceans propagate the tremendous anthem.—Mutest of creatures, add your silent oratory, and display the triumphs of his meekness; who though he maketh the clouds his chariot, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; though the thunder is his voice, and the lightning his sword of justice; yet amidst the most abusive and cruel injuries, was submissive and lifted not his hand, was "dumb and opened not his mouth."—Great source of day, address thy radiant homage to a far sublimer sun; write in all thy ample round, with every lucid beam, O write a testimony to him, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, who is the Sun of righteousness to a sinful world, and is risen never to go down; is risen to be our everlasting light.—Shine clear, ye skies; look gay, thou earth; let the floods clap their hands, and let every creature wear a smile; for he cometh, the Creator himself cometh to be manifested in the flesh; and with him comes pardon, peace, and joy; every virtue and all felicity comes in his train.—Angels and archangels, let your songs be of Jesus, and teach the very heavens to echo with his adored and majestic name. Ye beheld him, with greater transports of admiration, when you attended his agony in the garden, and saw him prostrate on the ground, than when you beheld universal nature rising at his call, and saw the wonders of his creating might. Tune to loftiest notes your golden harps, and waken raptures unknown before even in heavenly breasts, while all that has breath, swells the concert of harmony; and all that has being unites in the tribute of praise.

Chiefly let man exalt his voice; let man, with distinguished hosannas, hail the Redeemer. For man he was stretched on the racking cross; for man, he was consigned to the gloomy sepulchre; for man, he procured grace unmeasurable, and bliss inconceivable.—However different, therefore, in your age, or more different in your circumstances, be unanimous, O men! in magnifying a Saviour, who is no respecter of persons, who gave himself a ransom for all.—Bend, ye kings, from your thrones of ivory and gold, in your robes of imperial purple, fall prostrate at his feet; who forsook a nobler throne, and laid aside more illustrious ensigns of majesty, that you might reign with God for ever and ever.—Children of poverty, meanest of mortals, (if any can be called poor who are thus enriched; if any can be accounted mean who are thus ennobled,) rejoice, greatly rejoice in God your Saviour; who chose to be indigent, was willing to be contemned; that you might be entitled to the treasures, and be numbered with the princes of heaven. Sons of affliction, though harassed with pain, and inured to anguish, O! change your groans into songs of grati-

tude: let no complaining voice, no jarring string be heard, in the universal symphony, but glorify the Lamb even in the fires; (Isa. xxiv. 15.) who himself bore greater torment than you feel; and has promised you a share in the joy which he inherits; who has made your sufferings short, and will make your rest eternal.—Men of hoary locks, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave; let Christ be your support under all infirmities; lean upon Christ, as the rock of your salvation; let his name, his precious name, form the last accents which quiver on your pale expiring lips;—and let this be the first that lisps on your tongues, ye tender infants, remember your Redeemer in your earliest moments; devote the choice of your hours to the learning of his will, and the chief of your strength to the glorifying of his name; who in the perfection of health, and the very prime of manhood, was content to become a motionless and ghastly corpse, that you might be girt with the vigour, and clothed with the bloom of eternal youth.

Ye spirits of just men made perfect! who are released from the burden of the flesh; and freed from all the vexatious solicitations of corruption in yourselves; delivered from all the injurious effects of iniquity in others; who sojourn no longer in the tents of strife, or the territories of disorder; but are received into that pure, harmonious, holy society, where every one acts up to his amiable and exalted character; where God himself is pleased graciously and immediately to preside.—You find, not without pleasing astonishment, your hopes improved into actual enjoyment, and your faith superseded by the beatific vision; you feel all your former shyness of behaviour, happily lost in the overflowings of unbounded love; and all your little differences of opinion entirely bore down by tides of invariable truth. Bless, therefore, with all your enlarged powers, bless his infinitely larger goodness; who, when he had overcome the sharpness of death, opened the gates of paradise, opened the kingdom of heaven to all generations, and to every denomination of the faithful.

Ye men of holy conversation and humble tempers, think of him who loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood; think of him on your silent couch; talk of him in every social interview; glory in his excellencies, make your boast of his obedience, and add, still continue to add, the incense of a dutiful life, to all the oblations of a grateful tongue.—Weakest of believers, who go mourning under a sense of guilt, and conflicting with the ceaseless assaults of temptation, put off your sackcloth and be girded with gladness. Because Jesus is as merciful to hear, as he is mighty to help. Because he is touched with the tenderest sympathizing concern, for all your distresses; and he lives, ever lives, to be your advocate with the Father.—Why then should uneasy doubts sadden your countenances? Why should desponding fears oppress your soul? Turn, turn, those disconsolate sighs into cheerful hymns, since you have his powerful intercession, and his inestimable merits, to be your anchor in all tribulations, to be your passport into eternal blessedness.

Most of all, ye ministers of the sanctuary, heralds commissioned from above; lift every one his voice like a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the Redeemer. Get ye up, ye ambassadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains; and spread far and wide the honours of the Lamb "that was slain, but is alive for evermore." Teach every sacred roof to resound with his fame, and every human heart to glow with his love. Declare as far as the force of words will go, declare the inexhausible fulness of that great atonement, whose merits are commensurate with the glories of the Divinity.* Tell the sinful wretch, what pity yearns in Immanuel's bowels; what blood he has spilt, what agonies he has endured, what wonders he has wrought, for the salvation of his enemies. Invite the indigent to become rich; entreat the guilty to accept of pardon, because with the crucified Jesus is plenteous redemption, and all sufficiency to save.—While you, placed in conspicuous stations, pour the joyful sound, may I, as I steal through the vale of humble life, catch the pleasing accents! For me the author of all blessings became a curse: for me, his bones were dislocated, and his flesh was torn; he hung with streaming veins, and agonizing soul on the cross for me. O! may I in my little sphere, and amidst the scanty circle of my acquaintance, at least whisper these glad transporting tidings? whisper them from my own heart, that they

* If in this place and others, I have spoken magnificently of the blood of Christ, and its insuperable efficacy to expiate guilt, I think it is no more than is expressed in a very celebrated hymn, written by one of the greatest wits, who had also been one of the greatest libertines, and afterwards commenced one of the most remarkable penitents in France; a hymn, which even Mr. Bayle confesses to be a very fine one, which another critic calls an admirable one, and which a genius superior to them both, recommends as a noble one. (See Spect. Vol. vii. No. 513.)

The author having acknowledged his crimes to be beyond measure heinous, and almost beyond forgiveness provoking—so provoking, as to render tears from such eyes offensive, and prayers from such lips abominable; composes himself to submit, without the least repining sentiment; to submit even with praise and adoration, to the most dreadful doom. Accordingly, he stands in resigned expectation of being instantly struck by the bolts of vengeance; but with a turn of thought equally surprising and sprightly, with a faith properly founded and happily firm, he adds,

Yet where! O where! can even thy thunders fall?
Christ's blood o'erspreads and shields me from them all.

may surely reach, and sweetly penetrate theirs.

But when men and angels raise the grand hymn, when all worlds and all beings add their collective acclamations; this full, fervent, and universal chorus will be so inferior to the riches of the Redeemer's grace, so disproportionate to the magnificence of his glory, that it will seem but to debase the unutterable subject it attempts to exalt, the loud hallelujah will die away, in the solemn mental eloquence of prostrate, rapturous, silent adoration.

O Goodness infinite! goodness immense!
And love that passeth knowledge!—words are vain,
Language is lost in wonders so divine
"Come then expressive silence muse his praise."

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT,

AND THE

STARRY HEAVENS,

WITH

A WINTER-PIECE.

"MY MEDITATIONS OF HIM SHALL BE SWEET."—PSALM CIV. 34.

TO

PAUL ORCHARD, ESQ.

OF

STOKE-ABBEY, DEVONSHIRE.

Dear Sir,

As your honoured father was pleased to make choice of me to answer in your name at the font, and to exercise a sort of guardianship over your spiritual interests, permit me, by putting these little treatises into your hand, to fulfil some part of that solemn obligation.

Gratitude for many signal favours, and a conscientious regard to my sacred engagement, have long ago inspired my breast with the warmest wishes, both for your true dignity, and real happiness. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual way of advancing either the one or the other, than to set before you a sketch of your excellent father's character. Illustrious examples are the most winning incitements to virtue; and none can come attended with such particular recommendations to you, sir, as the pattern of that worthy person from whom you derive your very being.

A most cordial and reverential esteem for the divine word, was one of his remarkable qualities. Those oracles of Heaven were his principal delight, and his inseparable companions. Your gardens, your solitary walks, and the hedges of your fields, can witness (Joshua xxiv. 27.) with what an unwearied assiduity he exercised himself in the law of the Lord. From hence he fetched his maxims of wisdom, and formed his judgment of things; the sacred precepts were the model of his temper, and the guide of his life; while the precious promises were the joy of his heart, and his portion for ever.

Improving company was another of his most relishing pleasures. Few gentlemen were better furnished, either with richness of fancy, or copiousness of expression, to bear a shining part in conversation. With these talents he always endeavoured to give some useful, generally some religious, turn to the discourse. Nor did he ever reflect with greater complacency on his social hours, than when they tended to glorify the eternal majesty, and to waken in himself and others a more lively spirit of devotion.

To project for the good of others, was his frequent study; and to carry those benevolent contrivances into execution, his favourite employ. When visited by the young persons of the neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful pride to initiate them in debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous habit, it was his incessant aim, by finely-adapted persuasives, to encourage them in industry, and establish them in a course of so-

briety, to guard them against the allurements of vice, and animate them with the principles of piety. A noble kind of hospitality this! which will probably transmit its beneficial influence to their earthly possessions, to their future families, and even to their everlasting state.

A conviction of human indigence, and a thorough persuasion of the divine all-sufficiency, induced him to be frequent in prayer. To prostrate himself in profound adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in light inaccessible, was his glory; to implore the continuance of the Almighty favour, and the increase of all Christian graces, was his gain. In those moments, no doubt, he remembered you, sir, with a particular earnestness; and lodged many an ardent petition in the court of Heaven for his infant son. Cease not to second them with your own devout supplications, that they may descend upon your head, "in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace."

To give their genuine lustre to all his other endowments, he was careful to maintain an humble mind. Though his friends might admire his superior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he saw how far he fell short of the mark of his high calling; saw, and lamented his defects; saw, and renounced himself; relying for final acceptance and endless felicity on a better righteousness than his own, even on the transcendently perfect righteousness, and inconceivably precious death of Jesus the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the very crown of his rejoicing.

These, sir, are some of the distinguishing characteristics of your deceased parent. As you had the misfortune to lose so valuable a relative, before you was capable of forming any acquaintance with his person, I flatter myself you will the more attentively observe his picture—this his moral picture; designed, not to be set in gold, or sparkle in enamel, but to breathe in your spirit, and to live in all your conduct; which, though it be entirely your own, calculated purely for yourself, may possibly (like the family pieces in your parlour, that glance an eye upon as many as enter the room) make some pleasing and useful impression on every beholder. May every one, charmed with the beautiful image, catch its resemblance; and each, in its respective sphere, "go and do likewise."

But you, sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent Providence has made you heir of the affluent circumstances, let not a gay and thoughtless inadvertence cut you off from the richer inheritance of these noble qualifications. These will be your security amidst all the glittering dangers which are inseparable from blooming years and an elevated situation in life. These are your path, your sure and only path, to true greatness, and solid happiness. Tread in these steps, and you cannot fail to be the darling of your friends, and the favourite of heaven. Tread in these steps, and you will give inexpressible joy to one of the best of mothers; you will become an extensive blessing to your fellow-creatures; and which, after such most engaging motives, is scarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the delight, the honour, and the boast of, dear sir, your very affectionate godfather, and most faithful humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favel, near Northampton,
July 14, 1747.

PREFACE

We have already exercised our speculations on the Tombs and Flowers; surveying nature, covered with the deepest horrors, and arrayed in the richest beauties. Allegory taught many of the oojects to speak the language of virtue, while imagination lent her colouring to give the lessons an engaging air. And this with a view of imitating that divine instructor, who commissioned the lily in her silver suit, to remonstrate in the ear of unbelieving reason; who sent his disciples (men ordained to teach the universe) to learn maxims of the last importance, from the most insignificant birds that wander through the paths of the air; from the very meanest herbs, (Matth. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30,) that are scattered over the face of the ground.*

Emboldened by the kind acceptance of the preceding sketches, I beg leave to confide in the same benevolence of taste, for the protection and support of the two remaining essays; which exhibit a prospect of still life, and grand operation, which moralize on the most composed, and most magnificent appearances of things; in which Fancy is again suffered to introduce her imagery, but only as the handmaid of Truth, in order to dress her person, and display her charms, to engage the attention, and win the love even of the gay and of the fashionable; which is more likely to be affected, by forming agreeable pictures of nature, and deriving instructive observations, than by the laborious method

* Celebrated writers, as Demosthenes and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, are observed to have a style peculiar to themselves. Now, whoever considers the discourses of Christ, will find him distinguishing himself by a style, which may properly be called his own. Majestic, yet familiar, happily uniting dignity with condescension, it consists in teaching his followers the sublimest truths, by spiritualizing on the most common occurrences; which besides its being level to the lowest apprehensions, and admirably adapted to steal into the most inattentive heart, is accompanied with this very singular advantage, that it turns even the sphere of business into a school of instruction; and renders the most ordinary objects a set of monitors, ever soliciting our regard because ever present to our senses.—So that I believe, it may be said of this amiable method, in which our Lord conveyed, as well as of that powerful energy which attended his doctrines, "That never man spake like this man."—The harvest approaching, he reminds his disciples of a far more important harvest, John iv. 35. Matt. xiii. 39. when immortal beings shall be reaped from the grave, and gathered in from all the quarters of the earth, when every human creature shall sustain the character of valuable wheat, or despicable tares; and accordingly be lodged in mansions of everlasting security, or consigned over to the rage of unquenchable fire.—In his charge to fishermen when they are commencing preachers, Matth. iv. 19, he exhorts them, conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to use the same assiduity and address in winning souls, as they were wont to exercise in catching the finny prey.—For the farther illustration of this no less useful, than curious subject, I would refer my reader to a valuable note in Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, p 148. 4to. edition.

of long-deduced arguments, or close connected reasonings. The contemplation of the heavens and the earth, of their admirable properties and beneficial changes, has always afforded the most exalted gratification to the human mind. In compliance with this prevailing taste, I have drawn my serious admonitions from the stupendous theatre, and variegated scenery of the universe; that the reader may learn his duty from his very pleasures; may gather wisdom mingled with virtue, from the most refined entertainments, and noblest delights.

The evening drawing her sables over the world, and gently darkening into Night, is a season peculiarly proper for sedate consideration. All circumstances concur to hush our passions, and soothe our cares, to tempt our steps abroad, and prompt our thoughts to serious reflection.

——Then is the time
For those whom wisdom, and whom nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degen'rate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things;
To tread low thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace,
And woo lone quiet in her silent walks.*

The favour I would solicit for the first of the following compositions is, that it may be permitted to attend in such retired and contemplated excursions, to attend, if not under the character of a friend, at least in the humble capacity of a servant or a page; as a servant to open the door of meditation, and remove every impediment to those better exercises of the mind, which blend advantage with amusement, and improve while they delight; as a page, to gather up the unstable fluctuating train of fancy, and collect her fickle powers into a consistent, regular and useful habit of thinking.

The other conversant among the starry regions, would lead the imagination through those beautiful tracts of unclouded azure, and point out to the judgment some of those astonishing particulars which so eminently signalize the celestial worlds. A prospect this to which curiosity attracts our eyes, and to which scripture itself often directs our study, a prospect beyond all others most excellently calculated to enlarge the soul, and ennoble its conceptions; to give the grandest apprehensions of the everlasting God, and create sentiments of becoming superiority, with relation to all transitory interests; in a word, to furnish faith with the surest foundation for a holy affiance and true magnanimity of spirit, to afford piety the strongest motives, both for a lively gratitude, and profound veneration.

While Galileo lifts his tube, and discovers the prodigious magnitude of those radiant orbs; while Newton measures their amazing distances, and unites the whole system in harmonious order by the subtile influences of attraction; I would only, like the herald before that illustrious Hebrew, (Gen. xli. 43.) proclaim at every turn, "Bow the knee, and adore the Almighty Maker, magnify his eternal name, and make his praise like all his works, to be glorious.

* Thomson's Autumn, l. 973. last edit. 12mo.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

THE business of the day dispatched, and the sultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk, a walk in one of the finest recesses of the country, and in one of the most pleasant evenings which the summer season produced.

The limes and elms, uniting their branches over my head, formed a verdant canopy, and cast a most refreshing shade. Under my feet lay a carpet of nature's velvet; grass intermingled with moss, and embroidered with flowers. Jessamines, in conjunction with woodbines, twined around the trees; displaying their artless beauties to the eye, and diffusing their delicious sweets through the air. On either side, the boughs, rounded into a set of regular arches, opened a view into the distant fields, and presented me with a prospect of the bending skies. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favours of the light, were paying their acknowledgments in a tribute of harmony, and soothing themselves to rest with songs, while a French horn from a neighbouring seat, sent its melodious accents, softened by the length of their passage, to complete the concert of the grove.

Roving in this agreeable manner, my thoughts were exercised on a subject still more agreeable than the season, or the scene, I mean our late signal victory over the united forces of intestine treason, and foreign invasion, a victory which pours joy through the present age, and will transmit its influence to generations yet unborn.—Are not all the blessings which can endear society, or render life itself desirable, centered in our present happy constitution, and auspicious government? Were they not all struck at by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at Rome, levelled by France, and seconded by factious spirits at home? Who then can be sufficiently thankful for the gracious interposition of Providence, which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it, with aggravated confusion, on the authors of our troubles.

Methinks, every thing valuable which I possess; every thing charming which I behold, conspire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing that I can ramble unmolested along the vale of private life, and taste all the innocent satisfactions of a contemplative retirement.—Had rebellion* succeeded in her detestable designs; instead of walking with security and complacence in these flowery paths, I might have met the assassin with his dagger, or have been obliged to abandon my habitation, and "embrace the rock for a shelter."—Farewell then, ye fragrant shades; seats of meditation and calm repose! I should have been driven from your loved retreats, to make way for some barbarous, some insulting victor. Farewell then, ye pleasing toils, and wholesome amusements of my rural hours! I should no more have reared the tender flower to the sun; no more have taught the espalier to expand her boughs; nor have fetched any longer from my kitchen-garden the purest supplies of health.

Had rebellion succeeded in her detestable designs, instead of being regaled with the music of the woods, I might have been

* Referring to the rebellion set on foot in the year 1745, which for several months made a very alarming progress in the North;—but was happily extinguished by the glorious and decisive victory at Culloden.

alarmed with the sound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Instead of being entertained with this beautiful landscape, I might have beheld our houses ransacked, and our villages plundered: I might have beheld our fenced cities encompassed with armies, and our fruitful fields "clothed with desolation:" or have been shocked with the more frightful images of garments rolled in blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Instead of peace, with her cheering olives, sheltering our abodes; instead of justice, with her impartial scale, securing our goods; persecution had brandished her sword, and slavery clanked her chains.

Nor are these miseries imaginary only, or the creatures of a groundless panic. There are in a neighbouring kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their rigour.* And if the malignant spirit of Popery had forced itself into our church; if an abjured pretender had cut his way to our throne, we could have no reason to expect a mitigation of their severity on our behalf. But supposing the tender mercies of a bigoted usurper to have been somewhat less cruel; where, alas! would have been the encouragement to cultivate our little portion; or what pleasure could arise from an improved spot; if both the one and the other lay every moment at the mercy of lawless power? This imbittering circumstance would spoil their relish; and by rendering them a precarious, would render them a joyless acquisition. In vain might the vine spread her purple clusters, in vain be lavish of her generous juices, if tyranny, like a ravenous harpy, should be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to snatch it from the lip of industry, or wrest it from the hand of liberty.

Liberty! that dearest of names; and property! that best of charters; give an additional, an inexpressible charm to every delightful object. See how the declining sun has beautified the western clouds; has arrayed them in crimson, and skirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our domestic bliss is property, such an improvement of our public privileges is liberty.—When the lamp of day shall entirely withdraw his beams, there will still remain the same collection of floating vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The carnation-streaks are faded; the golden edges are worn away; and all the lovely tinges are lost in a leaden-coloured louring sadness. Such would be the aspect of all these scenes of beauty, and all these abodes of pleasure, if exposed continually to the caprice of arbitrary sway, or held in a state of abject and cringing dependence.

The sun has almost finished his daily race, and hastens to the goal. He descends lower and lower, till his chariot-wheels seem to hover on the utmost verge of the sky. What is somewhat remarkable, the orb of light upon the point of setting, grows considerably broader. The shadows of objects, just before they become blended in undistinguishable darkness, are exceedingly lengthened*.—Like blessings little prized while possessed; but highly esteemed, the very instant they are preparing for their flight; bitterly regretted when once they are gone, and to be seen no more.

The radiant globe is now half immersed beneath the dusky earth, or as the ancient poet speaks, is shooting into the ocean, and sinks in the western sea.—And could I view the sea at this juncture, it would yield a most amusing and curious spectacle. The rays, striking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glass; or reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colours. A stranger, as he walks along the sandy beach, and lost in pensive attention, listens to the murmurings of the restless flood, is agreeably alarmed by the gay decorations of the surface. With entertainment and with wonder, he sees the curling waves, here glistering with white, there glowing with purple; in one place wearing an azure tincture, in another glancing a cast of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of fluid scenery, that may vie with yonder pensile tapestries, though wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dyes of heaven.

While I am transported by fancy to the shores of the ocean, the great luminary is sunk beneath the horizon, and totally disappears. The whole face of the ground is overspread with shades; or, with what one of the finest painters of nature calls a dun obscurity. Only a few very superior eminences are tipt with streaming silver. The tops of groves and lofty towers catch the last smiles of day;† are still irradiated by the departing beams.—But O! how transient is the distinction! how momentary the gift: Like all the blessings which mortals enjoy below, it is gone almost as soon as granted. See how languishingly it trem-

* See a Pamphlet entitled Popery always the same, which contains a narrative of the persecutions and severe hardships lately suffered by the protestants in the southern parts of France; and closes with a most seasonable, alarming, and spirited address to the inhabitants of Great Britain. Printed 1746.

* Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.—*Virg.*

† See this remarkable appearance delicately described; and wrought into a comparison, which in my opinion is one of the most just, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagery to be found in modern poetry; Night Thoughts, No. II. p. 42. 4to. edition.

bles on the leafy spire, and glimmers with a dying faintness, on the mountain's brow. The little vivacity that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold its station. While I speak, it expires, and resigns the world to the gradual approaches of night.

——Now twilight gray
Has in her sober livery all things clad.*

Every object a little while ago glared with light, but now all appears under a more qualified lustre. The animals harmonize with the insensible creation; and what was gay in those, as well as glittering in this, gives place to an universal gravity. In the meadows all was jocund and sportive; but now the gamesome lambs are grown weary of their frolics, and the tired shepherd has imposed silence on his pipe. In the branches, all was sprightliness and song, but now the lively green is wrapt in the descending glooms; and no tuneful airs are heard, only the plaintive stock-dove cooing mournfully through the grove. Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unseasonable levity. Therefore, be these moments devoted to thoughts sedate as the closing day, solemn as the face of things. And indeed, however my social hours are enlivened with innocent pleasantry, let every evening, in her sable habit, toll the bell to serious consideration. Nothing can be more proper for a person who walks on the borders of eternity, and is hasting continually to his final audit; nothing more proper, than daily to slip away from the circle of amusements, and frequently to relinquish the hurry of business, in order to consider and adjust "the things that belong to his peace."

Since the sun is departed, from whence can it proceed that I am not involved in pitchy darkness? Whence these remainders of diminished brightness, which, though scarcely forming a refulgence, soften and soothe the horrors of night? I see not the shining ruler, yet am cheered with a real though faint communication of his splendour. Does he remember us in his progress through other climes? does he send a detachment of his rays to escort us, during his personal absence? or to cover (if I may use the military term) our retreat from the scene of action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, sufficient to render our circumstances easy, and our situation agreeable, till sleep pours its soft impression on the organs of sense; till sleep suspends all the operations of our hands, and entirely supersedes any further occasion for the light.

No; it is ill judged and unreasonable to ascribe this beneficent conduct to the sun. Not unto him, not unto him; but unto his Almighty Maker, we are obliged for this pleasant attendant, this valuable legacy. The gracious Author of our being has so disposed the collection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and wonderful effect. The sun-beams, falling on the higher parts of the aereal fluid, instead of passing on in straight lines, are bent inwards, and conducted to our sight. Their natural course is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about, on purpose to favour us with a welcome and salutary visit. —By which means the blessing of light, and the season of business, are considerably prolonged; and what is a very endearing circumstance, prolonged most considerably when the vehement heats of summer incline the student to postpone his walk till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labours of the harvest call the husbandman abroad before the day is fully risen.

After all the ardours of the sultry day, how reviving is this coolness! This gives new verdure to the fading plants, new vivacity to the withering flowers, and a more exquisite fragrance to their mingled scents. By this, the air also receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itself with greater activity; qualified to brace our limbs, to heave our lungs, and to co-operate with a brisker impulse in perpetuating the circulation of our blood. This I might call the grand alembic of nature, which distils her most sovereign cordial, the refreshing dews. Incessant heat would rob us of their beneficial agency, and oblige them to evaporate in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentler motions of Aurora's fan, would dissipate the rising vapours, and not suffer them to form a coalition. But favoured by the stillness, and condensed by the coolness of the night, they unite in pearly drops, and create that finely tempered humidity, which cheers the vegetable world, as sleep exhilarates the animal.

Not unlike to these are the advantages of solitude. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect stable purposes on its fluctuating waves? The world is a school of wrong; and who does not feel himself warping to its pernicious influence?* On this sea of glass (Rev. xv. 2.) how insensibly we slide from our own steadfastness! Some sacred truth, which was struck in lively characters on our souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some worthy resolution, which heaven had wrought in our breasts, is shak-

* Milt. Par. Lost, Book iv, l. 598.

* Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid ex eo quod composui, turbatur: aliquid, ex his quae fugavi redit. Inimica est multorum conversatio.—*Senec.*

en, if not overthrown. Some enticing vanity, which we had solemnly renounced, again practises its wiles, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unwary glance kindled a fever of irregular desire in our hearts? How often has a word of applause dropt luscious poison into our ears? or some disrespectful expression raised a gust of passion in our bosoms? Our innocence is of so tender a constitution, that it suffers in the promiscuous crowd. Our purity is of so delicate a complexion, that it scarce touches on the world without contracting a stain. We see, we hear, with peril.

But here safety dwells. Every meddling and intrusive avocation is secluded. Silence holds the door against the strife of tongues, and all the impertinencies of idle conversation. The busy swarm of vain images, and cajoling temptations, which beset us, with a buzzing importunity, amidst the gaieties of life, are chased by these thickening shades. Here I may without disturbance commune with my own heart, and learn that best of sciences, to know myself. Here the soul may rally her dissipated powers, and grace recover its native energy. This is the opportunity to rectify every evil impression, to expel the poison, and guard against the contagion of corrupting examples. This is the place where I may with advantage apply myself to subdue the rebel within, and be master, not of a sceptre, but of myself. Throng, then, ye ambitious, the levees of the powerful: I will be punctual in my assignations with solitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms incomparably more engaging than the entertainments presented in the theatre, or the honours conferred in the drawing-room.

I said *solitude*.—Am I then alone?—It is true, my acquaintance are at a distance. I have stolen away from company, and am remote from all human observation. But that is an alarming thought,

> Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.*

Perhaps there may be numbers of those invisible beings patrolling this same retreat, and joining with me in contemplating the Creator's works. Perhaps those ministering spirits who rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely recess; and even in our most solitary moments, be constant attendants. What a pleasing awe is awakened by such a reflection! How venerable it renders my retired walks! I am struck with reverence, as under the roof of some sacred edifice, or in the presence-chamber of some mighty monarch. O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute affection, where such refined and exalted intelligences exercise their watch!

It is possible that I am encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses; but it is certain that God, the infinite eternal God, is now and ever with me. The great Jehovah, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads and veil their faces, surrounds me, supports me, pervades me. "In him I live, move, and have my being." The whole world is his august temple, and in the most sequestered corner I appear before his adorable Majesty, no less than when I worship in his house, or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart cleansed from idols and devoted to his service. In every circumstance, let me feel no ambition, but to please him, nor covet any happiness, but to enjoy him.

How sublime is the description, and how striking the sentiment, in that noble passage of the Psalms: Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I climb up into the heights of heaven thou art there enthroned in light. If I go down to the depths of the grave, thou art there also in thy pavilion of darkness. If I retire to the remotest eastern climes, where the morning first takes wings; if, swifter than the darting ray, I pass to the opposite regions of the west, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea;* shall I in that distant situation be beyond thy reach, or by this sudden transition escape thy notice? So far from it, that could I, with one glance of thought, transport myself beyond all the bounds of creation, I should still be encircled with the immensity of thy essence, or rather still be enclosed in the hollow of thy hand. Awful, yet delightful truth! let it be interwoven with every thought, and become one with the very consciousness of my existence; that I may continually walk with God, and conduct myself in every step of my behaviour, "as seeing Him that is invisible."

They are the happy persons; felicity, true felicity, is all their own, who live under an habitual sense of God's omnipresence, and a sweet persuasion of his special love. If dangers threaten, their impregnable defence is at hand. Nothing can be so near to terrify, as their almighty Guardian to secure

* Milt. Par. Lost, Book iv. l. 677.

* Psalm cxxxix. 7—9. There is, I think an additional strength and beauty in the thought, if, with the learned Mr. Mudge, we suppose an antithesis between the two clauses of the last verse, as there evidently is between those of the preceding, and that they express, in a poetical style, the extremities of the east and the west.

them. To these, the hours can never be tedious; and it is impossible for them to be alone. Do they step aside from the occupations of animal life? A more exalted set of employments engage their attention. They address themselves in all their various acts of devotion, to their heavenly Father; who now sees in secret, and will hereafter reward them openly. They spread all their wants before his indulgent eye, and disburden all their sorrows into his compassionate bosom. Do they withdraw from human society? They find themselves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they resign the satisfactions of social intercourse, it is to cultivate a correspondence with the condescending Deity, and taste the pleasures of divine friendship. What is such a state but the very suburbs of heaven! What is such a conduct, but an antepast of eternal blessedness!

Now, my soul, the day is ended. The hours are all fled. They are fled to the supreme Judge, and have given in their evidence; an evidence registered in heaven, and to be produced at the great audit. Happy they whose improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes, who have seized the important fugitives, and engaged them in the pursuit of wisdom, or devoted them to the service of virtue.

Fugitives indeed they are. Our moments slip away silently and insensibly. The thief steals not more unperceived from the pillaged house; so that the day seems to be closed almost as soon as it dawned.—And will the runagates never stop? No; wherever we are, however employed, time pursues his incessant course. Though we are listless and dilatory, the great measurer of our days presses on; still presses on in his unwearied career,* and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away. Is it not then surprisingly strange, to hear people complain of the tediousness of their time, and how heavy it hangs upon their hands? to see them contrive a variety of amusing artifices, to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden! Ah! thoughtless mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent? Your days are swifter than a post, which, carrying dispatches of the last importance, with unremitted speed scours the road. They pass away like the nimble ships, which have the wind in their wings, and skim along the watery plain. They hasten to their destined period with the rapidity of an eagle; which leaves the stormy blasts behind her, while she cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey.†

Now the day is gone, how short it appears! When my fond eye beheld it in perspective, it seemed a very considerable space. Minutes crowded upon minutes, and hours ranged behind hours, exhibited an extensive draught, and flattered me with a long progression of pleasures. But, upon a retrospective view, how wonderfully is the scene altered! the landscape, large and spacious, which a warm fancy drew, brought to the test of cool experience, shrinks into a span. Just as the shores vanish, and mountains dwindle to a spot, when the sailor, surrounded by skies and ocean, throws his last look on his native land. How clearly do I now discover the cheat! May it never impose upon my unwary imagination again! I find there is nothing abiding on this side eternity. A long duration in a state of finite existence is mere illusion.

Perhaps the healthy and the gay may not readily credit the serious truth; especially from a young pen, and new to its employ. Let us then refer ourselves to the decision of the ancient. Ask some venerable old person, who is just marching off the mortal stage, how many have been the days of the years of thy life? (Gen. xlvii. 8. Heb. Bib.) It was a monarch's question, and therefore can want no recommendation to the fashionable world. Observe how he shakes his hoary locks, and from a deep-felt conviction replies, "Fourscore years have finished their rounds, to furrow these cheeks, and clothe this head in snow." Such a term may seem long and large to inconsiderate youth; but, oh! how short, how scanty, to one that has made the experiment! Short as a gleam of transient sun-shine; scanty "as the shadow that departeth." Methinks, it was but yesterday that I exchanged my childish sports for manly exercises; and now I am resigning them both for the sleep of death. As soon as we are born, we begin to draw to our end; and how small is the interval between the cradle and the tomb! Oh, may we believe this testimony of mature age! May every evening bring it with clearer evidence to our minds. And may we form such an estimate of the little pittance while it is upon the advancing hand, as we shall certainly make when the sands are all run down.

Let me add one reflection on the work to be done, while this shuttle is flying through the loom;* a work of no small

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* Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus.—*Virg.*

† Job ix. 25, 26. By these three very expressive images, the inspired poet represents the unintermitted and rapid flight of time. The passage is illustrated with great judgment and equal delicacy, in Dr. Gray's most ingenious abridgment of Schultens. Quae tribus in elementis velocissima, hic admirabili cum emphasi congeruntur. In terris, nil pernicius cursore, et quidem laeti quid ferente. Rapidius tamen adhuc undas, non secant sed supervolant, naviallo papyro contexta. Omnium rapidissime aerem grandibus alias permetitur aquila, praecipiti lapsu ruens in pr.

* My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, Job vii. 6.

difficulty, yet of the utmost consequence. Hast thou not seen, hast thou not known the excellent of the earth, who were living images of their Maker? His divine likeness was transfused into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their conduct; beamed forth in meekness of wisdom and purity of affection; in all the tender offices of love, and all the noble efforts of zeal. To be stamped with the same beautiful signature, and to be followers of them as they were of Christ; this, this is thy business: On the accomplishment of this, thy eternal all depends. And will an affair of such unspeakable weight admit of a moment's delay, or consist with the least remissness; especially since much of thy appointed time is already elapsed, and the remainder is all uncertainty, save only that it is in the very act to fly? Or, suppose thou hast made a covenant with the grave, and wast assured of reaching the age of Methuselah, how soon would even such a lease expire! Extend it if you please still further, and let it be co-existent with nature itself. How inconsiderable is the addition; for, yet a very little while, and the commissioned archangel lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by the almighty name, that time shall be no longer.* Then, abused opportunities will never return, and new opportunities will never more be offered. Then should negligent mortals wish, wish ever so passionately for a few hours, a few moments only, to be thrown back from the opening eternity, thousands of worlds would not be able to procure the grant.

Shall I now be industrious to shorten what is no longer than a span, or to quicken the pace of what is ever on the wing? Shall I squander away what is unutterably important while it lasts, and when once departed, is altogether irrevocable? O! my soul forbear the folly, forbear the desperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a loiterer the arrow that boundeth from the string, or sweep away diamonds, as the refuse of thy house? Throw time away! astonishing, ruinous, irreparable profuseness! Throw empires away, and be blameless; but, O! be parsimonious of thy days; husband thy precious hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected, with heaven or hell.* Improved, they are a sure pledge of everlasting glory; wasted, they are a sad preface to never ending confusion and anguish.

What a profound silence has composed the world! So profound is the silence, that my very breath seems a noise; the ticking of my watch is distinctly heard; if I do but stir, it creates a disturbance. There is now none of that confused din from the tumultuous city; no voice of jovial rustics from the neighbouring meadow; no chirping melody from the shady thicket. Every lip is sealed; not the least whisper invades the air; nor the least motion rustles among the boughs. Echo herself sleeps unmolested. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no sound but the liquid lapse of a distant murmuring stream.

All things are hush'd, as nature's self lay dead.

If, in the midst of this deep and universal composure, ten thousand bellowing thunders should burst over my head, and rend the skies with their united vollies, how should I bear so unexpected a shock? It would stun my senses, and confound my thoughts. I should shudder in every limb, perhaps sink to the earth with terror. Consider then, O mortals! consider the much more prodigious and amazing call which will ere long alarm your sleeping bones. When the tenants of the tomb have slumbered in the most undisturbed repose, for a multitude of

* This alludes to the beginning of Revelations, chap. 10; which abstracted from its spiritual meaning, and considered only as a stately piece of machinery, well deserves our attention; and I will venture to say has not its superior, perhaps not its equal in any of the most celebrated masters of Greece and Rome.—All that is gloomy or beautiful in the atmosphere, all that is striking or magnificent in every element, is taken to heighten the idea. Yet nothing is disproportionate, but an uniform air of ineffable majesty, greatens, exalts, and ennobles the whole. Be pleased to observe the aspect of this august personage; all the brightness of the sun shines in his countenance, and all the rage of the fire burns in his feet. See his apparel; the clouds compose his robe, and the drapery of the sky floats upon his shoulders; the rainbow forms his diadem, and that which "compasseth the heaven with a glorious circle," is the ornament of his head. Behold his attitude; one foot stands on the ocean, the other rests on the land. The wide extended earth and the world of waters, serve as pedestals for those mighty columns. Consider the action; his hand is lifted up to the height of the stars. He speaks, and the regions of the firmament echo with the mighty accents, as the midnight desert resounds with the lion's roar. The artillery of the skies is discharged at the signal; a peal of sevenfold thunders spreads the alarm, and prepares the universe to receive his orders. To finish all, and give the highest grandeur, as well as the utmost solemnity to the representation, hear the decree that issues from his mouth. He swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever. In whatever manner so majestic a person had expressed himself, he could not fail of commanding universal attention. But when he confirms his speech by a most sacred and inviolable oath, we are not only wrapt up in silent suspense, but overwhelmed with the profoundest awe. He swears that time shall be no longer! Was ever voice so full of terror; so big with wonder! It proclaims not the fall of empires, but the final period of things. It strikes off the wheels of nature; bids ages and generations cease to roll; and, with one potent word consigns a whole world over to dissolution. This is one among a multitude of very sublime and masterly strokes to be found in that too much neglected book, the Bible.

* I remember to have seen upon a sun-dial in a physician's garden at Northampton, the following inscription, which, I think, is the most proper motto for the instrument that measures our time, and the most striking admonition which can possibly be presented to every eye that glances upon it; *ab hoc momento pendet eternitas.* The weighty sense of which I know not how to express in English more happily than in those words of Dr. Watts:

Good God! on what a slender thread
(Or, on what a moment of time)
Hang everlasting things!

ages; what an inconceivable consternation must the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God occasion! will it not wound the ear of the ungodly, and affright even to distraction, the impenitent sinner? The stupendous peal will sound through the vast expanse of heaven, will shake the foundations of nature, and pierce even the deepest recesses of the grave. And how, O! how will the prisoners of divine justice be able to endure that tremendous summons to a far more tremendous tribunal? Do thou, my soul, listen to the still voice of the gospel. Attend in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then shall that great midnight cry lose its horror, and be music in thy ears. It shall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty to the dungeon captive, as the year of Jubilee to the harassed slave. This, this shall be its charming import, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust." (Isa. xxvi. 19.)

What a general cessation of affairs has this dusky hour introduced! A little while ago, all was hurry, hurry; life and activity exerted themselves in a thousand busy forms; the city swarmed with passing and repassing multitudes; all the country was sweat and dust; the air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. Art sat prying with her piercing eyes, while industry plied her restless hands. But see how all this fervent and impetuous bustle is fled with the setting sun. The beasts are sunk to their grassy couch; and the winged people are retired to their downy nests. The hammer has resigned its sounding task, and the file ceases to repeat its flying touches. Shut is the well frequented shop, and its threshold no longer worn by the feet of numerous customers. The village swain lies drowned in slumbers; and even his trusty dog, who for a considerable time stood sentry at the door, is extended at his ease, and snores with his master. In every place, toil reclines her head, and application folds her arms. All interests seem to be forgot; all pursuits are suspended; all employment is sunk away—sunk away with those fluttering myriads which lately sported in the sun's departing rays. It is like the Sabbath of universal nature, or as though the pulse of life stood still.

Thus will it be with our infinitely momentous concerns, when once the shadows of the evening (that long evening which follows the footsteps of death) are stretched over us. The dead cannot seek unto God; the living, the living alone, are possessed of this inestimable opportunity.* "There is no work or device, no repentance or amendment, in the grave,* whither we are all hasting." When once that closing scene is advanced, we shall have no other part to act on this earthly theatre. Then the sluggard, who has slumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, must lie down in hopeless distress and everlasting sorrow. Then that awful doom will take place; "He that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy for ever.

Is it so, my soul? Is this the only, only time allotted for obtaining the great reward, and making thy salvation sure? and art thou lulled in a vain security, or dreaming in a supine inadvertency? Start, O! start from thy trance. Gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day. Improve the present seed-time, that eternity may yield a joyful harvest.—We especially, who are watchmen in Israel, and ministers of the glorious gospel; may we be awakened, by this consideration, to all assiduity in our holy office! Some or other of our people are ever and anon departing into the invisible state; all our friends are making incessant approaches to their long home; and we ourselves shall very shortly be transmitted to the confinement of the tomb. This is the favourable juncture wherein alone we can contribute to their endless welfare. This is the crisis, the all-important crisis of their final felicity. Instantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholesome instructions; instantly let us ply them with our earnest exhortations. A moment's delay may be an irreparable loss; may be irretrievable ruin. While we procrastinate a fatal stroke may intervene, and place us beyond the power of administering, or place them beyond all possibility of receiving, any spiritual good.†

* Behold! now is the accepted time. Behold! now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door,
Insidious death! Should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the prisoner free.

* They who are gone down to the grave are represented, Isa. xxxviii. 11, by the phrase, rendered by Vitringa, *those that inhabit the land of intermission or cessation;* which prevents all appearance of tautology in the sentence; and is, I think, a valuable improvement of the translation, as it conveys an idea not only distinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical and very afflicting nature; such as was perfectly natural for the royal singer and royal sufferer to dwell upon in his desponding moments. Thus interpreted, the sense will run; "I shall see man no more; I shall be cut off from the cheerful ways of men, and all the sweets of human society; and, what is a further aggravation of the threatened stroke, I shall, by its taking place, be numbered with those that inherit the land of cessation and inactivity; where there will be no more possibility of contributing to the happiness of my kingdom; no more opportunity of advancing my Creator's glory, or of making my own final salvation sure." A sentiment like this is grand, important, and full of benevolence; removes all suspicion of unbecoming pusillanimity, and does the highest honour to the monarch's character.

† The case represented by the prophet (1 Kings xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable on this occasion. As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. So, while we are either remiss in our function, or laying ourselves out upon inferior cares, the people of our charge may be gone;—gone beyond the influence of our counsels; beyond the reach of our prayers; gone into the unchangeable and eternal state.

How frequently is the face of nature changed; and by changing made more agreeable! The long continued glitter of the day renders the soothing shades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn ever purple the east with so engaging a lustre, as after the gloom of a dark and dismal night. At present a calm of tranquillity is spread through the universe. The weary winds have forgot to blow. The gentle gales have fanned themselves asleep. Not so much as a single leaf nods. Even the quivering aspen rests. And not one breath curls over the stream. Sometimes, on the contrary, the tempest summons all the forces of the air, and pours itself with resistless fury from the angry north. The whole atmosphere is tossed into tumultuous confusion, and the watery world is heaved to the clouds. The astonished mariner, and his straining vessel, now scale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully visible on the broken surge; now shoot with headlong impetuosity into the yawning gulf, and neither hulk nor mast is seen. The storm sweeps over the continent; raves along the city streets; struggles through the forest boughs; and terrifies the savage nations with a howl more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blast; their iron trunks groan, and their stubborn limbs are dashed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the solid tower totters on its basis.

Such variations are kindly contrived, and with an evident condescension to the fickleness of our taste. Because a perpetual repetition of the same objects would create satiety and disgust; therefore the indulgent Father of our race has diversified the universal scene, and bid every appearance bring with it the charm of novelty. This circumstance is beneficial, as well as entertaining. Providence, ever gracious to mortals, ever intent upon promoting our felicity, has taken care to mingle, in the constitution of things, what is pleasing to our imagination with what is serviceable to our interests. The piercing winds, and rugged aspect of winter, render the balmy gales and flowery scenes of spring peculiarly delightful. At the same time, the keen frosts mellow the soil, and prepare it for the hand of industry. The rushing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it to become the magazine of plenty. The earth is a great laboratory; and December's cold collects the gross materials, which are sublimated by the refining warmth of May. The air is a pure elastic fluid; and were it always to remain in this motionless serenity, it would lose much of its active spring: were it never agitated by those wholesome concussions, it would contract a noisome, perhaps a pestilential taint. In which cases, our respiration, instead of purifying, would corrupt the vital juices; instead of supplying us with refreshment, would be a source of diseases; or every gasp we drew might be unavoidable death.* How then should we admire, how should we adore, that happy union of benignity and wisdom, which, from a variety of dispensations, produces an uniformity of good! produces a perpetual succession of delights, and an uninterrupted series of advantages.

The darkness is now at its height; and I cannot but admire the obliging manner of its taking place. It comes, not with a blunt and abrupt incivility, but makes gentle and respectful advances. A precipitate transition from the splendours of day to all the horrors of midnight would be inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would strike the creation with amazement; and perhaps be pernicious to the organs of sight. Therefore the gloom rushes not upon us instantaneously, but increases by slow degrees; and sending twilight before as its harbinger, decently advertises us of its approach. By this means we are neither alarmed nor incommoded by the change; but are able to take all suitable and timely measures for its reception. Thus graciously has Providence regulated, not only the grand vicissitudes of the seasons, but also the common interchanges of light and darkness, with an apparent reference to our comfort.

Now, the fierce inhabitants of the forest forsake their dens. A thousand grim forms, a thousand growling monsters pace the desert. Death is in their jaws, while, stung with hunger and athirst for blood, they roam their nightly rounds. Unfortunate the traveller who is overtaken by the night in those dismal wilds! how must he stand aghast at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after their prey! Defend him, propitious heaven! or else he must see his endearing spouse, and hail his native home no more!—Now the prowling

* Considering the immense quantity of coals, and other combustible materials which are daily consumed, and evaporate into the air; considering the numberless streams, and clouds of smoke, which almost continually overwhelm populous cities; the noisome exhalations which arise from thronged infirmaries and loathsome jails, from stagnating lakes and putrid fens; the variety of offensive and unwholesome effluvia, which proceed from other causes: it is a very remarkable instance of a Providence at once tenderly kind and infinitely powerful, that mankind is not suffocated with stench, that the air is not choked with filth. The air is the common sewer into which ten thousand times ten thousand nuisances are incessantly discharged; yet it is preserved so thoroughly clear, as to afford the most transparent medium for vision; so delicately undulatory, as to transmit, with all imaginable distinctness, every diversity of sound; so perfectly pure, as to be the constant refiner of the fluids in every animal that breathes.

wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the shepherd's footsteps, and besets his bleating charge. The fox, like a crafty felon, steals to the thatched cottage, and carries off the feathered booty.

Happy for the world, were these the only destroyers that walk in darkness. But, alas! there are savages in human shape, who, muffled in shades, infest the abodes of civilized life. The sons of violence make choice of this season* to perpetrate the most outrageous acts of wrong and robbery. The adulterer waiteth for the twilight; and, baser than the villain on the highway, betrays the honour of his bosom friend. Now faction forms her close cabals, and whispers her traiterous insinuations. Now rebellion plans her accursed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now crimes, which hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the seats of society, and stalk through the gloom with audacious front. Now the vermin of the stews crawl from their lurking-holes to wallow in sin, and spread contagion through the night. Each soothing himself with the fond notion, that all is safe, that no eye sees.

Are they then concealed? Preposterous madmen! to draw the curtain between their infamous practices and a little set of mortals, but lay them open to all these chaste and wakeful eyes of heaven!† as though the moon and stars were made to light men to their revels, and not to God. Are they then concealed? No, truly. Was every one of these vigilant luminaries closed, an eye keener than the lightning's flash, an eye brighter than ten thousand suns, beholds their every motion. Their thickest shades are beaming day‡ to the jealous Inspector and supreme Judge of human actions. Deluded creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, "That clouds and darkness are his majestic residence?" (Psa. xcvii. 2. In that very gloom to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your screen is the bar of his tribunal. Oh, remember this! stand in awe and sin not. Remember that the great and terrible God is about your path§ when you take your midnight range; is about your bed, when you indulge the loose desire; and spies out all your ways, be they ever so secretly conducted, or artfully disguised.

Some minutes ago, a passenger crossed along the road. His horse's foot struck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eye, though at a distance, catched the view; and saw with great clearness the transient sparkles, of which, had I been ever so near, I should not have discerned the least glimpse under the blaze of day.* So, when sickness has drawn a veil over the gaiety of out hearts; when misfortunes have eclipsed the splendour of our outward circumstances; how many important convictions present themselves with the brightest evidence! Under the sunshine of prosperity they lay undiscovered; but, when some intervening cloud has darkened the scene, they emerge from their obscurity, and even glitter upon our minds. Then the world, that delusive cheat, confesses her emptiness; but Jesus, the bright and morning star, beams forth with inimitable lustre. Then vice loses all her fallacious allurements; that painted strumpet is horrible as the hags of hell; but virtue, despised virtue, gains loveliness from a louring providence, and treads the shades with more than mortal charms. May this reconcile me, and all the sons of sorrow to our appointed share of suffering? If tribulation tend to dissipate the inward darkness, and pour heavenly day upon our minds; welcome distress, welcome disappointment, welcome whatever our froward flesh, or peevish passions, would miscall calamities. These light afflictions which are but for a moment, shall sit easy upon our spirits; since they befriend our knowledge, promote our faith, and so work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.†

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* ——————When night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.—*Milt.*
† ——Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes
Intendent oculus.

‡ This is finely, and very forcibly expressed by the Psalmist: "If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be turned to day;" or as it may be rendered somewhat more emphatically, Even the night shall be broad day-light all around me. Psalm cxxxix. 11.

§ The original words are much stronger than the translation; signifying, Thou siftest my path; and art familiarly or intimately acquainted with all my ways. The former, I apprehend, denoting the exact cognizance which the Almighty taketh, the latter implying the constant inspection which he exerciseth, over all the circumstances of our conduct, Psalm cxxxix. 2.

* I beg leave to inform the young gentleman, whose name dignifies my Dedication, that this was a remark of his honoured father, when we rode together, and conversed in a dusky evening. I mention this circumstance, partly to secure the paragraph from contempt; partly to give him and the world an idea of that eminently serious taste which distinguished my deceased friend. The less obvious the reflection, the more clearly it discovers a turn of mind remarkably spiritual, which would suffer nothing to escape, without yielding some religious improvement. The meaner the incident, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the sublimest truths from the most trivial occurrences.

† 2 Cor. iv. 17. The great Stephens, that oracle of Grecian learning, translates our apostle's phrase—καθ' ὑπερβολὴν, Quo nihil magis dici aut fingi potest. But how does the sense rise! how is the idea enlarged, under two such forcible expressions! The whole verse is a master-piece of the beautiful antithesis, the lively description, and the nervous diction. It is one of those exquisite passages in the inspired writings, which, like some rich aromatic plants, cannot be transferred from their own generous and native soil, without being impaired in their vivacity, and losing much of their delicacy. Perhaps, the following version may be somewhat less injurious to the

How has this darkness snatched every splended and graceful object from my sight; It has dashed the sponge over the pictures of spring, and destroyed all the delicate distinctions of things. Where are now the fine tinges, which so lately charmed me from the glowing parterre? The blush is struck out from the cheeks of the rose; and the snowy hue is dropt from the lily. I cast my eyes toward a magnificent seat: but the aspiring columns, and fair expanded front, are mingled in rude confusion. Without the sun, all the elegance of the blooming world, is a mere blank; all the symmetry of architecture is a shapeless heap.

Is not this an expressive emblem of the loveliness which the Sun of Righteousness transfuses into all that is amiable! Was it not for Jesus and his merits, I should sigh with anguish of spirit, even while I rove through ranks of the most beautiful flowers or breathe amidst a wilderness of sweets. Was it not for Jesus and his merits, I should roam like some disconsolate spectre, even through the smiles of creation, and the caresses of fortune. My conversation in this world, though dressed in the most engaging forms of external pleasure, would be like the passage of a condemned malefactor, through enamelled meadows and bowers of bliss, to be broke upon the wheel, or to expire on the rack. But a daily reflection on the Lamb's atoning blood; a comfortable trust that my soul is reconciled through this divine expiation; this is the ray, the golden ray, which irradiates the face of the universe. This is the oil of beauty, which makes all things wear a cheerful aspect; and the oil of gladness, which disposes the spectator to behold them with delight.* This, this is the sacred charm, which teacheth nature in all her prospects, in all her productions, so exquisitely to please.

"Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, till the evening;" but then his strength fails, his spirits flag, and he stands in need, not only of some respite from toil, but of some kindly and sovereign refreshments. What an admirable provision for this purpose is sleep! Sleep introduces a most welcome vacation, both for the soul and body. The exercises of the brain, and the labours of the hands, are at once discontinued. So that the weary limbs repair their exhausted vigour; while the pensive thoughts drop their load of sorrows, and the busy ones rest from the fatigue of application. Most reviving cordial! equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual powers. It supplies the fleshly machine, and keeps all its nice movements in a proper posture for easy play. It animates the thinking faculties with fresh alacrity, and rekindles their ardour for the studies of the dawn. Without these enlivening recruits, how soon would the most robust constitution be wasted into a walking skeleton; and the most learned sage degenerate into a hoary idiot! Some time ago I beheld with surprise poor Florio. His air was wild; his countenance meagre, his thoughts roving, and speech disconcerted. Inquiring the cause of this strange alteration, I was informed, that for several nights he had not closed his eyes in sleep. For want of which noble restorative, that sprightly youth (who was once the life of the discourse, and the darling of the company) is become a spectacle of misery and horror. How many of my fellow-creatures are at this very instant confined to the bed of languishing, and complaining with that illustrious sufferer of old, wearisome nights are appointed to me! (Job vii. 3.) Instead of indulging soft repose, they are counting the tedious hours, telling every striking clock, or measuring the very moments by their throbbing pulse. How many, harassed with pain, most passionately long to make some little truce with their agonies in peaceful slumbers! How many, sick with disquietude, and restless even on their downy pillows, would purchase this transient oblivion of their woes almost at any rate! That which wealth cannot procure, which multitudes sigh for in vain, thy God has bestowed on thee times out of number. The welcome visitant, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch; has gently closed thine eye-lids, and shed his slumberous dews over all thy senses.

Since sleep is so absolutely necessary, so inestimably valuable, observe what a fine apparatus almighty goodness has made to accommodate us with the balmy blessing! With how kind a precaution, he removes whatever might obstruct its access, or impede its influence! He draws around us the curtain of darkness; which inclines us to a drowsy indolence, and conceals every object that might too strongly agitate the sense. He conveys peace into our apart-

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sacred original than the common translation:—Our very light affliction, which is but just for the present moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, and incomparably great, and eternal weight of glory.

* Thus applied, that fine piece of flattery, addressed to the Heathen emperor, is strictly and literally true.

——Vultus ubi tuus
Affulsit populo, gratior et dies,
Et soles melius nitent.—*Horat.*

Which I would cast in a Christian mould, and thus translate:

When faith presents the Saviour's death,
And whispers "This is thine,"
Sweetly my rising hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While such my views, the radiant sun
Sheds a more sprightly ray:
Each object smiles; all nature charms;
I sing my cares away.

ments, and imposes silence on the whole creation. Every animal is bid to tread softly, or rather to cease from its motion, when man is retiring to his repose. May we not discern, in this gracious disposition of things, the tender cares of a nursing-mother, who hushes every noise, and secludes every disturbance, when she has laid the child of her love to rest. So, by such soothing circumstances, and gently working opiates, he giveth to his beloved sleep. (Psalm cxxvii. 2.)

Another signal instance of a providence ntent upon our welfare is, that we are preserved safe in the hours of slumber. How are we then lost to all apprehension of danger; even though the murderer be at our bed side, or his naked sword at our breast! Destitute of all concern for ourselves, we are unable to think of, much more to provide for, our own security. At these moments, therefore, we lie open to innumerable perils: perils from the resistless rage of flames; perils from the insidious artifices of thieves, or the outrageous violence of robbers; perils from the irregular workings* of our own thoughts, and especially from the incursions of our spiritual enemy.

What dreadful mischief might that restless, that implacable adversary of mankind work, was there not an invisible hand to control his rage, and protect poor mortals! What scenes of horror might he represent to our imaginations, and "scare us with dreams, or terrify us with visions!"† But the Keeper of Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps, interposes in our behalf, at once to cherish us under his wings, and to defend us with a shield. It is said of Solomon, "that threescore valiant men were about his bed, all expert in war; every one with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night;" (Song iii. 7, 8.) but one greater than Solomon, one mightier than myriads of armed hosts, even the great Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength, vouchsafes to encamp about our houses, watch over our sleeping minutes, and to stop all the avenues of ill. O! the unwearied and condescending goodness of our Creator! who lulls us to our rest by bringing on the silent shades; and plants his own ever-watchful eye as our sentinel, while we enjoy the needful repose.

Reason now resigns her sedate office, and fancy, extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a maze of vanity. The head is crowned with false images, and tantalized with the most ridiculous misapprehensions of things. Some are expatiating amidst fairy fields and gathering garlands of visionary bliss, while their bodies are stretched on a wisp of straw, and sheltered by the cobwebs of a barn. Others, quite insensible of their rooms of state, are mourning in a doleful dungeon, or struggling with the raging billows. Perhaps, with hasty steps, they climb the craggy cliff, and with real anxiety fly from the imaginary danger; or else, benumbed with sudden fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their hopes and their efforts; and, though reclined on a couch of ivory, are sinking, all helpless and distressed, in the furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the vagaries of the brain, while sleep maintains its dominion over the limbs.

But is this the only season when absurd and incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds? Are there not those who dream even in their waking moments?—Some pride themselves in a notion of superior excellency, because the royal favour has annexed a few splendid titles to their names, or because the dying silk-worm has bequeathed her finest threads to cover their nakedness. Others congratulate their own signal happiness, because loads of golden lumber are amassed together in their coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after substantial satisfaction from airy

* I think it is referable only to a superintending and watchful providence, that we are not hurried into the most pernicious actions, when our imagination is heated, and our reason stupified by dreams. We have sometimes heard of unfortunate persons, who, walking in their sleep, have thrown themselves headlong from a window, and been dashed to death on the pebbles. And whence is it that such disastrous accidents are only related as pieces of news, not experienced by ourselves or our families? Were our minds more sober in their operations, or more circumspect in their regards? No verily, nothing could be more wild than their excursions, and none could be more inattentive to their own welfare. Therefore, if we have laid us down, and slept in peace, it was because the Lord vouchsafed us the sweet refreshment; if we rose again in safety, it was because the Lord sustained us with his unremitted protection.

Will the candid reader excuse me, if I add a short story, or rather matter of fact, suitable to the preceding remark? Two persons who had been hunting together in the day, slept together the following night. One of them was renewing the pursuit in his dream; and, having run the whole circle of the chase, came at last to the fall of the stag. Upon this, he cries out with a determined ardour, I'll kill him; I'll kill him; and immediately feels for the knife, which he carried in his pocket. His companion happening to be awake, and observing what passed, leaped from the bed: being secure from danger, and the moon shining into the room, he stood to view the event; when, to his inexpressible surprise, the infatuated sportsman gave several deadly stabs, in the very place, where, a moment before, the throat and the life of his friend lay. This I mention as a proof that nothing hinders us, even from being assassins of others, or murderers of ourselves, amidst the mad sallies of sleep—but the preventing care of our heavenly Father.

† What a complete master that malignant spirit is in exhibiting visionary representations, appears from his conduct towards Christ on the high mountain; and that he is too ready, if not restrained by an over-ruling power, to employ his dexterity in afflicting mankind, is evident from his treatment of Job. See Luke iv. 5. Job vii. 14.

applause: and flatter themselves with I know not what immortality, in the momentary buzz of renown. Are any of these a whit more reasonable in their opinions, than the poor ragged wretch in his reveries, who while snoring under a hedge, exults in the possession of his stately palace and sumptuous furniture? If persons who are very vassals to their own domineering passions, and led captive by numberless temptations; if these persons pique themselves with a conceit of their liberty, and fancy themselves the generous and gallant spirits of the age; where is the difference between theirs and the madman's frenzy, who though chained to the floor, is throned in thought, and wielding an imaginary sceptre? In a word, as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of fortune; as many as send their souls to seek for bliss in the blandishments of sense, or in any thing short of the divine favour, and a well grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance;* what are they, but dreamers with their eyes open—delirious, though in health?

Would you see their picture drawn to the very life, and the success of their schemes calculated with the utmost exactness; cast your eye upon that fine representation exhibited by the prophet: "It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or, as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite; (Isa. xxix. 8. Such is the race, and such the prize, of all those candidates for honour and joy, who run wide from the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. They live in vanity, and die in woe. Awaken us, merciful Lord, from these noon-tide trances! Awaken us, while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not serve only to increase our torment. O! let our "eyes be enlightened to discern the things that are excellent," and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic appearances, which, however pompous they may seem, will prove more empty than the visions of the night, more transient than the dream that is forgotten.

Having mentioned sleep and dreams, let me once again consider those remarkable incidents of our frame; so very remarkable, that I may venture to call them a kind of experimental mystery, and little less than a standing miracle. Behold the most vigorous constitution when stretched on the bed of ease, and totally resigned to the slumbers of the night: its activity is oppressed with fetters of indolence; its strength is consigned over to a temporary annihilation; the nerves are like a bow unstrung, and the whole animal system is like a motionless log. Behold a person of the most delicate sensations, and amiable dispositions: his eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the visual ray, at least distinguish not objects: his ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the sound, at least apprehend not the meaning. The senses, and their exquisitely fine feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable stupefaction. You call him a social creature: but where are his social affections? He knows not the father that begat him, and takes no notice of the friend that is as his own soul. The wife of his bosom may expire by his side, and he lie more unconcerned than a barbarian. The children of his body may be tortured with the severest pangs, and he, even in the same chamber, remain untouched with the least commiseration. Behold the most ingenious scholar, whose judgment is piercing, and able to trace the most intricate difficulties of science; his taste refined, and quick to relish all the beauties of sentiment and composition: yet, at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual economy quite disconcerted. Instead of close connected reasonings, nothing but a disjointed huddle of absurd ideas; instead of well-digested principles, nothing but a disorderly jumble of crude conceptions: the most palpable delusions impose upon his imagination. The whole night passes, and he frequently mistakes it for a single minute; is not sensible of the transition, hardly sensible of any duration.

Yet, no sooner does the morning draw back his curtains, and day-light fill the room, but he awakes, and finds himself possessed of all the valuable endowments, which, for several hours were suspended or lost. His sinews are braced, and fit for action; his senses are alert and keen. The romantic visionary brightens into the master of reason. The frozen or benumbed affections melt with tenderness, and glow with benevolence; and, what is beyond measure surprising, the intoxicated mind works itself sober, not by slow degrees, but in the twinkling of an eye recovers from its perturbation. Why does not the stupor which deadens all the nice operations of the animal powers hold fast its possession? When the thoughts are once disadjusted, why are they not always in confusion? How is it that they are rallied in a moment; and, from the wildest irregularity, reduced to the most orderly array? From an inactivity resembling death, how is the body so sud-

* These give a sacred and home felt delight,
A sober certainty of waking bliss.—*Milt. Comus.*

denly restored to vigour and agility? From extravagancies bordering upon madness, how is the understanding instantaneously re-established in sedateness and harmony? Surely, "this is the Lord's doing, and it should be marvellous in our eyes;" should awaken our gratitude, and inspirit our praise.

This is the time in which ghosts are supposed to make their appearance. Now the timorous imagination teems with phantoms, and creates numberless terrors to itself. Now dreary forms, in sullen state, stalk along the gloom; or, swifter than lightning, glide across the shades. Now voices more than mortal* are heard from the echoing vaults, and groans issue from the hollow tombs. Now melancholy spectres visit the ruins of ancient monasteries, and frequent the solitary dwellings of the dead. They pass and repass, in unsubstantial images, along the forsaken galleries; or take their determined stand over some lamented grave. How often has the school-boy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needless step, in order to avoid the haunted churchyard! Or if necessity, sad necessity, has obliged him to cross the spot, where human skulls are lodged below, and the baleful yews shed supernumerary horrors above: a thousand hideous stories rush into his memory; fear adds wings to his feet; he scarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him; and blesses his good fortune, if no frightful sound purred at his heels, if no ghastly shape bolted upon his sight.

It is strange to observe the excessive timidity which possesses many people's minds on this fanciful occasion, while they are void of all concern on others of the most tremendous import. Those who are startled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the very apprehenson of a single spectre, are nevertheless unimpressed at the sure prospect of entering into a whole world of disembodied beings; nay, are without any emotions of awe, though they know themselves to be hastening into the presence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit. Should some pale messenger from the regions of the dead draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight, and, appointing some particular place, say, as the horrid apparition to Brutus, *I'll meet thee there!*†, I believe the boldest heart would feel something like a panic; would seriously think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But when a voice from heaven cries, in the awakening language of the prophet, Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel; (Amos iv. 12.) how little is the warning regarded! how soon is it forgot! Preposterous stupidity! to be utterly unconcerned, where it is the truest wisdom to take the alarm; and to be all trepidation, where there is nothing really terrible. Do thou, my soul, remember thy Saviour's admonition; "I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear not these imaginary horrors of the night; but fear that awful being, whose revelation of himself, though with expressions of peculiar mercy, made Moses, his favourite servant, tremble exceedingly; whose manifestation, when he appears with purposes of inexorable vengeance, will make mighty conquerors, who were familiar with dangers and estranged to dismay, call upon the mountains to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them! the menace of whose majestic eye, when he comes attended with thousand thousands of his immortal hosts, will make the very heavens cleave asunder, and the earth flee away. O! dread his displeasure; secure his favour; and then thou mayest commit all thy other anxieties to the wind; thou mayest laugh at every other fear."

This brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of Job; (Job iv. 12, 14, &c.) which is, I think, no inconsiderable proof of the real existence of apparitions* on some very extraordinary emergencies, while it discountenances those legions of idle tales, which superstition has raised and credulity received; since it teaches us, that if at any time those visitants from the unknown world render themselves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous consequence, but to convey intelligence of the utmost moment, or to work impressions of the highest advantage.

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* Vox quoque per lucos vulgo ex audita silentes
Ingens, et simulacra modis pallentia miris.
Visa sub obscurum noctis.—*Virg.*

† The story of Brutus and his evil genius, is well known. Nor must it be deemed, that the precise words of the spectre to the hero were, I'll meet thee at Phillippi. But as this would not answer my purpose, I was obliged to make an alteration in the circumstance of place.

* *Is a proof of the real existence of apparitions*, if the sense in which I have always understood this passage be true.—Eliphaz, I apprehend, was neither in a trance nor in a dream, but perfectly awake.—Though he speaks of sleep, he speaks of it as fallen not upon himself, but upon other men. He does not mention dreams, though *somnia* would have suited the verse (if the book be in metre) altogether as well as visions. It could not surely be a wind, as some translate the word; because the circumstance of standing still is not so compatible with the nature of a wind; and a wind would have passed above him, all around him, as well as before him: not to add, how low a remark it is, and how unworthy of a place in so august a description, that he could not discern the form of a wind.—It seems, therefore, to have been a real spirit; either angelical, as were those which presented themselves to Abraham resting at the door of his tent, and to Lot sitting in the gate of Sodom; or else the spirit of some departed saint, as in the case of Samuel's apparition, or the famous appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration; a spirit assuming some vehicle, in order to become visible to the human eye; which, accordingly, Eliphaz saw, exhibiting itself as an object of sight, but saw so obscurely and indistinctly, that he was not able to describe its aspect, or to discern whom it resembled.

It was in the dead of night: all nature lay shrouded in darkness: Every creature was buried in sleep: The most profound silence reigned through the universe. In these solemn moments, Eliphaz alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly subjects; when, lo! an awful being from the invisible realms burst into his apartment.* A spirit passed before his face. Astonishment seized the beholder; his bones shivered within him; his flesh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head stood erect with horror. Sudden and unexpected was the appearance of the phantom; not such its departure. It stood still, to present itself more fully to his view: It made a solemn pause, to prepare his mind for some momentous message. After which a voice was heard; a voice, for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance; for the solemnity of its delivery, enough to alarm a heart of stone. It spoke, and this was the purport of its words: "Shall man, frail man, be just before the mighty God? Shall even the most accomplished of mortals be pure in the sight of his Maker?† Behold, and consider it attentively: He put no such trust in his most exalted servants as should bespeak them incapable of defect! and his very angels he charged with folly, as sinking, even in the highest perfection of their holiness, infinitely beneath his transcendent glories; as falling, even in all the fidelity of their obedience, inexpressibly short of the homage due to his adorable majesty. If angelic natures must not presume to justify either themselves or their services before uncreated purity, how much more absurd is such a notion, how much more impious such an attempt, in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose original is from the dust, and whose state is all imperfection."

I would observe from hence, the very singular necessity of that poverty of spirit which entirely renounces it own attainments, and most thankfully submits to the righteousness of the incarnate God. To inculcate this lesson, the Son of the Blessed came down from heaven, and pressed no other principle with so repeated an importunity on his hearers.* To instil the same doctrine, the Holy Ghost touched the lips of the apostles with sacred eloquence, and made it an eminent part of their commission "to demolish every high imagination." That no expedient might be wanting to give it a deep and lasting efficacy on the human mind, a phantom arises from the valley of the shadow of death, or a teacher descends from the habitation of spirits. Whatever then we neglect, let us not neglect to cultivate this grace, which has been so variously taught, so powerfully enforced.

Hark! a doleful voice. With sudden starts, and hideous screams, it disturbs the silence of the peaceful night. It is the screech-owl, sometimes in frantic, sometimes in disconsolate accents, uttering her woes.† She flies the vocal grove, and shuns the society of all the feathered choir. The blooming gardens, and flowery meads, have no charms for her. Obscure shades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, are her favourite haunts. Above, the mouldering precipice nods, and threatens a fall; below, the toad crawls, or the poisonous adder hisses. The sprightly morning which awakens other animals into joy, administers no pleasure to this gloomy recluse. Even the smiling face of day is her aversion, and all its lovely scenes create nothing but uneasiness.

So, just so, would it fare with the ungodly, were it possible to suppose their admission into the chaste and bright abodes of endless felicity. They would find nothing but disappointment and shame, even at the fountain-head of happiness and honour. For how could the tongue habituated to profaneness, taste any delight in the harmonious adorations of heaven? How could the lips cankered with slander, relish the raptures of everlasting praise? Where would

* I have given this solemn picture a modern dress, rather for the sake of variety and illustration, than from any apprehension of improving the admirable original. Such an attempt, I am sensible, would be more absurdly vain, than to lacquer gold, or to paint the diamond. The description in Eliphaz's own language is awful and affecting to the last degree—a night-piece, dressed in all the circumstances of the deepest horror. I question whether Shakespeare himself, though so peculiarly happy for his great command of terrifying images, has any thing superior or comparable to this. The judges of fine composition see the masterly strokes; and I believe the most ordinary reader feels them chilling his blood, and awakening emotions of dread in his mind.

† There seems to be a significant and beautiful gradation in the Hebrew, which I have endeavoured to preserve by a sort of paraphrastic version. The reader will observe a new turn given to the sentiment, preferable, I think, to that which our English translation exhibits. Not, "Shall man be more just than God?" but, "Shall man be just before, or in the sight of God?" The passage thus rendered, speaks a truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated; a truth exactly parallel to that humbling confession of the prophet, "we are all as an unclean thing;" and to that solemn declaration of the Psalmist; "In thy sight shall no man living be justified."

* It is well worthy of our observation, says an excellent commentator, that no one sentence uttered by our Lord, is so frequently repeated as this; "Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted," which occurs at least ten times in the Evangelists; but is never duly accomplished in us, till we disclaim all pretensions to merit and righteousness of our own, and seek them only in the atonement and obedience of Jesus Christ.

† Solaque culminibus serali carmine bubo
Sepe queri, longasque in fletum ducere voces.
Virgil.

Thus sung that charming genius, that prince of the ancient poets, that most consummate master of elegance and accuracy; all whose sentiments are nature, whose every description is a picture, whose whole language is music.

be the satisfaction of the vain beauty, or the supercilious grandee? Since, in the temple of the skies, no incense of flattery would be addressed to the former, nor any obsequious homage paid to the latter. The spotless and inconceivable purity of the blessed God, would flash confusion on the lascivious eye. The envious mind must be on a rack of self-tormenting passions, to observe millions of happy beings shining in all the perfections of glory, and solacing themselves in the fulness of joy. In short, the unsanctified soul, amidst holy and triumphant spirits, even in the refined regions of bliss and immortality, would be like this melancholy bird, dislodged from her darksome retirement, and imprisoned under the beams of day.*

The voice of this creature screaming at our windows, or of the raven croaking over our houses, is, they say, a token of approaching death. There are persons who would regard such an incident with no small degree of solicitude. Trivial as it is, it would damp their spirits, perhaps break their rest. One cannot but wonder, that people should suffer themselves to be affrighted at such fantastical, and yet be quite unaffected with real, presages of their dissolution. Real presages of this awful event address us from every quarter. What are these incumbent glooms which overwhelm the world, but a kind of pall provided for nature, and an image of that long night, which will quickly cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What an affinity has the sleep,† which will very soon weigh down my drowsy eye-lids, with that state of entire cessation, in which all my senses must be laid aside! The silent chamber, and the bed of slumber, are a very significant representation of the land where all things are hushed, all things are forgotten. What meant that deep death-bell note, which the other evening saddened the air? Laden with heavy accents, it struck our ears, and seemed to knock at the door of our hearts. Surely, it brought a message to surviving mortals, and thus the tidings ran: "Mortals, the destroyer of your race is on his way. The last enemy has begun the pursuit, and is gaining ground upon you every moment. His paths are strewed with heaps of slain. Even now his javelin has laid one of your neighbours in the dust; and will soon, very soon, aim the inevitable blow at each of your lives."

We need not go down to the charnel-house, nor carry our research into the repositories of the dead, in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of these remembrancers are planted in all our paths, and point the heedless passengers to their long home. I can hardly enter a considerable town, but I meet the funeral procession; or the mourners going about the streets. The hatchment suspended on the wall, or the crape streaming in the air, are silent intimations, that both rich and poor have been emptying their houses, and replenishing their sepulchres. I can scarce join in any conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the physician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have just dropt their clay amidst weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the earth. There's not a newspaper comes to my hand, but, amidst all its entertaining narrations, reads several serious lectures of mortality. What else are the repeated accounts of age worn out by slow-consuming sicknesses; of youth dashed to pieces by some sudden stroke of casualty; of patriots exchanging their seats in the senate, for a lodging in the tomb; of misers resigning their breath, and (O! relentless destiny!) leaving their very riches for others? Even the vehicles of our amusement are registers of the deceased; and the voice of fame seldom sounds but in concert with a knell.

These monitors crowd every place; not so much as the scenes of our diversion excepted. What are the decorations of our public buildings, and the most elegant furniture of our parlours, but the imagery of death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble bust, and those gilded pictures, how solemnly they recognise the fate of others, and speakingly remind us of our own! I see, I hear, and O! I feel this great truth: It is interwoven with my constitution. The frequent decays of the structure foretell its final ruin. What are all the pains that have been darted through my limbs; what every disease that has assaulted my health; but the advanced guards of the foe? What are the languors and weariness that attend the labours of each revolving day, but the more secret practices of the adversary, slowly undermining the earthly tabernacle?

Amidst so many notices, shall we go on thoughtless and unconcerned? Can none of these prognostics, which are as sure as oracles, awaken our attention, and engage

* I would beg of the reader to observe, with what emphasis and propriety, our Lord touches this important point, in his reply to Nicodemus. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." q. d. "I wave the authority of the supreme Judge, and speak with the condescension of a teacher in Israel. Though I might, without being liable to the least control, pass it into a sovereign decree, That unrenewed mortals, who are slaves to corrupt appetites, shall not enter the habitations of the just; I rather choose to represent it as a case utterly impossible; and charge the calamity, not upon divine severity, but upon human folly. Such persons, from the very nature of things, preclude themselves; they incapacitate their own minds; and contrarities must be reconciled, before they, in their unregenerate condition, can be partakers of those spiritual and sublime delights." John iii. 3.

† Et consanguineus lethi sopor.—*Virg.*

our circumspection? Noah, it is written, being warned of God, prepared an ark. Imitate, my soul—imitate this excellent example. Admonished by such a cloud of witnesses, be continually putting thyself in a readiness for the last change. Let not that day, of which thou hast so many infallible signs, come upon thee unawares. Get the ivy untwined, and thy affections disentangled from this enchanting world, that thou mayest be able to quit it without reluctance. Get the dreadful hand-writing cancelled, and all thy sins blotted out, that thou mayest depart in peace, and have nothing to fear at the decisive tribunal. Get, O! get thyself interested in the Redeemer's merits; and transformed into his sacred image; then shalt thou be meet for the inheritance of saints in light, and mayest even desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.

Sometimes in my evening walk I have heard

> ——The wakeful bird,
> Sing darkling, and in shadiest covert hid,
> Tune her nocturnal note.*

How different the airs of this charming songster, from those harsh and boding outcries! The little creature ran through all the variations of music; and showed herself mistress of every grace, which constitutes or embellishes harmony. Sometimes she swells a manly throat, and her song kindles into ardour. The tone is so bold, and strikes with such energy, you would imagine the sprightly serenader in the very next thicket. Anon the strain languishes, and the mournful warbler melts into tenderness. The melancholy notes just steal upon the shades, and faintly touch your ear; or, in soft and sadly pleasing accents, they seem to die along the distant vales, silence is pleased, and night listens to the trilling tale.

What an invitation is this, to slip away from the thronged city! This coy and modest minstrel entertains only the lovers of retirement. Those who are carousing over their bowls, or ranting at the riotous club, lose this feast of harmony. In like manner, the pleasures of religion, and the joy of reconciliation with God; the satisfaction arising from an established interest in Christ, and from the prospect of a blissful immortality; these are all lost to the mind that is ever in the crowd, and dares not, or delights not, to retire within itself. Are we charmed with the nightingale's song! Do we wish to have it nearer, and hear it oftener! Let us seek a renewed heart, and a resigned will, a conscience that whispers peace, and passions that are tuned by grace; then shall we never want a melody in our breasts, far more musically pleasing than sweet Philomela's sweetest strains.

As different as the voices of these birds, are the circumstances of those few persons who continue awake. Some are squandering pearls, shall I say, or kingdoms? No; but what is unspeakably more precious—Time! squandering this inestimable talent with the most senseless and wanton prodigality. Not content with allowing a few spare minutes for the purpose of necessary recreation, they lavish many hours, devote whole nights, to that idle diversion of shuffling, ranging, and detaching a set of painted pasteboards. Others, instead of this busy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even piquet themselves,* and call it amusement; they are torn by wild horses, yet term it a sport. What else is the gamester's practice? His mind is stretched on the tenter-hooks of anxious suspense, and agitated by the fiercest extremes of hope and fear. While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing, his fortune is tottering; and possibly, at the very next throw, the one sinks in the gulf of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of distraction.

Some, snatched from the bloom of health and the lap of plenty, are confined to the chamber of sickness; where they are constrained either to plunge into the everlasting world in an unprepared condition, or else (sad alternative!) to think over all the follies of a heedless life, and all the bitterness of approaching death. The disease rages, it baffles the force of medicine, and urges the reluctant wretch to the brink of the precipice. While furies rouse the conscience, and point at the bottomless pit below. Perhaps his drooping mother, deprived long ago of the husband of her bosom, and bereft of all her other offspring, is even now receiving the blow which consummates her calamities.† In vain she tries to assuage the sorrows of a

* Milt. Par. Lost. Book III. l. 38.

* Alluding to a very painful punishment, inflicted on delinquents among the soldiery.

† This brings to my mind one of the deepest mourning-pieces extant in the productions of the pen. The sacred historian paints it in all the simplicity of style, yet with all the strength of colouring; "when Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." What a gradation is here! How pathetically beautiful! every fresh circumstance widens the wound, aggravates the calamity, till the description is worked up into the most finished picture of exquisite and inconsolable distress. He was a young man, cut off in the flower of life amidst a thousand gay expectations and smiling hopes. A son, an only son; the afflicted mother's all, so that none remained to preserve the name or perpetuate the family. What rendered the case still more deplorable, she was a widow! left entirely desolate; abandoned to her woes; without any to share her sorrows, or to comfort her under the irreparable loss. Is not this a fine sketch of the impassioned and picturesque? Who can consider the narrative with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated with a tender commiseration? Luke vii. 12.

beloved son: in vain she attempts, with her tender offices, to prolong a life dearer than her own. He faints in her arms: he bows his head: he sinks in death. Fatal, doubly fatal, that last expiring pang! While it dislodges the unwilling soul, it rends an only child from the yearning embraces of a parent, and tears away the support of her age from a disconsolate widow.

While these long for a reprieve, others invite the stroke. Quite weary of the world, with a restless impatience, they sigh for dissolution; some pining away under the tedious decays of an incurable consumption, or gasping for breath and almost suffocated by an inundation of dropsical waters. On some a relentless cancer has fastened its envenomed teeth, and is gnawing them, though in the midst of bodily vigour, in the midst of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by convulsive fits of the stone. O! how the pain writhes their limbs! How the sweat bedews their flesh, and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks the night condoles with these her distressed children, and sheds dewy tears over their sorrowful abodes. But, of all mortals, they are the most exquisitely miserable, who groan beneath the pressure of a melancholy mind, or smart under the lashes of a resentful conscience. Though robed in ermine, or covered with jewels, the state of a slave chained to the gallies, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradise compared with theirs.

O that the votaries of mirth, whose life is a continued round of merriment and whim, would bestow one serious reflection on this variety of human woes! It might teach them to be less enamoured with the few languid sweets, that are thinly scattered through this vale of tears, and environed with such a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them no longer to dance away their years, with a giddy rambling impulse; but to aspire with a determined aim, after those happy regions, where delights abundant and unimbittered flow.

Can there be circumstances which a man of wisdom would more earnestly deprecate than these several instances of grievous tribulation? There are; and what is very astonishing, they are frequently the desire and the choice of those, who fancy themselves the sole heirs of happiness: Those, I mean, who are launching out into the depths of extravagance, and running excessive lengths of riot; who are prostituting their reputation, and sacrificing their peace, to the gratification of their lusts; sapping the foundation of their health in debaucheries, or shipwrecking the interests of their families in their bowls, and what is worse, are forfeiting the joys of an eternal heaven, for the sordid satisfactions of the beast, for the transitory sensations of an hour. Ye slaves of appetite, how far am I from envying your gross sensualities and voluptuous revels! Little, ah! little are you sensible, that while indulgence showers her roses, and luxury diffuses her odours, they scatter poisons also, and shed unheeded bane.*—Evils incomparably more malignant than the wormwood and gall of the sharpest affliction. Since death is in the drunkard's cup, and worse than poinards in the harlot's embrace, may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his share of these pestilent sweets!†

Abundance of living sparks glitter in the lanes, and twinkle under the hedges. I suppose they are the glow-worms, which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, through the absence of the sun, to play a feeble beam. A faint glimmer just serves to render them perceivable, without tending at all to dissipate the shades, or making any amends for the departed day. Should some weather-beaten traveller, dropping with wet, and shivering with cold, hover round this mimicry of fire, in order to dry his garments and warm his benumbed limbs; should some bewildered traveller, groping for his way, in a starless night, and trackless desert, take one of these languid tapers, as a light to his feet, and a lantern to his path; how certainly would both the one and the other be frustrated of their expectation! And are they more likely to succeed, who, neglecting that sovereign balm which distilled from the cross, apply any carnal diversion to heal the anxiety of the mind? who, deaf to the infallible decisions of revelation, resign themselves over to the erroneous conjectures of reason, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life? or, lastly, who have recourse to the froth of this vain world, for a satisfactory portion and a substantial happiness? Their conduct is in no degree wiser; their disappointment equally sure; and their miscarriage infinitely more disastrous. To speak in the delicate language of a sacred writer, "they sow the wind, and will reap the whirlwind." Hos. viii. 7.

To speak more plainly, the pleasures of the world, which we are all so prone to dote upon; and the powers of fallen reason, which some are so apt to idolize;‡ are not

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* Yes in the flow'rs that wreathe the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and pois'nous serpents roll.
Prior's Sol.

† "Quam suava est suavitatibus istis carere!"—was St. Augustine's pious exclamation. The substance of which Mr. Pope has expressed with more simplicity, and with no less dignity.

Count all the advantage prospepous Vice attains.
'Tis but what Virtue flies from and disdains.

‡ I hope it will be observed, that I am far from decrying that noble faculty of reason when exerted in her proper sphere, when acting in a differential subordination to the revealed will of heaven. While she ex-

only vain, but treacherous; not only a painted flame, like the sparkling animals, but much like those unctuous exhalations, which arise from the marshy ground, and often dance before the eye of the benighted way-faring man. Kindled into a sort of fire, they personate a guide, and seem to offer their service; but blazing with delusive light, mislead their follower into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulfs; where, far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of succour, the unhappy wanderer is swallowed up and lost.

Not long ago we observed a very surprising appearance in the western sky. A prodigious star took its flaming route through those coasts; and trailed as it passed, a tremendous length of fire, almost over half the heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous stranger, with much the same anxious amazement as Belshazzar beheld the hand-writing upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a bloody* flag, hung out by divine resentment over a guilty world. Some read in its glaring visage the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms.† To others it shook, or seemed to shake, pestilence and war from its horrid hair. For my part, I am not so superstitious as to regard what every astrologer has to prognosticate upon the accession of a comet, or the projection of its huge vapoury train. Nothing can be more precarious and unjustifiable, than to draw such conclusions from such events; since they neither are preternatural effects, nor do they throw the frame of things into any disorder. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled those stupendous orbs from his creating hand, and leads them by his providential eye, through unmeasurable tracts of ether; who bids them now approach the sun, and glow with unsufferable ardours;‡ now retreat to the utmost bounds of our planetary system, and make their entry among other worlds.

They are harmless visitants. I acquit them from the charge of causing, or being accessory to desolating plagues. Would to God there were no other more formidable indications of approaching judgments, or impending ruin! But, alas! when vice becomes predominant, and irreligion almost epidemical; when the sabbaths of a jealous God are notoriously profaned, and that name which is great, wonderful, and holy, is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to the most execrable purposes; when the worship of our great Creator and Preserver is banished from many of the most conspicuous families, and it is deemed a piece of rude impertinence so much as to mention the gracious Redeemer in our genteel interviews; when it passes for an elegant freedom of behaviour to ridicule the mysteries of Christianity, and a species of refined conversation to taint the air with lascivious hints; when those who sit in the scorner's chair sin with a high hand, and many of those who wear the professor's garb, are destitute of the power, and content themselves with the mere form of godliness; when such is the state of a community, there is reason, too apparent reason, to be horribly afraid. Such phenomena abounding in the moral world, are not fanciful, but real omens. Will not an injured God be avenged on such a nation as this? Will he not be provoked to "sweep it with the besom of destruction?"*

O that the inhabitants of Great Britain would lay these alarming considerations to heart! The Lord of hosts has commanded the sword of civil discord to return into its sheath; but have we returned every one from his evil ways? Are we become a renewed people, devoted to a dying Saviour, and zealous of good works? What mean those peals of sobs which burst from the expiring cattle? What mean those melancholy moans, where the lusty droves were wont to low?† What mean those arrows of untimely deaths, discharged on our innocent and useful animals?

No wantonness or sloth has vitiated the blood of these laborious, temperate creatures. They have contracted no disease

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ercises her powers within these appointed limits, she is unspeakably serviceable, and cannot be too industriously cultivated; but, when she sets up herself in proud contradiction to the sacred oracles; when, all arrogant and self-sufficient, she says to the word of scripture, I have no need of thee; she is then, I must be bold to maintain, not only a glow-worm, but an *ignis fatuus*, not only a bubble, but a snare.

May not this remark, with the strictest propriety, and without the least limitation, be applied to the generality of our modern romances, novels, and theatrical entertainments? These are commonly calculated to inflame a wanton fancy; or, if conducted with so much modesty as not to debauch the affections, they pervert the judgment, and bewilder the taste. By their incredible adventures, their extravagant parade of gallantry, and their characters widely different from truth and nature, they inspire foolish conceits, beget idle expectations, introduce a disgust of genuine history, and indispose their admirers to acquiesce in the decent civilities, or to relish the sober satisfactions of common life.

* ——Liquida si quando nocte cometa
Sanguinei lugubre rubent.—*Virg.*

† ——Crinemque timendi
Sideris, et terris, mutantem regna cometum.

‡ "The comet in the year of 1680, according to Sir Isaac Newton's computation, was, in its nearest approach, above 166 times nearer the sun than the earth is. Consequently, its heat was then 98,000 times greater than that of summer. So that a ball of iron as big as the earth heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50,000 years." Der. Astr. Theo. p. 237.

* Isa. xiv. 23. The eternal sovereign, speaking of Babylon, denounces this threatening, "I will sweep it with the besom of destruction."—What a noble, but dreadful image is here! How strongly and awfully pourtrayed! How pregnant also is its signification; intimating the vile nature, and expressing the total extirpation of this wicked people; at the same time, suggesting the perfect ease with which the righteous God would execute his intended vengeance.

† If these papers should be so happy as to outlive their author, perhaps it may be needful to inform posterity, that the above mentioned hints allude to a most terrible contagious and mortal distemper, raging among the horned cattle in various parts of the kingdom

from unseasonable indulgences and inordinate revellings. The pure stream is their drink; the simple herb their repast. Neither care disturbs their sleep, nor passion inflames their breast. Whence, then, are they visited with such terrible disorders, as no prudence can prevent, nor any medicines heal? Surely these calamities are the weapons of divine displeasure, and manifest chastisements of an evil generation!* Surely God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, has still a controversy with our sinful land! And who can tell where the visitation will end? What a storm may follow these delusive drops? O that we may "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it!" Taught by these penal effects of our disobedience, may we remove the accursed thing from our tents, our practices, our hearts; (Joshua vi. 18.) May we turn from all ungodliness, before wrath come upon us to the uttermost; before iniquity prove our ruin!

Sometimes at this hour, another most remarkable sight amuses the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A blaze of lambent meteors is kindled, or some very extraordinary lights are refracted, in the quarters of the north. The streams of radiance, like legions rushing to the engagement, meet and mingle, insomuch that the air seems to be all conflicting fire. Within a while they start from one another, and, like legions in precipitate flight, sweep each a separate way through the firmament. Now they are quiescent, anon they are thrown into a quivering motion; presently the whole horizon is illuminated with the glancing flames. Sometimes, with an aspect awfully ludicrous, they represent extravagant and antic vagaries: at other times, you would suspect that some invisible hand was playing off the dumb artillery of the skies, and, by a strange expedient, giving us the flash without the roar.

The villagers gaze at the spectacle: first with wonder, then with horror. A general panic seizes the country. Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. The crowds that flock together, instead of diminishing, increase the dread. They catch contagion from each other's looks and words: while fear is in every eye, and every tongue speaks the language of terror. Some see hideous shapes, armies mixing in fierce encounter, or fields swimming with blood. Some foresee direful events, states overthrown, or mighty monarchs tottering on their thrones. Others, scared with still more frightful apprehensions, think of nothing but the day of doom. "Sure," says one, "the unalterable hour is struck, and the end of all things come." "See," replies another, "how the blasted stars look wan! Are not these the signs of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven?" "Jesus, prepare us," (cries a third, and lifts up his eyes in devotion) for the archangel's trump, and the great tribunal!"

If this waving brightness, which plays innocently over our heads, be so amazing to multitudes; what inexpressible consternation must overwhelm unthinking mortals, when the general conflagration commences! The day, the dreadful day, is approaching, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise;"* and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. That mighty hand, which once opened the windows from on high, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, will then unlock all the magazines of fire, and pour a second deluge upon the earth. The vengeful flames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, spread themselves from the centre to the circumference. Nothing can withstand their impetuosity; nothing can escape their rage. Universal desolation attends their progress. Magnificent palaces, and solemn temples, are laid in ashes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers, are mingled in one smoking mass, Not only the productions of human art, but the works of almighty power, are fuel for the devouring element. The everlasting mountains melt, like the snows which cover their summit. Even vast oceans serve only to augment the inconceivable rapidity and fury of the blaze. O! how shall I or others stand undismayed amidst the glare of a burning world, unless the Lord Jehovah be our defence? How shall we be upheld in security, when the globe itself is sinking in a fiery ruin, unless the Rock of ages be our support.

Behold a new spectacle of wonder! The moon is making her entry on the eastern sky. See her rising in clouded majesty!

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* Hinc lætis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis
Et dulces animas plena ad præsepia reddunt,
Balatu hinc pecorum, et crebis, mugitibus amnes,
Arentesque sonant ripæ, collesque supini.—*Virg.*

* 2 Pet. iii. 10. I have often thought this verse an eminent instance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very sound bears a sort of significancy; at least carries an exact correspondence with the sense. The original expression is one of the hoarsest and deepest words in language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the ear, as well as impress the imagination, with the wreck of nature, and the crash of a fallen world. I scarce ever read this clause, but it brings to my mind that admired description in Milton:

> ——On a sudden open fly,
> With impetuous recoil, and jarring sound,
> Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
> Harsh thunder.—*Book.* II. l. 879.

It is a pleasing employ, and a very laudable office of true criticism, to point out these inferior recommendations of the sacred classics. Though I believe, the inspired writers themselves, amidst all the elevation and magnificence of their divine ideas, disdained a scrupulous attention to such little nicetics of style.

opening as it were, and asserting her original commission to rule over the night. All grand and stately, but somewhat sullied is her aspect. However, she brightens as she advances, and grows clearer as she climbs higher, till at length her silver loses all its dross: she unveils her peerless light, and becomes "the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars,"* delighting every eye, and cheering the whole world, with the brightness of her appearance and the softness of her splendours.—O, thou queen of the shades! may it be my ambition to follow this thy instructive example! While others are fond to transcribe the fashions of little courts, and to mimic personages of inferior state; be it mine to imitate thy improving purity. May my conduct become more unblemished, and my temper more refined, as I proceed farther and farther in my probationary course. May every sordid desire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually lost, as I make nearer approaches to the celestial mansions. Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too shall shine in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? shine with a richer lustre than that which radiates from thy resplendent orb; shine with an unfading lustre, when every ray that beams from thy beauteous sphere is totally extinguished?

The day afforded us a variety of entertaining sights. These were all withdrawn at the accession of darkness. The stars, kindly officious, immediately lent us their aid. This served to alleviate the frown of night, rather than to recover the objects from their obscurity. A faint ray, scarcely reflected, and not from the entire surface of things, gave the straining eye a very imperfect glimpse; such as rather mocked than satisfied vision. Now the moon is risen, and has collected all her beams, the veil is taken from off the countenance of nature. I see the recumbent flocks; I see the green hedge-rows, though without the feathered choristers hoping from spray to spray. In short, I see once again the world's great picture; not indeed in its late lively colours, but more delicately shaded, and arrayed in softer charms.†

What a majestic scene is here! incomparably grand, and exquisitely fine! The moon, like an immense crystal lamp, pendent in the magnificent ceiling of the heavens. The stars, like so many thousands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure sockets. All pouring their lustre on spacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean, gleaming on the forest; and opening a prospect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint.* We are forward to admire the performances of human art. A landscape, elegantly designed, and executed with a masterly hand; a piece of statuary, which seems, amidst all the recommendations of exact proportion and graceful attitude, to soften into flesh, and almost breathe with life;—these little imitations of nature, we behold with a pleasing surprise. And shall we be less affected, less delighted, with the inexpressibly noble, and completely finished original? The ample dimensions of Ranelagh's dome, the gay illuminations of Vauxhall grove, I should scorn to mention on such an occasion, were they not the objects of general admiration. Shall we be charmed with those puny essays of finite ingenuity, and touched with no transport at this stupendous display of omnipotent skill? at the august grandeur, and shining stateliness of the firmament; which forms an alcove for ten thousand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlasting luminaries? Surely, this must betray, not only a total want of religion, but the most abject littleness of mind, and the utmost poverty of genius.

The moon is not barely "an ornament in the high places of the Lord," (Eccl'us. xliii. 9.) but of signal service to the inhabitants of the earth. How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkness! especially in the long absence of the winter's sun. Welcome, therefore, thrice welcome, this auspicious gift of Providence, to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with silver the raven-coloured mantle of night. How desirable to have our summer evenings illuminated! that we may be able to tread the dewy meads, and breathe the delicious fragrance of our gardens; especially, when the sultry heats render it irksome and fatiguing to walk abroad by day. How cheering to the shepherd the use of this universal lantern, as he tends his fleecy charge, or late consigns them to their hurdled cots! How comfortable and how advantageous to the mariner, as he ploughs the midnight main, to adjust the tackling, to explore his way,

* Eccl'us. xliii. 9.
——Lucidum cœli decus.—*Hor.*

† ——Now reigns
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things.—*Milt.*

* As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head:
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise;
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
Iliad viii.

I transcribe these lines, because Mr. Pope says, they exhibit, in the original, the finest night-piece in poetry. And if they are so beautiful in Homer's language, who can suspect their suffering any disadvantage from the pen of his admirable translator?

and under the influence of this beaming sconce, to avoid the fatal rock! For these, and other beneficial purposes, the hand of the Almighty has hung the stately branch on high; and filled it with a splendour not confined to a single edifice, or commensurate to a particular square, but diffusive as the whole extent of the hemisphere.

The most faithful of our inferior servants are sometimes tardy in their office, sometimes negligent of their duty. But this celestial attendant is most exactly punctual, at all the stated periods of her ministration. If we choose to prolong our journey after the sun is gone down, the moon, during her whole increase, is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to set out very early in the morning, the moon, in her decrease, prevents the dawn, on purpose to offer her assistance. And because it is so pleasant a thing for the eyes to behold the light, the moon, at her full, by a course of unintermitted waiting, gives us as it were a double day. How apparently has the divine wisdom interested itself, in providing even for the pleasurable accommodation of man! How desirous that he should want no piece of commodious furniture, no kind of delightful convenience; and, in prosecution of these benevolent intentions, has annexed so valuable an appendage to the terrestrial globe. Justly, therefore, does the Psalmist celebrate that admirable constitution, which ordained the moon and the stars to govern the night, as an instance of rich goodness, and of mercy which endureth for ever: (Psalm cxxxvi. 9.

The moon, it is confessed, is no luminous body. All the brightness which beautifies her countenance is originally in the sun, and no more than transmissively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light. From thence the morning star gilds her horn;* from thence the planetary circles are crowned with lustre; and from thence the moon derives all her silver radiance. It is pleasing to reflect, that such is the case with the all-sufficient Redeemer, and his dependent people. We are replenished from his fulness. What do we possess which we have not received; and what can we desire, which we may not expect from that never-failing source of all good? He is the author of our faith, and the former of our graces. In his unspotted life, we see the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant resurrection, the proof—of bliss and immortality. If we offend and fall seven times a-day, he is the Lord our peace, (Judges vi. 24.) If we are depraved, and our best deeds very unworthy; he is the Lord our righteousness, (Jer. xxiii. 6.) If we are blind, and even brutish, in heavenly knowledge; he is the Lord our wisdom, (1 Cor. i. 30.) his word dispels the shades; his Spirit scatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkness into day. In short we are nothing, and "Christ is all." Worse than defective in ourselves, "we are complete in him." So that if we shine, it is with delegated rays, and with borrowed light. We act by a strength, and glory in merits, not our own. Oh! may we be thoroughly sensible of our dependence on the Saviour. May we constantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never, by indulging unbelief, or backsliding into folly, withdraw our souls from his benign influences; lest we lose our comfort and our holiness, as the fair ruler of the night loses her splendour, when her urn is turned from its fountain,* and receives no more communications of solar effulgence.

The moon is incessantly varying, either in her aspect, or her stages. Sometimes she looks full upon us, and her visage is all lustre: Sometimes she appears in profile, and shows us only half her enlightened face; anon, a radiant crescent but just adorns her brow; soon it dwindles into a slender streak; till at length, all her beauty vanishes, and she becomes a beamless orb. Sometimes she rises with the descending day, and begins her procession amidst admiring multitudes; ere long, she defers her progress till the midnight watches, and steals unobserved upon the sleeping world. Sometimes she just enters the edges of the western horizon, and drops us a ceremonious visit. Within a while, she sets out on her nightly tour from the opposite regions of the east, traverses the whole hemisphere, and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent partner of her sway renders her presence unnecessary. In a word, she is, while conversant among us, still waxing or waning, and "never continueth in one stay."

Such is the moon, and such are all sublunary things—exposed to perpetual vicissitudes. How often, and how soon, have the faint echoes of renown slept in silence, or been converted into the clamours of obloquy! The same lips; almost with the same breath, cry, Hosanna and Crucify. Have not riches confessed their notorious treachery a thousand and a thousand times? either melting away like snow in our hands

* I might, to justify this expression, observe that the planet Venus, commonly called the morning star, is found by our telescopes frequently to appear horned; or to have a crescent of light, somewhat like the moon, a little before or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark too deep and refined for my scheme; which proceeds only upon a superficial knowledge, and the most obvious appearances of nature.

* Alluding to those truly poetical lines in Milton.

Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
Par. Lost, Book vii.

by insensible degrees, or escaping like a winged prisoner from its cage with a precipitate flight. Have we not known the bridegroom's closet an anti-chamber to the tomb; and heard the voice which so lately pronounced the sparkling pair husband and wife, proclaim an everlasting divorce, and seal the decree with that solemn asseveration, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" Our friends, though the medicine of life—our health, though the balm of nature, are a most precarious possession. How soon may the first become a corpse in our arms; and how easily is the last destroyed in its vigour! You have seen, no doubt, a set of pretty painted birds, perching on your trees, or sporting in your meadows. You was pleased with the lovely visitants, that brought beauty on their wings, and melody in their throats. But could you insure the continuance of this agreeable entertainment? No, truly. At the least disturbing noise, at the least terrifying appearance, they start from their seats, they mount the skies, and are gone in an instant, are gone for ever. Would you choose to have a happiness which bears date with their arrival, and expires at their departure? If you could not be content with a portion, enjoyable only through such a fortuitous term, not of years, but of moments, O! take up with nothing earthly; set your affections on things above; there alone is "no variableness or shadow of turning."

Job is not a more illustrious pattern of patience, than an eminent exemplification of this remark. View him in his private estate. He heaps up silver as the dust; he washes his steps in butter; and the rocks pour him out rivers of oil. View him in his public character: Princes revere his dignity; the aged listen to his wisdom; every eye beholds him with delight; every tongue loads him with blessings. View him in his domestic circumstances: On one hand, he is defended by a troop of sons; on the other, adorned with a train of daughters; and on all sides surrounded by "a very great household." Never was human felicity so consummate; never was disastrous revolution so sudden. The lightning which consumed his cattle was not more terrible, and scarce more instantaneous; the joyful parent is bereft of his offspring, and his children are buried in death. The man of affluence is stript of his abundance; and he who was clothed in scarlet, embraces the dunghill. The venerable patriarch is the derision of scoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent providence, is become "a brother to dragons, a companion of owls." Nor need we go back to former ages for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times, in all times, the wheel continues the same incessant whirl; and frequently those who are triumphing to-day in the highest elevations of joy, to-morrow are bemoaning the instability of mortal affairs in the very depths of misery.* Amid so much fluctuation and uncertainty, how wretched is the condition which has no anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast! May thy loving kindness, O God, be our present treasure; and thy future glory our reversionary inheritance! Then shall our happiness not be like the full-orbed moon, which is "a light that decreaseth in its perfection;" but like the sun, when he goeth forth in his strength, and knoweth no other change, but that of shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Methinks, in this ever varying sphere, I see a representation not only of our temporal advantages, but also of our spiritual accomplishments. Such, I am sure, is what the kind partiality of a friend would call my righteousness; and such, I am apt to suspect,† is the righteousness of every man living. Now we exercise it in some few instances, in some little degrees: anon, sin revives, and leads our souls into a transient though unwilling captivity. Now we are meek; but soon a ruffling accident intervenes, and turns our composure into a fretful disquietude. Now we are humble; soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable or

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* I believe I may venture to apply what the Temanite says of the affairs of the wicked to all sublunary things, as a true description of their very great instability. Job xxii. 16. rendered by Schultens, "*Flumen fusum fundamentum eorum.*" Their foundation, (or what they reckon their most solid and stable possession) is a flood poured out: which is one of the boldest images, and most poetical beauties I ever met with in any language sacred or profane. In order to have a tolerable conception of the image, and a taste of its beauty, you must suppose a torrent of waters, rushing in broken cataracts, and with impetuous rapidity, from a steep and craggy mountain. Then imagine to yourself an edifice built upon the surge of this rolling precipice, which has no other basis than one of those headlong whirling waves. Was there ever such a representation of transitory prosperity, tending with inconceivable swiftness, unto ruin? Yet such is every form of human felicity, that is not grounded on Jesus, and a participation of his merits, who is the Rock of ages; on Jesus, and his image formed in our hearts, which is the hope of glory.

† I would not be understood as measuring in this respect, others by myself; but as taking my estimate from the unerring standard of Scripture. And indeed, proceeding on this evidence, supported by this authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare suspicion. For "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," says the Spirit of inspiration by Solomon (Eccles. vii. 20.) Nay, such is the purity, and so extensive are the demands of the divine law, that an apostle makes a still more humbling acknowledgment; "In many things we offend all." (James iii. 2.) And the unerring teacher, who most thoroughly knew our frame, directs the most advanced, most established, and most watchful Christians, to pray daily for the forgiveness of their daily trespasses.—To which testimonies, I beg leave to add an elegant passage from the Canticles; because it not only expresses the sentiment of this paragraph, but illustrates it by the very same similitude. She (the church) is fair as the moon; clear as the sun. Fair as the moon, the lesser and changeable light, in her sanctification; clear as the sun, the greater and invariable luminary in her justification. The inherent holiness of believers being imperfect, and subject to many inequalities; while their imputed righteousness is every way complete, and constantly like itself. Cant. vi. 10.

imaginary superiority over others, and a sudden elatement swells our minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a clean heart, and are warm with holy love; but, O! how easily is the purity of our affections sullied! how soon the fervour of our gratitude cooled! And is there not something amiss even in our best moments? Something to be ashamed of in all we are, something to be repented of in all we do?

With what gladness, therefore, and adoring thankfulness, should we submit to the righteousness of "our incarnate God;" and receive as a divine gift, what cannot be acquired by human works! (Rom. v. 17, —x. 3.) A writer of the first distinction, and nicest discernment, styles the obedience of our glorious Surety, an everlasting righteousness, (Dan. ix. 24.) such as was subject to no interruption, nor obscured by the least blemish, but proceded always in the same uniform tenor of the most spotless perfection. This righteousness, in another sense, answers the prophet's exalted description; as its beneficial and sovereign efficacy knows no end, but lasts through all our life; lasts in the trying hour of death; lasts at the decisive day of judgment; lasts through every generation; and will last to all eternity.

Sometimes I have seen that resplendent globe stript of her radiance; or, according to the emphatical language of Scripture, "turned into blood." The earth, interposing with its opaque body, intercepted the solar rays, and cast its gloomy shadow on the moon. The malignant influence gained upon her sickening orb, extinguished more and more the feeble remainders of light, till, at length, like one in a deep swoon, no comeliness was left in her countenance—she was totally overspread with darkness. At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes were gazing upon the rueful spectacle! even of those eyes which disregarded the empress of the night, or beheld her with indifference, when, robed in glory, and riding in her triumphal chariot, she shed a softer day through the nations. But now, under these circumstances of disgrace, they watch her motions with the most prying attention. In every place her misfortune is the object of general observation, and the prevailing topic of discourse in every company.

Is it not thus with regard to persons of eminence in their respective spheres? Kings at the head of their subjects; nobles surrounded with their dependants; and (after names of so much grandeur, may I be allowed to add?) ministers labouring among their people,* are each in a conspicuous station. Their conduct in its minutest step, especially in any miscarriage, will be narrowly surveyed, and critically scanned. Can there be a louder call to ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways? Those who move in inferior life may grossly offend, and little alarm be given, perhaps no notice taken. But it is not to be expected that the least slip in their carriage, the least flaw in their character will pass undiscovered. Malice, with her eagle-eyes, will be sure to discern them, while Censure, with her shrill trumpet, will be as far from concealing them, as Calumny, with her treacherous whispers, from extenuating them. A planet may sink below the horizon, or a star for several months withdraw its shining: and scarce one in ten thousand perceive the loss; but if the moon suffers a transient eclipse, almost half the world are spectators of her dishonour.

Very different was the case, when at this late hour, I have taken a solitary walk on the western cliffs. At the foot of the steep mountain, the sea, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense plain, and held a watery mirror to the skies. Infinite heights above the firmament stretched its azure expanse, bespangled with unnumbered stars, and adorned with the moon "walking in brightness." (Job xxxi. 26.) She seemed to contemplate herself with a peculiar pleasure, while the transparent surface both received and returned her silver image. Here, instead of being covered with sackcloth, she shone with double lustre; or rather, with a lustre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various situations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behaviour in persons of exalted rank. Their course, as it is nobly distinguished, so it will be happily influential; others will catch the diffusive ray, and be ambitious to resemble a pattern so attracting, so commanding. Their amiable qualities will not terminate in themselves, but we shall see them reflected from their families, their acquaintance, their retainers. Just as we may now behold another moon, trembling* in the stream, glittering in the canal, and displaying its lovely impress on every collection of waters.

The moon, philosophy says, is a sort of sovereign over the great deep. Her orb, like a royal sceptre, sways the ocean, and actuates the fluid realms. It swells the tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb and flow, by which means the liquid element purges off its filth, and is preserved from being putrefied itself, and from poisoning the world. Is the moon thus operative on the vast abyss? and shall not the faith

* "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." Matt. v. 14.

* Splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus.

of eternal and infinite delights to come, be equally efficacious on this soul of mine? Far above her argent fields are treasures of happiness, unseen by mortal eye, by mortal ear unheard, and unconceived by any human imagination. In that desirable world, the most distinguished and exalted honours also are conferred; in comparison with which the thrones and diadems of earthly monarchs are empty pageants, and childish toys. Yonder arch of sapphire, with all its spangles of gold, is but the floor of those divine abodes. What then are the apartments? what is the palace? How bright with glories! how rich with bliss!

O! ye mansions of blessedness; ye beauties of my Father's kingdom, which far outshine the lamps of the visible heaven, transmit your sweet and winning invitations to my heart. Attract and refine all my affections. Withdraw them from stagnating on the sordid shores of flesh; never suffer them to settle upon the impure lees of sense; but impress them with emotions of restless desire after sublime and celestial joys,—joys, that will proceed, still proceed, in a copious and everlasting flow, when seas shall cease to roll,—joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginable pleasure, when the moon, with her waxing splendours, shall cheer our sight no more.

Enough for the present evening. My thoughts have been sufficiently exercised, and my steps begin to be attended with weariness. Let me obey the admonition of nature, and give respite to my meditations, slumber to my eyes. But stay.—Shall I retire to the bed of sleep, with as little ceremony, and with as much inattention, as the brutes to their sordid lair? Are no acknowledgments due to that divine Being who is the support of my life, and the length of my days? Have I no farther need of his protecting care; no more occasion for the blessings of his goodness? Lepidus perhaps may laugh at the bended knee, and have a thousand darts of raillery ready to discharge on the practice of devotion. The wits, I know, are unmercifully severe on what they call the drudgery of prayer, and the fantastical rant of praise. These they leave to the illiterate labourer, and the mean mechanic; or treat them with a contemptuous sneer, as the parson's ignoble trade.

Is it then an instance of superstitious blindness to distinguish, or of whimsical zeal to celebrate, the most supereminent excellency and merit? Is it an ungraceful business, or does it argue a grovelling disposition, to magnify goodness transcendently rich and diffusive? What can be so truly becoming a dependant state, as to pay our adoring homage to the Author of all perfection? and profess our devoted allegiance to the supreme Almighty Governor of the universe? Can any thing more significantly bespeak an ingenuous temper, or administer a more real satisfaction to its finest feelings, than the exercises of penitential devotion, by which we give vent to an honest anguish, or melt into filial sorrow, for our insensibility to the best of friends, for our disobedience to the best of parents? In a word, can there be a more sublime pleasure, than to dwell in fixed contemplation on the beauties of the eternal mind; the amiable original of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful? Can there be a more advantageous employ, than to present our requests to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wisdom, and all the faculties of our souls to the communications of his grace? It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the notion of dignity in sentiment, and the pursuit of refined enjoyment, should ever be disunited from devotion; that persons who make pretensions to an improved taste, and exalted genius, should neglect this most ennobling intercourse with the wisest and best of beings, the inexhaustible source of honour and joy.

Shall I be deterred from approaching this source of the purest delight? deterred from pursuing this highest improvement of my nature? deterred from all by a formidable banter, or confuted by one irrefragable smile? No: let the moon in her resplendent sphere, and yonder pole with all its starry train, witness if I be silent even or morn; if I refrain to kindle in my heart, and breathe from my lips, the reasonable incense of praise; praise to that great and glorious God who formed the earth and built the skies, who poured from his hand the watery world, and shed the all-surrounding air abroad. "Thou also madest the night, Maker omnipotent! and thou the day; which I, though less than the least of all thy mercies, have passed in safety, tranquillity, and comfort. When I was lost in the extravagance of dreams, or lay immersed in the insensibility of sleep, thy hand recovered me from the temporary lethargy; thy hand set a new, a delicately fine edge, on all my blunted senses, and strung my sinews with recruited vigour. When my thoughts were benumbed and stupified, thy quickening influence roused them into activity: when they were disconcerted and wild, thy regulating influence reduced them into order; refitting me at once to relish the innocent entertainments of an animal, and to enjoy the sublime gratifications of a rational capacity. When darkness covered the creation, at thy command the sun arose, painted the flowers, and distinguished every object; gave light to my feet, and gave nature with all her

beautiful scenes to my eye. To thee, O thou God of my strength, I owe the continuance of my being, and the vivacity of my constitution. By thy sacred order, without any consciousness of mine, the wheels of life move, and the crimson fountain plays. Overruled by thy exquisite skill, it transforms itself, by the nicest operations of an inexplicable kind of chemistry, into a variety of the finest secretions, which glide into the muscles, and swell them for action, or pour themselves into the fluids, and repair their incessant decays; which cause cheerfulness to sparkle in the eye, and health to bloom in the cheek.

"Disastrous accidents, injurious to the peace of my mind, or fatal to the welfare of my body, beset my paths. But thy faithfulness and truth, like an impenetrable shield, guarded me all around. Under this divine protection, I walked secure amidst legions of apparent perils; and passed unhurt through a far greater multiplicity of unseen evils. Not one of my bones was broken; not a single shaft grazed upon my ease; even when the eye that watched over me, saw, in its wide survey, thousands falling beside me in irrecoverable ruin, and ten thousands deeply wounded on my right hand. If sickness has at any time saddened my chamber, or pain harrowed my flesh, it was a wholesome discipline, and a gracious severity. The chastisement proved a sovereign medicine to cure me of an immoderate fondness for this imperfect troublesome state, and to quicken my desires after the unembittered enjoyments of my eternal home. Has not thy munificence, unwearied and unbounded, spread my table, furnished it with the finest wheat, and replenished it with marrow and fatness: while temperance sweetened the bowl, appetite seasoned the dish, contentment and gratitude crowned the repast? Has not thy kindness, O God of the family of Israel, preserved my affectionate relations, who study by their tender offices to soften every care, and heighten every joy? Has not thy kindness given me valuable friends, whose presence is a cordial to cheer me in a dejected hour, and whose conversation mingles improvement with delight?

"When sin lay disguised amidst flowery scenes of pleasure; enlightened by thy wisdom, I discerned the latent mischief; made resolute by thy grace, I shunned the luscious bane. If, through the impulse of sensuality, or the violence of passion, I have been hurried into the snare, and stung by the serpent; thy faithful admonitions have recalled the foolish wanderer, while the blood of thy Son has healed his deadly wounds. Some, no doubt, have been cut off in the midst of their iniquities, and transmitted from the thrillings of polluted joy to the agonies of eternal despair; whereas I have been distinguished by long-suffering mercy; and, instead of lifting up my eyes in torments, to behold a heaven irrecoverably lost, I may lift them up under the pleasing views of being admitted, ere long, into those abodes of endless felicity. In the mean time, thou hast vouchsafed me the revelation of thy will, the influences of thy Spirit, and abundance of the most effectual aids, for advancing in knowledge, and growing in godliness; for becoming more conformable to thy image, and more meet for thy presence; for tasting the pleasures of religion, and securing the riches of eternity.

"How various is thy beneficence, O thou lover of souls! It has unsealed a thousand sources of good; opened a thousand avenues of delight; and heaped blessings upon me with a ceaseless liberality. If I should attempt to declare them, they would be more than the starry host which glitter in this unclouded sky; more than the dewy gems, which will adorn the face of the morning.

"And, shall I forget the God of my salvation, the author of all my mercies! Rather let my pulse forget to beat. Shall I render him no expressions of thankfulness? Then might all nature reproach my ingratitude. Shall I rest satisfied with the bare acknowledgment of my lips? No; let my life be vocal, and speak his praise, in that only genuine, that most emphatical language, the language of devout obedience. Let the bill be drawn upon my very heart; let all my affections acknowledge the draught; and let the whole tenor of my actions, in time and through eternity, be continually paying the debt, the ever-pleasing, ever-growing debt of duty, veneration, and love.

"And can I, O thou guide of my goings, and guardian of all my interests, can I distrust such signal, such experienced goodness? Thou hast been my helper through all the busy scenes of day; therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I repose myself, during the darkness, the danger, and death-like inactivity of the night. Whatever defilement I have contracted, wash it thoroughly away in redeeming blood; and let neither the sinful stain, nor the sinful inclination, accompany me to my couch. Then shall I lay me down in peace, and take my rest; cheerfully referring it to thy all-wise determination, whether I shall open my eyes in this world, or awake in the unknown regions of another.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON

THE STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS evening, I exchange the nice retreats of art, for the noble theatre of nature. Instead of measuring my steps, under the covert of an arbour, let me range along the summit of this gently rising hill. There is no need of the leafy shade, since the sun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his scorching beams. But see how advantages and inconveniences are usually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the annoying heat ceases, the landscape and its pleasing scenes are also removed. The majestic castle and the lowly cottage are vanished together. I have lost the aspiring mountain, and its russet brow; I look round but to no purpose, for the humble vale, and its flowery lap. The plains whitened with flocks, and the heath yellow with furze, disappear. The advancing night has wrapt in darkness the long extended forest, and drawn her mantle over the windings of the silver stream. I no longer behold that luxuriant fertility in the fields, that wild magnificence of prospect, and endless variety of images, which have so often touched me with delight, and struck me with awe, from this commanding eminence.

The loss, however, is scarcely to be regretted; since it is amply compensated by the opening beauties of the sky. Here I enjoy a free view of the whole hemisphere, without any obstacle from below to confine the exploring eye, or any cloud from above, to overcast the spacious concave. It is true, the lively vermillion, which so lately streaked the chambers of the west, is all faded? But the planets, one after another, light up their lamps; the stars advance in the glittering train; a thousand and a thousand luminaries shine forth in successive splendours; and the whole firmament is kindling into the most beautiful glow. The blueness of the ether, heightened by the season of the year, and still more enlivened by the absence of the moon, gives those gems of heaven the strongest lustre.

One pleasure more the invading gloom has not been able to snatch from my sense. The night rather improves than destroys the fragrance which exales from the blooming beans. With these the sides of this slopping declivity are lined; and with these the balmy zephyrs perfume their wings. Does Arabia, from all her spicy groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of sweets? And, what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural entertainments presented in our happy land, they are alloyed by no apprehensions of danger. No poisonous serpent lurks under the blossom; nor any ravenous beast lies ready to start from the thicket. But I wander from a far more exalted subject. My thoughts, like my affections, are too easily diverted from the heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention! from these little blandishments of the earth; since all the glories of the sky invite thy regard.

We have taken a turn among the tombs, and viewed the solemn memorials of the dead, in order to learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their soft enchantment. We have surveyed the ornaments of the garden; not that the heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race; but that these delicacies of a day might teach us to aspire after a better paradise, where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom. A third time we lighted the candle of meditation; and sought for wisdom, not in the crowded city or wrangling schools, but in the silent and lonely walks of ancient Night.* Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raise our speculations to those sublimer

* Referring to the several subjects of the three preceding essays.

works of the great Creator which the regions of the sky contain, and the dusky hour unveils.*

If we have discerned the touches of his pencil glowing in the colours of spring, if we have seen a sample of his beneficence exhibited in the stores of nature, and a ray of his brightness beaming in the blaze of day; what an infinitely richer field for the display of his perfections are the heavens! The heavens, in the most emphatical manner, declare the glory of God. The heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the most magnificent heralds of their Maker's praise. They speak to the whole universe; for there is neither speech so barbarous, but their language is understood; nor nation so distant, but their voices are heard among them. (Psalm xix. 2.) Let me, then, in this solemn season, formed for thought, and a calm intercourse with heaven, let me listen to their silent lectures. Perhaps I may receive such impressive manifestations of "the eternal power and Godhead," as may shed religion on my soul while I walk the solitary shades, and may be a tutelary friend to my virtue, when the call of business and the return of light expose me again to the inroads of temptation.

The Israelites, instigated by frenzy rather than devotion, worshipped the host of heaven. And the pretenders to judicial astrology talk of I know not what mysterious efficacy in the different aspect of the stars, or the various conjunction and opposition of the planets. Let those who are unacquainted with the sure word of revelation, give ear to these sons of delusion, and dealers in deceit. For my part, it is a question of indifference to me, whether the constellations shone with smiles, or lowered in frowns, on the hour of my nativity. Let Christ be my guard; and, secure in such a protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces. Let Christ be my guide; and I shall scorn to ask as well as despair of receiving, any predictory information from such senseless masses. What! shall "the living seek to the dead?" (Isaiah viii. 19.) Can these bodies advertise me of future events, which are unconscious of their own existence? Shall I have recourse to dull unintelligent matter, when I may apply to that all-wise being, who with one comprehensive glance distinctly views whatever is lodged in the bosom of immensity, or forming in the womb of futurity? Never, never will I search for any intimations of my fate, but often trace my Creator's footsteps* in yonder starry plains. In the former case, they would be teachers of lies; in the latter, they are oracles of truth. In this, therefore, this sense only, I profess myself the pupil of the stars.

The vulgar are apprehensive of nothing more than a multitude of bright spangles dropt over the etherial blue. They have no higher notion of these fine appearances, than that they are so many golden studs with which the empyrean arch is decorated. But studious minds, that carry a more accurate and strict inquiry among the celestial bodies, bring back advices of a most astonishing import. Let me just recollect the most material of those stupendous discoveries, in order to furnish out proper subjects for contemplation. And let the unlearned remember, that the scene I am going to display, is the workmanship of that incomprehensible God, who is "perfect in knowledge and mighty in power;" whose name, whose nature, and all whose operations are "great and marvellous;" who summons into being with equal ease, a single grain, or ten thousand worlds. To this if we continually advert, the assertions, though they will certainly excite our admiration, need not transcend our belief.

The earth is, in fact, a round body, however it may seem in some parts to be sunk into vales, and raised into hills;† in other parts, to be spread into a spacious plain, extending to the confines of the heavens, or terminated by the waters of the ocean.

* Night opes the noblest scenes, and sheds an awe,
Which give those venerable scenes full weight,
And deep reception in th' entender'd heart.
Night Thoughts, No. IX.

* "It is most becoming" (says a great author) "such imperfect creatures as we are, to contemplate the works of God with this design, that we may discern the manifestations of wisdom in them; and thereby excite in ourselves those devout affections, and that superlative respect, which is the very essence of praise, as it is a reasonable and moral service." *Abernethy on the Attributes.* And, indeed, if we are sincerely disposed to employ ourselves in this excellent, this delightful duty of praising the infinite Creator; the means and the motives are both at hand. His works, in a wonderful and instructive variety, present themselves with pregnant manifestations of the most transcendent excellencies of their Maker. They pour their evidence from all quarters, and into all the avenues of the mind. They invite us, especially in the magnificent system of the universe, to contemplate counsel consummately wise, and execution inimitably perfect; power, to which nothing is impossible; and goodness, which extendeth to all, which endureth for ever. To give, not a full display, but only some slight strictures of these glorious truths, is the principal scope of the following remarks.

† A learned writer, I think Dr. Derham, has somewhere an observation to this purpose: That the loftiest summits of hills, and the most enormous ridges of mountains, are no real objections to the globular or round form of the earth. Because, however they may render it, to our limited sight, vastly uneven and protuberant, yet they bear no more proportion to the entire surface of the terraqueous ball, than a particle of dust, casually dropt on the mathematician's globe, bears to its whole circumference. Consequently, the rotund figure is no more destroyed in the former case than in the latter. On the same principle, I have not thought it necessary to take any notice of the comparatively small difference between the polar and equatorial diameter of the earth.

We may fancy that it has deep foundations, and rests upon some prodigiously solid basis: But it is pendent in the wide transpicuous ether, without any visible cause to uphold it from above, or support it from beneath. It may seem to be sedentary in its attitude, and motionless in its situation: But it is continually sailing* through the depths of the sky; and in the space of twelve months finishes the mighty voyage. Which periodical rotation produces the seasons and completes the year. As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it spins upon its own centre, and turns its sides alternately to the fountain of light. By which means the day dawns in one hemisphere, while the night succeeds in the other. Without this expedient, one part of its regions would, during half the great revolution, be scorched with excessive heat, or languish under an unintermitted glare; while the other, exposed to the contrary extremes, would be frozen to ice, and buried under a long oppression of dismal and destructive darkness.

I cannot forbear taking notice, that in this compound motion of the earth, the one never interferes with the other, but both are perfectly compatible. Is it not thus with the precepts of religion, and the needful affairs of the present life; not excepting even the innocent gratifications of our appetites? Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must renounce society, if they devote themselves to Christ; and abandon all the satisfactions of this world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of another. But this is a very mistaken notion, or else a very injurious representation of the doctrine which is according to godliness. It was never intended to drive men into deserts, but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleasant paths of wisdom, into the blissful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the wheels of business, or cut in sunder the sinews of industry; but rather to make men industrious, from a principle of conscience, not from the instigations of avarice; that so they may promote their immortal happiness even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no design to extirpate our passions, but only to restrain their irregularities; neither would it extinguish the delights of sense, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and subsiding into gall. A person may be cheerful among his friends, and yet joyful in God. He may taste the sweets of his earthly estate, and, at the same time cherish his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven. The trader may prosecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negotiate the affairs of his salvation. The warrior may wear his sword, may draw in a just cause that murderous weapon, yet be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The parent may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treasures either of grace or of glory. So far is Christianity from obstructing any valuable interest, or withholding any real pleasure, that it improves the one, and advances the other: Just as the diurnal and annual motions are so far from clashing, that they entirely accord; and instead of being destructive of each other, by mutually blending their effects, they give proportion and harmony to time, fertility and innumerable benefits to nature.

To us who dwell on its surface, the earth is by far the most extensive orb that our eyes can any where behold. It is also clothed with verdure, distinguished by trees, and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations. Whereas, to a spectator placed on one of the planets, it wears an uniform aspect; looks all luminous, and no larger than a spot. To beings who dwell at still greater distances, it entirely disappears. That which we call, alternately, the morning and the evening star, (as in one part of her orbit she rides foremost in the procession of night, in the other ushers in and anticipates the dawn,) is a planetary world; which, with the four others, that so wonderfully vary their mystic dance, are in themselves dark bodies, and shine only by reflection; have fields, and seas, and skies of their own; are furnished with all accommodations for animal subsistence, and are supposed to be the abodes of intellectual life. All which, together with this our earthly habitation, are dependant on that grand dispenser of divine munificence—the sun! receive their light from the distribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from his benign agency.

The sun, which seems to perform its daily stages through the sky, is in this respect,* fixed and immoveable. It is the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more spacious orbs, wheel their stated courses. The sun, though seemingly smaller than the dial it illuminates, is abundantly larger† than this whole earth, on which so many lofty mountains rise, and such vast oceans roll.

* With what amazing speed this vessel, (if I may carry on the allusion,) filled with a multitude of nations, and freighted with all their possessions, makes her way through the etherial space.

* I say, *in this respect*, that I may not seem to forget or exclude the revolution of the sun round its own axis.

† 100,000 times, according to the lowest reckoning. Sir Isaac Newton computes the sun to be 900,000 times bigger than the earth.—*Religious Philosopher*, p. 749

A line, extending from side to side, through the centre of that resplendent orb, would measure more than eight hundred thousand miles: a girdle, formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions: were its solid contents to be estimated, the account would overwhelm our understanding, and be almost beyond the power of language to express.* Are we startled at these reports of philosophy? Are we ready to cry out in a transport of surprise, How mighty is the being, who kindled such a prodigious fire, and keeps alive, from age to age, such an enormous mass of flame? Let us attend to our philosophic guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with speculations more enlarged and more amazing.

The sun, with all its attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the universe. Every star, though in appearance no bigger than the diamond that glitters upon a lady's ring, is really a vast globe, like the sun in size, and in glory; no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant source of our day. So that every star is not barely a world, but the centre of a magnificent system: has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence; all which are lost to our sight in unmeasurable wilds of ether. That the stars appear like so many diminutive, and scarce distinguishable points, is owing to their immense, and inconceivable distance. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is; since a ball, shot from a loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous rate, almost seven hundred thousand years,† before it could reach the nearest of those twinkling luminaries.

Can any thing be more wonderful than these observations? Yes; there are truths far more stupendous; there are scenes far more extensive. As there is no end of the almighty Maker's greatness, so no imagination can set limits to his creating hand. Could you soar beyond the moon, and pass through all the planetary choir; could you wing your way to the highest apparent star, and take your stand on one of the loftiest pinnacles of heaven—you would there see other skies expanded; another sun distributing his inexhaustible beams by day; other stars that gild the horrors of the alternate night; and other,‡ perhaps nobler, systems established—established in unknown profusion, through the boundless dimensions of space. Nor does the dominion of the universal Sovereign terminate there. Even at the end of this vast tour, you would find yourself advanced no farther than the suburbs of creation, arrived only at the frontiers of the great Jehovah's kingdom.*

And do they tell me that the sun, the moon, and all the planets, are but a little part of his works? How great, then, are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders. (Dan. iv. 3.) And if so, what is the Creator himself? How far exalted above all praise! who is so high, that he looks down on the highest of these dazzling spheres, and sees, even the summit of creation, in a vale! so great, that this prodigious extent of space is but a point in his presence; and all this confluence of worlds, as the lightest atom, that fluctuates in air, and sports in the meridian ray.†

Thou most sublime and incomprehensibly glorious God, how I am overwhelmed with awe! how sunk into the lowest prostration of mind! when I consider thy "excellent greatness," and my own utter insignificancy? And have I, excessively mean as I am, have I entertained any conceited apprehensions of myself; have I felt the least elatement of thought, in the presence

* Dr. Derham, after having calculated the dimensions of the planets, adds, "Amazing as these masses are, they are all far outdone by that stupendous globe of light, the sun; which, as it is the fountain of light and heat to all the planets about it, so doth it far surpass them all in its bulk; its apparent diameter being computed at 822,148 English miles, its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and its solid contents at, 290,971,000,000,000,000." Astro-Theology, Book I. ch. ii.

† See Religious Philosopher, p. 818.

‡ See Astro-Theology, Book II. chap. ii. where the author, having assigned various reasons to support this theory of our modern astronomers, adds, "Besides the fore-mentioned strong probabilities, we have this farther recommendation of such an account of the universe, that it is far more magnificent, and worthy of the infinite Creator, than any other of the narrower schemes."

* Job, after a most beautiful dissertation on the mighty works of God, as they are distributed through universal nature, from the heights of heaven to the very depths of hell, closes the magnificent account with this acknowledgment; Lo! these are parts of his ways. Or, as the original word more literally signifies, and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered, These are only the skirts, the very uttermost borders of his works. No more than a small preface to the immense volume of the creation. From the Hebrew *(extremities,)* I cannot forbear thinking on the extreme and very attenuated fibres of the root, when compared with the whole substance of the trunk; or on the exquisitely small size of the capillary vessels, when compared with the whole structure of the body. Job xxvi. 14.

† This puts me in mind of a very fine remark on a scriptural beauty and a solid correction of the common translation, made by that learned, sagacious, and devout expositor Vitringa. Isa. xl. 15. We find it written of the Supreme Being, that he *taketh up the isles as a very little thing.* Which, our critic observes, is neither answerable to the import of the original, nor consonant to the structure of the discourse. The prophet had no intention to inform mankind what the Almighty could do with regard to the islands, if he pleased to exert uncontrollable power. His design was to show how insignificant, or rather what mere nothings they are, in his esteem, and before his Majesty. The islands, says he, though so spacious as to afford room for the erection of kingdoms, and the abode of nations; though so strong as to withstand, for many thousands of years, the raging and reiterated assaults of the whole watery world, are yet, before the adored Jehovah, small as the minutest grain which the eye can scarce discern, light as the feathered mote which the least breath hurries away like a tempest. *Insulæ sunt ut leve quid, quod avelat.* The deep-rooted islands are as the volatile atom, which by the gentlest undulations of the air, is wafted to and fro in perpetual agitation.

of so majestic and adorable a being? How should this wound me with sorrow, and cover me with confusion! O my God, was I possessed of all the high perfections, which accomplish and adorn the angels of light; amidst all these noble endowments I would fall down in the deepest abasement at thy feet. Lost in the infinitely superior blaze of thy uncreated glories, I would confess myself to be nothing, to be less than nothing and vanity. How much more ought I to maintain the most unfeigned humiliation before thy divine majesty, who am not only dust and ashes, but a compound of ignorance, imperfection, and depravity!

While, beholding this vast expanse, I learn my own extreme meanness, I would also discover the abject littleness of all terrestrial things. What is the earth with all her ostentatious scenes, compared with this astonishing grand furniture of the skies? What, but a dim speck hardly perceivable in the map of the universe? It is observed by a very judicious writer,* that if the sun himself, which enlightens this part of the creation, was extinguished, and all the host of planetary worlds which move about him, were annihilated; they would not be missed by an eye that can take in the whole compass of nature, any more than a grain of sand upon the sea-shore. The bulk of which they consist, and the space which they occupy, is so exceedingly little in comparison of the whole, that their loss would scarce leave a blank in the immensity of God's works. If then, not our globe only, but this whole system, be so very diminutive, what is a kingdom or a country? what are a few lordships, or the so much admired patrimonies of those who are styled wealthy? When I measure them with my own little pittance, they swell into proud and bloated dimensions. But when I take the universe for my standard, how scanty is their size, how contemptible their figure! They shrink into pompous nothings.

When the keen-eyed eagle soars above all the feathered race, and leaves their very sight below: when she wings her way with direct ascent up the steep of heaven, and, steadily gazing on the meridian sun, accounts its beaming splendours all her own: does she then regard with any solicitude, the mote that is flying in the air, or the dust which she shook from her feet? And shall this eternal mind, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's glory, which is intended to enjoy the visions of his countenance; shall this eternal mind, endued with such great capacities, and made for such exalted ends, be so ignobly ambitious as to sigh for the tinsel of state; or so poorly covetous as to grasp after ample territories on a needle's point? No; under the influence of such considerations, I feel my sentiments expand, and my wishes acquire a tone of sublimity. My throbbing desires after worldly grandeur die away; and I find myself, if not possessed of power, yet superior to its charms. Too long, must I own, have my affections been pinioned by vanity, and immured in this earthly clod. But these thoughts break the shackles;* these objects open the door of liberty. My soul, fired by such noble prospects, weighs anchor from this little nook, and coasts no longer about its contracted shores; dotes no longer on its painted shells. The immensity of things is her range, and an infinity of bliss is her aim.

Behold this immense expanse, and admire the condescension of thy God. In this manner, an inspired and princely astronomer improved his survey of the nocturnal heavens. "When I consider thy heavens, even the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: I am smitten with wonder at thy glory, and cry out in a transport of gratitude, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him! or the son of man, that thou visitest him!" (Psalm viii. 3, 4.) How amazing, how charming, is that divine benignity, which is pleased to bow down its sacred regards to so foolish and worthless a creature! yea, disdains not, from the height of infinite exaltation, to extend its kind providential care to our most minute concerns! this is amazing. But that the everlasting Sovereign should give his Son to be made flesh, and become our Saviour! shall I call it a miracle of condescending goodness? Rather what are all miracles, what are all mysteries, to this ineffable gift!

Had the brightest archangel been commissioned to come down, with the olive branch of peace in his hand, signifying his eternal Maker's readiness to be reconciled; on our bended knees, with tears of joy, and a torrent of thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting news. But when, instead of such an angelic envoy, he sends his only begotten Son, his Son beyond all thought illustrious, to make us the gracious overture—sends him from the "habitation of his holiness and glory," to put on the infirmities of mortality, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay; sends him, not barely to make us a transient visit, but to abide many years in our inferior and miserable world; sends him, not to ex-

* Spect. Vol. viii. No. 565.

* The soul of man was made to walk the skies,
Delightful outlet of her prison here!
There, disincumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large;
There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let loose all her powers.
Night-Thoughts, No. ix.

ercise dominion over monarchs, but to wear out his life in the ignoble form of a servant; and at last, to make his exit under the infamous character of a malefactor! Was ever love like this? Did ever grace stoop so low?* Should the sun be shorn of all his radiant honours, and degraded into a clod of the valleys; should all the dignitaries of heaven be deposed from their thrones, and degenerate into insects of a day; great, great would be the abasement: but nothing to thine, most blessed Jesus! nothing to thine, thou prince of peace! when for us men, and for our salvation, thou didst not abhor the coarse accommodations of the manger; thou didst not decline even the gloomy horrors of the grave.

It is well the sacred oracles have given this doctrine the most explicit confirmation, and evidence quite incontestible; otherwise a favour so undeserved, so unexpected, and rich beyond all imagination, might stagger our belief. Could He who launches all these planetary globes through the illimitable void, and leads them on, from age to age, in their extensive career: could he resign his hands to be confined by the girding cord, and his back to be ploughed by the bloody scourge! Could he who crowns all the stars with inextinguishable brightness, be himself defiled with spitting, and disfigured with the thorny scar! It is the greatest of wonders, and yet the surest of truths.

O! ye mighty orbs, that roll along the spaces of the sky; I wondered a little while ago at your vast dimensions and ample circuits; but now my amazement ceases, or rather is entirely swallowed up by a much more stupendous subject. Methinks your enormous bulk is shrivelled to an atom, your prodigious revolutions are contracted to a span, while I muse upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths, the infinitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths, of the love of God in Christ Jesus; (Eph. iii. 18, 19.)

Contemplating this stately expanse, I see a mirror which represents in the most awful colours the heinousness of human guilt. Ten thousand volumes wrote on purpose to display the aggravations of my various acts of disobedience, could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the consideration of that all-glorious person, who, to make an atonement for them, spilt the last drop of his blood. I have sinned, may every child of Adam say; and what shall I do unto thee, O thou observer of men?* Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? vain commutation! and such as would be rejected by the blessed God with the utmost abhorrence. Will all the potentates that sway the sceptre in a thousand kingdoms, devote their royal and honoured lives to rescue an obnoxious creature from the stroke of vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, incomparably more, to expiate the malignity of sin, and save a guilty wretch from hell. Will all the principalities of heaven be content to assume my nature, and resign themselves to death for my pardon?† Even this would be too mean a satisfaction for inexorable justice; too scanty a reparation of

* This reminds me of a very noble piece of sacred oratory, where, in a fine series of the most beautiful gradations, the apostle displays the admirably condescending kindness of our Saviour. *He thought it no robbery*, it was his indisputable right, to be equal with the infinite, self-existent, immortal God. Yet, in mercy to sinners, he emptied himself of the incommunicable honours, and laid aside the robes of incomprehensible glory. When he entered upon his mediatorial state, instead of acting in the grand capacity of universal Sovereign, he took upon him the form of a servant; and not the form of those ministering spirits, whose duty is dignity itself, who are throned, though adoring. *He took not on him the nature of angels*, but stooped incomparably lower; assumed a body of animated dust, and *was made in the likeness of men*, those inferior and depraved creatures. Astonishing condescension! but not sufficient for the overflowing richness of the Redeemer's love. For, *being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself* farther still; occupied the lowest place, where all was low and ignoble. He not only submitted to the yoke of the law, but also bore the infirmities, and ministered to the necessities of mortals. He even washed the feet of others, and had not where to lay his own head. Yea, he carried his meritorious humiliation to the very deepest degrees of possible abasement. *He became obedient unto death*; and not to a common or natural death, but a death more infamous than the gibbet, more torturous than the rack, *even the accursed death of the cross*, Phil. ii 6—8.

* Job vii. 20. Not *preserver*, as it stands in our version, but *observer* of men. Which phrase, as it denotes the exact and incessant inspection of the divine eye, as it intimates the absolute impossibility that any transgression should escape the divine notice, is evidently most proper, both to assign the reason, and heighten the emphasis of the context.

† Milton sets this thought in a very poetical and striking light.—All the sanctities of heaven stand round the throne of the supreme Majesty. God foresees and fortels the fall of man; the ruin which will unavoidably ensue on his transgression; and the utter impossibility of his being able to extricate himself from the abyss of misery.

> He, with his whole posterity must die;
> Die he, e'er justice must; unless for him
> Some other able, and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death.

After which affecting representation, intending to raise the most tender emotions of pity, the following inquiry is addressed to all the surrounding angels.

> Say, heav'nly powers, where shall we find such love?
> Which of you will be mortal to redeem
> Man's mortal crime? and die the dead to save?
> He ask'd; but all the heavenly choir stood mute,
> And silence was in heav'n.

There is, to me at least, an inimitable spirit and beauty in the last circumstance. That such an innumerable multitude of generous and compassionate beings should be struck dumb with surprise and terror at the very mention of the deadly forfeiture and ransom set! no language is so eloquent as this silence. Words could not possibly have expressed, in so emphatical a manner, the dreadful nature of the task; the absolute inability of any or all creatures to execute it; the supereminent and matchless love of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work, not only without reluctance, but unsought, and unimplored, with readiness, alacrity and delight.

Par. Lost, Book III. line 209. *Edit. Bent.*

God's injured honour. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing but a victim of infinite dignity could constitute an adequate propitiation. He who said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the sky; he must take flesh; he must feel the fierce torments of crucifixion; and pour out his soul in agonies if ever such transgressors are pardoned.

How vast is that debt, which all the wealth of both the Indies cannot discharge! How vitiated that habit of body, which all the drugs produced by nature herself cannot rectify! But how much more ruined was thy condition, O my soul! how much more heinous were thy crimes! since nothing less than the sufferings and death of Messiah, the Son of God, and radiant image of his glory, could effect thy recovery, or cancel thy iniquity. Though, perhaps, thou art not sunk so very deep in pollution as some of the most abandoned profligates, yet remember the inestimable ransom paid to redeem thee from everlasting destruction. Remember this, and "never open thy mouth any more," (Ezek. xvi. 63,) either to murmur at the divine chastisements, or to glory in thy own attainments. Remember this, and even "loathe thyself for the multitude of thy provocations," (Ezek. xxxvi. 31,) and thy great baseness.

Once more let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanse, and conceive some juster apprehensions of the unknown richness of my Saviour's atonement. I am informed, by a writer who cannot mistake, that the High Priest of my profession, who was also the sacrifice for my sins, is higher than the heavens; (Heb. vii. 26,) more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly mansions, and all their illustrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled at the consideration of its excessive guilt, how do all my drooping powers revive at this delightful thought! The poor criminal, that seemed to be tottering on the very brink of the infernal pit, is raised by such a belief, even to the portals of paradise. My self-abasement, I trust will always continue, but my fears, under the influence of such a conviction, are quite gone.* I do not, I cannot doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. While I see a glimpse of its matchless excellency, and verily believe myself interested in its merits, I know not what it is to feel any misgiving suspicions, but am steadfast in faith, and joyful through hope.

Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that prodigious sum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuser of the brethren, load me with invectives; this one plea, *A Divine Redeemer died!* most thoroughly quashes every indictment. For though there be much turpitude, and manifold transgressions, "there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus." Nay, were I chargeable with all the vilest deeds which have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this most deplorable case I need not sink into despair. Even such guilt, though grievous beyond all expression, is not to be compared with that abundance of grace and righteousness which dwell in the incarnate Divinity. How great, how transcendently glorious, are the perfections of the adored Jehovah! So great, so superlatively precious, is the expiation of the dying Jesus. It is impossible for the human mind to exalt this atonement too highly;* it is impossible for the humble penitent to confide in it too steadily. The scriptures of eternal truth have said it, (exult my soul, in the belief of it!) that the blood on which we rely, is God's own blood; (Acts xx. 28,) and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

David, that egregious sinner, but more exemplary saint, seems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable truth. What else can be the import of that very remarkable, but most devout declaration! "Thou shalt purge me† with hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shalt be whiter than snow." I have been

* I am sorry to find, that some of my readers were a little disgusted at this expression, "my fears are quite gone;" as thinking it discovered a tincture of arrogance in the writer, and tended to discourage the weak Christian. But I hope a more mature consideration will acquit me from both these charges. For, what has the author said? Only that at some peculiarly happy moments, when the Holy Ghost bears witness of Christ in his heart, and he is favoured with a glimpse of the Redeemer's matchless excellency—that in these brighter intervals of life, his trembling fears with regard to the decisive sentence of the great tribunal, are turned into pleasing expectations. And what is there in such a declaration offensive to the strictest modesty, or dispiriting to the weakest believer? Instead of creating discouragement, it points out the way to obtain a settled tranquillity. Its natural tendency is, to engage the serious mind in a more constant and attentive meditation on the unknown merits of the divine Mediator. And were we more thoroughly acquainted, more deeply affected, with his unutterable dignity, I am persuaded our uneasy apprehensions would proportionally vanish; our faith be established, our hopes brightened, and our joys enlarged.

* This doctrine, though rich with consolation to the ruined sinner, yet, is it not likely to open a door for licentiousness, and embolden transgressors to prosecute their vices? No; it is the most powerful motive to that genuine repentance which flows from an unfeigned love of God, and operates in a hearty detestation of all sin. One who knew the unmeasurable goodness of the Lord, and was no stranger to the sinful perverseness of our nature, says, "There is mercy with thee; therefore shalt thou be feared," Psalm cxxx. 4. Words full to my purpose; which at once add the highest authority to this sentiment, and direct our minds to its proper influence, and due improvement.

† Psalm li. 7. "Thou shalt purge." I prefer this translation before the new one; because this speaks

guilty, I must confess, of the most complicated and shocking crimes; crimes, inflamed by every aggravating circumstance, with regard to myself, my neighbour, and my God. Myself, who have been blessed above men, and the distinguished favourite of Providence; my neighbour, who, in the most dear and tender interests, has been irreparably injured; my God, who might justly expect the most grateful returns of duty, instead of such enormous violations of his law. Yet, all horrid and execrable as my offence is, it is nothing to the superabundant merit of that great Redeemer who was promised from the foundations of the world; in whom all my fathers trusted; who is the hope of all the ends of the earth. Though my conscience be more loathsome, with adulterous impurity, than the dunghill; though treachery and murder have rendered it even black as the gloom of hell; yet, washed in the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness, (Zech. xiii. 1,) I shall be, I say not pure only, this were a disparagement to the efficacy of my Saviour's death; but I shall be fair as the lily, and white as the snow. Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious object of my confidence; cleansed by this sovereign sanctifying stream, I shall be fairer than the full-blown lily, whiter than the new-fallen snows."

Power, saith the Scripture, belongeth unto God; (Psalm lxii. 11.) And in what majestic lines is this attribute of Jehovah written throughout the whole volume of the creation! especially through those magnificent pages unfolded in yonder starry regions; which are therefore styled, by the sweet and seraphic singer of Israel, "The firmament of his power." (Psalm cl. 1,) because the grand exploits of Omnipotence are there displayed with the utmost pomp, and recorded in the most legible characters.

Who that looks upward to the midnight sky, and with an eye of reason beholds its rolling wonders, who can forbear inquiring of what were those mighty orbs formed? Amazing to relate: They were produced without materials! They sprung from emptiness itself. The stately fabric of universal nature emerged out of nothing. What instruments were used by the supreme Architect, to fashion the parts with such exquisite niceness, and give so beautiful a polish to the whole? How was all connected into one finely proportioned, and nobly finished structure? A bare fiat accomplished all! Let them be, saith God. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous edifice arose, adorned with every beauty, displaying innumerable perfections, and declaring, amidst enraptured seraphs, its great Creator's praise. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."* What forceful machinery fixed some of those ponderous globes on an immoveable basis? What irresistible impulse bowled others through the circuit of the heavens? What coercive energy confined their impetuous courses within limits astonishingly large, yet most minutely true? Nothing but his sovereign will. For all things were at first constituted, and all to this day abide according to his ordinance.

Without any toilsome assiduity, or laborious process, to raise, to touch, to speak such a multitude of immense bodies into being; to launch them through the spaces of the sky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant; to impress on such unwieldy masses a motion far outstripping the swiftness of the winged creation;† and to continue them in the same rapid whirl for thousands and thousands of years; what an amazing instance of infinite might is this! Can any thing be impossible to the Lord, the Lord God, the Creator and Controller of all the ends of the earth, all the regions of the universe? Rather, is not all that we count difficult, perfect ease to that glorious Being, who only spake, and the world was made? (Psalm xxxiii. 9,) who only gave command, and the stupendous axle was lodged fast, the lofty wheels moved complete? What a sure defence, O my soul, is this everlasting strength of thy God! Be this thy continual refuge in the article of danger; this thy

the language of a more steadfast belief, and gives the highest honour to the divine goodness. Were the words intended to bear no more than the common petitionary sense, and not to be expressive of a noble plerophory of faith, they would rather have been imperatives and not futures.

* If this thought is admitted a second time, and suffered to ennoble the next paragraph, it is partly because of its unequalled sublimity; partly, because it awakens the most grand idea of creating power; and partly, because the practice of the Psalmist, an authority too great to be controverted, is my precedent. The beautiful stanza quoted from Psalm xxxiii. 6, is a proof how thoroughly the royal poet entered into the majesty of the Mosaic narration. The repetition of the sentiment, verse 9, intimates how peculiarly he was charmed with that noble manner of describing the divine operations, while the turn of his own composition shows how perfectly he possessed the same elevated way of thinking: And this, long before Longinus wrote the celebrated treatise, which has taught the Heathen, as well as the Christian world, to admire the dignity of the Jewish legislator's style.—*Vid. Longin. de Sublim.* Sect ix.

† To give one instance of this remark: The earth, in the diurnal revolution which it performs on its own axis, whirls about at the rate of above a thousand miles an hour. And, as the great orbit, which it describes annually round the sun, is reckoned at 540 millions of miles, it must travel near a million and a half each day. What a force must be requisite to protrude so vast a globe, and wheel it on, loaded as it is with huge mountains and ponderous rocks, at such a prodigious degree of rapidity! It surpasses human conception. How natural, how pertinent, how almost necessary after such an observation, is the acknowledgment made by holy Job! "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought, no imaginable scheme can be withholden from thee, can lie beyond thy power to execute." Chap. xlii. 2.

never-failing resource in every time of need.

What cannot this uncontrollable power of the great Jehovah effect for his people? Be their miseries ever so galling, cannot this God relieve them? Be their wants ever so numerous, cannot this God supply them? Be their corruptions within ever so inveterate, or their temptations without ever so importunate, cannot this mighty, mighty God, subdue the former, and fortify them against the latter? Should trials, with an incessant vehemence, sift thee as wheat; should tribulation, with a weight of woes, almost grind thee to powder! should pleasure, with her bewitching smiles, solicit thee to delicious ruin; yet hold thou fast by God and lay thy help upon him that is omnipotent.* Thou canst not be involved in such calamitous circumstances, or exposed to such imminent peril, but thy God, whom thou servest is able to deliver thee from the one, and to support thee under the other. To support! to deliver! —Let me not dishonour the unlimited greatness of his power: He is able to exalt thee from the deepest distress to the most triumphant joy; and to make even a complication of evils work together for thy everlasting good. He is able, not only to accomplish what I have been speaking, but to "do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.*

O! the wretched condition of the wicked, who have this Lord of all power for their enemy! O! the desperate madness of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealousy! Besotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the lists against incensed Omnipotence? Can you bear the fierceness of his wrath, or sustain the vengeance of his lifted arm? At his presence, though awfully serene, the hills melt like wax, and the "mountains skip like frighted lambs." At the least intimation of his displeasure, the foundations of nature rock, and the pillars of heaven tremble. How then can a withered leaf endure, when "his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire?" Or, can any thing screen a guilty worm, when the great and terrible God shall whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on inexorable judgment? When that hand, which shoots the planets—masses of excessive bulk,† with such surprising rapidity, through the sky; that hand which darts the comets to such unmeasurable distances beyond the orbit of our remotest planet, beyond the pursuit of the strongest eye; when that hand is stretched out to punish, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of seas, or even interposing worlds divert the blow? Consider this, ambition, and bow thy haughty crest. Consider this, disobedience, and bend thy iron sinew! O! consider this, all ye that forget, or affront the tremendous Jehovah. He can, by a single act of his will, lay the universe in utter ruin; and can he want power to bring you, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to the dust of death, or to the flames of hell? He has—I say not ten thousand lightnings to scorch you to ashes, ten thou-

* It is a most charming description, as well as a most comfortable promise, which we find in Isaiah xl. 29, 30, 31. He giveth power to the feeble; and to them that have no might at all, he not only imparteth, but increaseth strength; making it to abound, where it did not so much as exist. Without this aid of Jehovah, even the youths, amidst the very prime of their vigour and activity, shall become languid in their work, and weary in their course. And the young men, to whose resolution and abilities nothing seemed impracticable, shall not only not succeed, but utterly fall, and miscarry in their various enterprises. Whereas they that wait upon the Lord, and confide in his grace, shall press on with a generous ardour from one degree of religious improvement to another. Instead of exhausting, they shall renew their strength; difficulties shall animate, and toil invigorate them. They shall mount up, as with soaring wings, above all opposition; they shall be carried through every discouragement, as eagles cleave the yielding air: They shall run with speed and alacrity the way of God's commandments, and not be weary: They shall hold on *(progredienter, carpentiter)* with constancy and perseverance in those peaceful paths, and not faint; but arrive at the end of their progress, and receive the prize of their high calling.

To this most cheering doctrine, permit me to add its no less beautiful and delightful contrast. Eliphaz, speaking of the enemies of the righteous, says, *Nihil excisum factio nobis adversaria.* We should reckon our language acquitted itself tolerably well, if, when deprecating the abilities of an adversary, it should represent them weak as the scorched thread, feeble as the dissolving smoke. But these are cold forms of speech compared with the eloquence of the east. According to the genius of our Bible, all the power that opposes the godly, is a mere nothing; or, to speak with a more emphatical air of contempt, a destroyed, an extirpated nothing. Admire this expression, ye that are charmed with daring images, and (what Tully calls *verbum ardens*) a spirited and glowing diction. Remember this declaration, ye that fight the good fight of faith. The united force of all your enemies, be it ever so formidable to the eye of flesh, is before your almighty Guardian, *nihil nihilissimum*, not only nothing, but less than nothing, and vanity. Job xxii. 20.

* I should in this place avoid swelling the notes any farther, were it not to take notice of the inimitable passage quoted above, and to be found Ephesians iii. 20. Which, if I do not greatly mistake, is the most complete representation of divine power that it is possible for words to frame. To do all that our tongue can ask, is a miracle of might: But we often think more than we can express, and are actuated with groanings unutterable. Yet, to answer these vast desires, is not beyond the accomplishment of our heavenly Father. Nay, to make his gifts and his blessings commensurate to the largest stretch of human expectations, is a small thing with the God of glory. He is able to do above all that the most enlarged apprehension can imagine; yea, to do abundantly more, exceeding abundantly more, than the mind itself, in the utmost exertion of all its faculties, is capable of wishing, or knows how to conceive.

† One of the planets (Saturn) is supposed to be more than 90 times as big as the globe on which we live. According to the same calculation, the largest of the planets (Jupiter) is above 200 times vaster than this vast collection of spacious forests, towering mountains, extensive continents, and boundless oceans. Such enormous magnitude! winged with such prodigious speed! It raises astonishment beyond expression. "With God is terrible majesty!" Job xxxvii. 22. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" Rev. xv. 4.

sand thunders to crush you into atoms; but, what is unspeakably more dreadful, he has an army of terrors even in the look of his angry countenance. His very frown is worse than destruction.

I cannot dismiss this subject without admiring the patience of the blessed God; who, though so strong and powerful, yet is provoked every day. Surely, as is his majesty, so is his mercy—his pity altogether commensurate to his power. If I vilify but the name of an earthly monarch, I lose my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I appear in arms, and draw the sword against my natural sovereign, my life is forfeited, and my very blood will scarce atone for the crime. But thee I have dishonoured, O thou king immortal and invisible! Against thee my breast has fomented secret disaffection; my behaviour has risen up in open rebellion; and yet I am spared, yet I am preserved. Instead of being banished from thy presence, I sit at thy table, and am fed from thy hand. Instead of pursuing me with thunderbolts of vengeance, thy favours surround me on every side. That arm, that injured arm, which might justly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head, is most graciously stretched out to caress him with the tenderest endearments, to cherish him with every instance of parental kindness! O, thou mightiest, thou best of Beings, how am I pained at my very soul, for such shameful and odious disingenuity! Let me always abominate myself, as the basest of creatures, but adore that unwearied long suffering of thine, which refuses to be irritated; love that unremitted goodness, which no acts of ingratitude could stop, or so much as check, in its gracious current. O! let this stubborn heart, which duty could not bind, which threatenings could not awe, be the captive, the willing captive, of such triumphant beneficence.

I have often been struck with wonder at that almighty skill, which weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; which proportioned the waters in the hollow of its hand, and adjusted the dust of the earth by a measure.* But how much more marvellous is that magnificent economy, which poised the stars with inexpressible nicety, and meted out the heavens with a span! where all is prodigiously vast, immensely various, and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely the wisdom of God manifests itself in the skies, and shines in those lucid orbs; shines on the contemplative mind, with a lustre incomparably brighter than that which their united splendours transmit to the eye.

Behold yonder countless multitude of globes; consider their amazing magnitude; regard them as the sovereigns of so many systems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this supposition, what a multiplicity of mighty spheres must be perpetually running their rounds in the upper regions! Yet none mistake their way, or wander from the goal, though they pass through trackless and unbounded fields. None fly off from their orbits into extravagant excursions; none press in upon their centre, with too near an approach: none interfere with each other in their perennial passage, or intercept the kindly communications of another's influence.* But all their rotations proceed in eternal harmony, keeping such time, and observing such laws, as are most exquisitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

While I contemplate this excellent wisdom, which made the heavens, and attunes all their motions, how am I abashed at that mixture of arrogance and folly which has at any time inclined me to murmur at thy dispensations? O Lord, what is this, but a sort of implicit treason against thy supremacy, and a tacit denial of thy infinite understanding! Hast thou so regularly placed such a wonderful diversity of systems through the spaces of the universe? Didst thou, without any probationary essays, without any improving retouches, speak them into the most consummate perfection? Dost thou continually superintend all their circumstances, with a sagacity that never mistakes the minutest tittle of propriety? And shall I be so unaccountably stupid, as to question the justness of thy discernment in choosing my inheritance, and fixing the bounds of my habitation? Not a single erratum, in modelling the structure, determining the distance,† and conducting the ca-

* Isa. xl. 12. The dust of the earth, in this sublime scripture, signifies the dry land, or solid part of our globe; which is placed in contradistinction to the whole collection of fluid matter, mentioned in the preceding clause. Perhaps this remarkable expression may be intended to intimate, not only the extreme niceness which stated the dimensions of the world in general, or in the gross, but also that particular exactness with which the very smallest materials that constitute its frame, (not excepting each individual atom) were calculated and disposed;—*q. d.* It is a small thing to say, no such enormous redundancies, as unnecessary ridges of mountains, were suffered to subsist. There was not so much as the least grain of sand superfluous, or a single particle of dust deficient. As the grand aim of the description is to celebrate the consummate wisdom exemplified in the creation, and to display that perfect proportion with which every part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes with the whole, I have taken leave to alter the word of our English translation *comprehend*, and introduce in its stead a term equally faithful to the Hebrew, and more significative of the prophet's precise idea.

* The interception of light, by means of an eclipse happens very rarely, and then it is of so short a continuance as not to be at all inconvenient. Nay, it is attended with such circumstances as render it rather useful than prejudicial.

† The sun in particular, (and let this serve as a specimen of that most curious exactness with which the other celestial bodies are constituted, and all their circumstances regulated,) the sun is formed of such a determinate magnitude, and placed at such a convenient distance, "as not to annoy, but only re-

reer of unnumbered worlds! And shall my peevish humour presume to censure thy interposition with regard to the affairs of one inconsiderable creature; whose stature, in such a comparative view, is less than a span, and his present duration little more than a moment?

O! thou God, "in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways," let such sentiments as now possess my thoughts be always lively on my heart! These shall compose my mind into a cheerful acquiescence and a thankful submission, even when afflictions gall the sense, or disappointments break my schemes. Then shall I, like the grateful patriarch, (Gen. xii. 7, 8,) in all the changes of my condition, and even in the depths of distress, erect an altar of adoring resignation, and inscribe it with the apostle's motto, "To God only wise." Then, shouldst thou give me leave to be the carver of my own fortunes, I would humbly desire to relinquish the grant, and recommit the disposal of myself to thy unerring beneficence; fully persuaded, that thy counsels, though contrary to my froward inclinations, or even afflictive to my flesh, are incomparably more eligible, than the blind impulse of my own will, however soothing to animal nature.

On a careless inspection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the position of the heavenly bodies. They appear like an illustrious chaos; a promiscuous heap of shining globes; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line. But what seems confusion, is all regularity. What carries a show of negligence, is really the result of the most masterly contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial flight; but they rove by the nicest rule, and without the least error. Their circuits, though seemingly devious, their mazes, though intricate to our apprehensions,* are marked out, not indeed with golden compasses, but by the infinitely more exact determinations of the all-wise Spirit.

So, what wears the appearance of calamity in the allotments appointed for the godly, has really the nature of a blessing. It issues from fatherly love, and will terminate in the richest good. If Joseph is snatched from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and abandoned to slavery in a foreign land, it is in order to save the whole family from perishing by famine, and to preserve the seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. If he falls into the deepest disgrace, it is on purpose that he may rise to the highest honours. Even the confinement of the prison, by the unsearchable workings of Providence, opens his way to the right hand of the throne itself. Let the most afflicted servant of Jesus wait the final upshot of things: He will then discover the apparent expediency of all those tribulations which now, perhaps, he can hardly admit without reluctance, or suffer without some struggles of disatisfaction. Then, the gushing tear and the heaving sigh will be turned into tides of gratitude and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer presumptuously impeach the divine procedure; but, adoring where we cannot comprehend, let us expect the evolution of the mysterious plan. Then shall every eye perceive, that the seeming labyrinths of providence were the most direct and compendious way to effect his general purposes of grace, and to bring about each one's particular happiness.* Then also shall it be clearly shown, in the presence of applauding worlds, why virtue pined in want, while vice rioted in affluence; why amiable innocence so often dragged the dungeon chain, while horrid guilt trailed the robe of state. That day of universal audit, that day of everlasting retribution, will not only vindicate but magnify the whole management of heaven. The august sessions shall close with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgment: "Though clouds and darkness, impenetrable by any human scrutiny, were sometimes round about the supreme conductor of things, yet righteousness and judgment were the constant habitation of his seat, (Psalm xcvii. 2,) the invariable standard of all his administrations." Thus (if I may illustrate the grandest truths by inferior occurrences) while we view the arras on the side of least distinction, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice strokes of art; nothing but a confused jumble of incoherent threads. No sooner is the piece beheld in its proper aspect, but the suspected rudeness vanishes, and the most curious arrangement takes place. We are charmed with designs of the finest taste, and figures of the most graceful form. All is shaped with symmetry, all is clad in beauty.

The goodness of God is most eminently displayed in the skies. Could we take an understanding survey of whatever is formed by the divine Architect, throughout the whole extent of material things, our minds would be transported with their excellencies,

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fresh us, and nourish the ground with its kindly warmth. If it was larger, it would set the earth on fire; if smaller, it would leave it frozen. If it was nearer us, we should be scorched to death; if farther from us, we should not be able to live for want of heat."—*Stackhouse's History of the Bible.*

* ——Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved; yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem.
Milton.

* ——The moral world,
Which, though to us it seems embroiled, moves on
In higher order; fitted and impelled
By Wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
In general good.—*Thomson's Winter, l.* 586, *last edit.*

and our tongues echo back that great encomium, they are good, very good, (Gen. i. 31.) Most beautiful* in themselves; contrived by unerring wisdom, and executed with inimitable skill. Most useful* in their functions; exactly fitting the places they fill, and completely answering the purposes for which they were intended. All the parts of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their intrinsic and relative excellencies, the all-diffusive beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the displays of divine indulgence in the worlds of life! Because dead matter is incapable of delight, therefore the gracious Creator has raised innumerable ranks of perceptive existence; such as are qualified to taste his bounty, and enjoy each a happiness suited to its peculiar state. With this view, he furnished the regions of inferior nature with an order and a series of sensitive beings. The waters teem with shoals of finny inhabitants: The dry land swarms with animals of every order: The dwellings of the firmament are occupied by multitudes of winged people. Not so much as a green leaf, philosophers say, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule tenants.† And wherefore this diversity, this profusion of living creatures, flying the air, treading the ground, and gliding through the paths of the sea? For this most glorious reason: That the eternal Sovereign may exercise his superabundant goodness; that his table may be furnished with millions and millions of guests; that he may fill every hour, every moment, their mouths with food, or their hearts with gladness.

But what a small theatre are three or four elements for the operations of Jehovah's bounty! His magnificent liberality scorns such scanty limits. If you ask, wherefore has he created all worlds, and replenished them with an unknown multiplicity of beings, rising one above another, in an endless gradation of still richer endowments, and still nobler capacities? The answer is, for the manifestation of his own glory, and especially for the communication of his inexhaustible beneficence.* The great Creator could propose no advantage to himself. His bliss is incapable of any addition. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made," he was supremely happy, in his own independent and all-sufficient self. His grand design, therefore, in erecting so many stately fabrics, and peopling them with so many tribes of inhabitants, was to transfuse his exuberant kindness, and impart felicity in all its forms. Ten thousand worlds, stocked with ten thousand times ten thousand ranks of sensitive and intelligent existence, are so many spacious gardens, which, with rivers of communicated joy, this overflowing fountain waters continually.

Boundless,† and (which raises our idea of this divine principle to the very highest degree of perfection) disinterested† munificence! How inexpressibly amiable is the blessed God, considered in this charming light! Is it possible to conceive any excellence so adorable and lovely, as infinite benevolence, guided by unerring wisdom, and exerting almighty power, on purpose to make a whole universe happy? O my soul, what an irresistible attractive is here! what a most worthy object for thy most fervent affection! shall now every glittering toy become a rival to this transcendently beneficent being, and rob him of thy heart? No, let his all-creating arm teach thee to trust in the fulness of his sufficiency; let his all-superintending eye incline thee to acquiesce in the dispensations of his providence: and let his bounty, so freely vouchsafed, so

* This *kaloegathia* of the universe, and all its parts, has been very highly and very justly extolled by the ancient inquirers into nature; and was indeed an illustrious scene spread before the sages of the Heathen world, wherein to contemplate the goodness and the glories of the supreme Being. It was nobly said by a Pagan philosopher, on this occasion, "That God, when he undertook the work of creation, transformed himself into love." But he need not transform himself into this amiable principle; for "God is love!" as was much more nobly said by one whom that philosopher would have termed a barbarian. 1 John iv. 8.

† A very celebrated poet, in a beautiful paragraph on this subject, informs his readers, that all nature swarms with life. In subterranean cells, the earth heaves with vital motion. Even the hard stone, in the very inmost recesses of its impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The pulp of mellow fruit, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the invisible nations. Each liquid, whether of acid taste or milder relish, abounds with various forms of sensitive existence. Nor is the pure stream, or transparent air, without their colonies of unseen people. In which constitution of things we have a wonderful instance, not only of the divine goodness to those minute beings, in giving them a capacity for animal gratifications, but of his tender care for mankind, in making them imperceptible to our senses.

> ——These, concealed
> By the kind art of forming heaven, escape
> The grosser eye of man: For, if the worlds
> In worlds enclosed should on his senses burst,
> From cares ambrosial, and the nectar'd bowl,
> He'd turn abhorrent; and in dead of night,
> When silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.
> *Thomson's Summer.*

* A sacred writer, considering this delightful subject, and confining his observation within the narrow limits of his own country, cries out with a mixture of amazement and gratitude; "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!" Who then can forbear being lost in wonder, and transported with delight, when he extends his survey to those infinitely more copious communications of divine bounty, which, like salutary and refreshing streams, run through all worlds, and make not only the little valleys of a single kingdom, but the immensity of creation laugh and sing? Zech. ix. 17.

† In this sense, "There is none good but one, that is God." None universally and essentially good; none whose goodness extends itself, in an infinite variety of blessings, to every capable object; or who always dispenses his favours from the sole principle of free and disinterested benevolence.

amply diffused, induce thee to love him, with all the ardour of a grateful and admiring soul; induce thee to serve him, not with a joyless awe, or slavish dread, but with unfeigned alacrity, and a delightful complacency.

If the goodness of God is so admirably seen in the works of nature and the favours of providence, with what a noble superiority does it even triumph in the mystery of redemption!* Redemption is the brightest mirror in which to contemplate this most lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts are only as mites from the divine treasury; but redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, all the stores of indulgence and grace. Herein "God commendeth his love," (Rom. v. 8;) not only manifests, but sets it off, as it were, with every bright and grand embellishment; manifests it in so stupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; "above all blessing and praise." Was He not thy Son, everlasting God, thy only Son, the Son of thy bosom from eternal ages, the highest object of thy complacential delight? Was not thy love to this adorable Son incomparably greater than the tenderest affection of any, or the united affections of all mortal parents? Was not the blessed Jesus more illustrious in excellency than all angels; more exalted in dignity than all heavens? Yet didst thou resign him for poor mortals, for vile sinners! Couldst thou see him descend from his royal throne, and take up his abode in the sordid stable? see him forego the homage of the seraphim, and stand exposed to the reproachful indignities of an insolent rabble! see him arraigned at the bar, and sentenced to death; numbered with malefactors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out his soul in agonies of sorrow! Could the Father, the Father himself, with unknown philanthropy,† say, "It shall, it shall be so! My pity to rebellious man pleads, and prevails. Awake, therefore, O sword, (Zech. xiii. 7,) edged with divine wrath! awake, and be sheathed in that immaculate breast; pierce that dearly beloved heart. I am content that my Son endure the sharpness of death, rather than sinful mortals perish for ever." Incomprehensible love! May it henceforward be the favourite subject of my meditation, more delightful to my musing mind than applause to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of my discourse; sweeter to my tongue than the droppings of the honey comb to my taste! May it be my choicest comfort through all the changes of life; and my reviving cordial even in the last extremities of dissolution itself!

A prophet, contemplating with a distant survey this unexampled instance of Almighty love, is wrapt into a transport of devotion. At a loss for proper acknowledgments, he calls upon the whole universe to aid his labouring breast, and supply his lack of praise. Sing melodiously, ye vaulted heavens; exult, and even leap for gladness, thou cumbrous earth; ye mountains, break your long silence, and burst into peals of loudest acclamation;* for the Lord, by his precious gift, and this great salvation, hath comforted his people. A sacred historian hath left it upon record, that at the first exhibition of this ravishing scene, there was with the angel who brought the blessed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and making the concave of the skies resound with their hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of Righteousness, when he was beginning to rise with healing in his wings, the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. And shall man, whom this gracious dispensation principally respects; shall man, who is the centre of all these gladdening rays; shall he have no heart to adore, no anthem to celebrate, this

> Love without end, and without measure, grace?
> *Milton.*

How pure is the state of the sky, and how clear its aspect! Clearer than the limpid stream, purer than the transparent crystal, and more curiously fine than the polished mirror. That stately ceiling fretted with gold, and stretched to an extent of many millions of leagues, is not disfigured with a single flaw. That azure canopy,

* In this, and in other parts of the Contemplations, the reader will observe, that the attributes of the Deity are represented as shining with more distinguished lustre in the wonders of redemption than in the works of creation. If such remarks should seem to be unprecedented, or to stand in need of a vindication, permit me to subjoin the sentiments of a great critic, equally versed in both those sublime theories. "In a perfect orator," he says "Tully requires some skill in the nature of heavenly bodies; because his mind will become more extensive and unconfined; and when he descends to treat of human affairs, he will both think and write in a more exalted and magnificent manner. For the same reason, that excellent master would have recommended the study of those great and glorious mysteries, which revelation has discovered to us; to which the noblest parts of this system of the world are as much inferior, as the creature is less excellent than the Creator."
Spectator, vol. xiii. no. 633.

† Philanthropy, that is loving-kindness to man.

* Isa. xlix. 13. I have not adhered to our common translation, but endeavoured to preserve, somewhat more faithfully, the noble pathos, and inimitable energy of the sacred original. The love of God manifested in a divine and dying Saviour, is a blessing of such inconceivable richness, as must render all acknowledgments flat and all encomiums languid. Yet I think the most poetical and most emphatical celebration of that unspeakable instance of goodness, is contained in this rapturous exclamation of the prophet; which intimates with a wonderful majesty of sentiment, that even the whole compass of the inanimate creation, could it be sensible of the benefit and capable of delight, would express its gratitude in all these demonstrations of the most lively and exuberant joy.

embroidered with stars, and spacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds, is without the least spot or wrinkle. Yet this, even this, will scarce yield us so much as a faint representation of the divine purity. God is a God of matchless and transcendent excellency. His ways are uprightness itself. His counsels and words are the very sanctity of wisdom and of truth. The laws which he hath given to universal nature, are exquisitely contrived, and beyond all possibility of improvement. The precepts which he hath appointed for the human race, are a complete summary of all that is honourable in itself and perfective of the rational mind. Not the least oversight, in planning a series of events for all futurity. Not the least mal-administration, in managing the affairs of every age since time began, and of every nation under the whole heavens. Pardon these disparaging expressions: A negative perfection is far, far beneath thy dignity, O thou most highest.* In all these instances, in all thy acts, and all thy attributes, thou art not only holy, but "glorious in holiness."

So inconceivably holy is the Lord God of hosts, that he sees defilement even in the brightness of the firmament. The living sapphire of the heavens, before his majesty, loses its lustre. Yea, the stars, (though the most pure and resplendent part of the heavens) are not pure in his sight. How much less man, who in his fallen and depraved state, is but as a worm that crawls in the corrupted carcase; and the Son of Man, who, by reason of his manifold actual impurities, is too justly compared to an insect, that wallows amidst stench and putrefaction?† Is there not then abundant cause for the most irreproachable and eminent of mankind to renounce all arrogant pretensions, to lay aside every assuming air, to take nothing but shame and confusion to themselves? A holy prophet, and a holy prince, felt such humbling impressions from a glimpse of the uncreated purity. I abhor myself in dust and ashes, (Job xlii. 6,) was the declaration of the one: I am a man of unclean lips, (Isaiah vi. 5,) the confession of the other. Should not this teach us all to adore the divine mercies, for that precious purifying fountain,* which was foretold from the foundation of the world, but was opened at that awful juncture, when knotty whips tore the flesh, when ragged thorns mangled the temples, when sharpened nails cut fresh sluices from the crimson current, when the gash of the spear completed the dreadful work, and forthwith flowed therefrom the wounded heart blood and water!

Especially since God himself saw no blemish in his dear Son. He looketh to the moon, and it shineth not; yet his all-penetrating and jealous eye discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? He bore this most illustrious testimony concerning his holy child Jesus; "In him I am pleased; I am well pleased; I acquiesce, with entire complacency and with the highest delight, in his person, his undertaking, and the whole execution of his office." How should this thought enliven our hopes, while the other mortifies our pride? Should not our hearts spring within us, and even leap for joy, at the repeated assurance given us by revelation, that such a divinely excellent person is our Mediator? What apparent reason has every believer to adopt the blessed virgin's exclamation, "My soul doth magnify the Lord for his transcendent mercy; and my spirit rejoices, not in wide ex-

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* "O thou most highest." This expression occurs more than once in the psalms used by the established church. It is, I think, one of those beauties which, because often exhibited, generally escape our notice. It is a superlative formed on a superlative; and, though not strictly conformable to grammatical rules, is nobly superior to them all. The language seems to be sensible of its own deficiency, when the incomprehensible Jehovah is addressed or celebrated. Oppressed as it were with the glories of the subject, it labours after a more emphatical manner of diction than the ordinary forms of speech afford. It is, if I rightly judge, one of those daring and happy peculiarities of a masterly genius, which Mr. Pope so finely describes, and while he describes, exemplifies:

> Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
> And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;
> From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
> And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.
> *Essay on Criticism.*

St Paul's is a beautiful passage of the like nature: which our translators have very properly rendered, *less than the least of all saints.* His *pollo mallon kretheson*, is another instance of the same kind. But here the English version fails. *Far better* is extremely flaccid, compared with the nervous original. And I greatly question, whether it is possible to translate the sentence with equal conciseness, and with equal spirit. See Eph. iii. 8. Phil. i. 23.

† Job xxv. 5, 6. I submit to the judgment of the learned, whether this is not the true meaning of the text. It may not, perhaps, recommend itself to the squeamishly nice critic; or to those persons who dream of, I know not what, dignity in our fallen nature. But it seems, in preference to every other interpretation, suitable to the sacred context; and is far from being injurious to the character of that apostate race, which is "altogether become abominable," and "is as an unclean thing." On this supposition there is not only an apparent, but a very striking contrast, between the purity of God and the pollution of man. The purity of the most high God, which outshines the moon and eclipses the stars; the pollution of degenerate man, which, exclusive of a Saviour, would render him as loathsome to the all-seeing eye, as the vilest vermin are in ours. Without assigning this cense to the passage, I cannot discern the force of the antithesis, nor indeed the propriety of the sentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an idea of meanness and infirmity, not of defilement and impurity, unless they are insects hatched amidst putrefaction, and considered in such noisome circumstances. The two words of the original are evidently used in this signification by Moses and Isaiah; by the former, to denote the vermin which devoured the putrefied manna; by the latter, to express the reptiles which swarm in the body that sees corruption. Exod. xvi. 20. Isa. xiv. 11.

* "In that day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. Zech. xiii. 1.

tended harvests, waving over my fertile glebe ;* not in armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar treasure of nations for my spoil ;* but in an infinitely richer, nobler blessing, even in God my Saviour :" That a person so sublime and perfect has vouchsafed to become my surety ; to give himself for my ransom in the world below, and to act as my advocate in the royal presence above ; yea, to make my recovery the reward of his sufferings ; my final felicity the honour of his mediatorial kingdom !

When an innumerable multitude† of bodies, many of them more than a hundred thousand miles in diameter,‡ are all set in motion ; when the orbits in which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of several hundreds of millions ; when each has a distinct and separate sphere for finishing his vast circuit ; when no one knows what it is to be cramped, but each most freely expatiates, in his unbounded career ; when every one is placed at such an immense remove from each other, that they appear to their respective inhabitants, only as so many spots of light —how astonishing must be the expanse which yields room for all those mighty globes, and their widely-diffused operations ! To what prodigious lengths did the almighty builder stretch his line, when he marked out the stupendous platform ! I wonder at such an immeasurable extent. My very thoughts are lost in this abyss of space. But be it known to mortals, be it never forgot by sinners, that, in all its most surprising amplitude, it is small, it is scanty, compared with the bounty and the mercy of its Maker.

His bounty is absolutely without limits,§ and without end. The most lavish generosity cannot exhaust, or even diminish his munificence. O ! all ye tribes of men ; or rather, all ye classes of intelligent creatures, ye are not straitened in the liberality of your ever-blessed Creator ; be not straitened in your own expectations. " Open your mouth wide, and he shall fill it" with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your God, on whom is your whole dependence, is more than able, is more than willing, to " supply all your need, according to his riches in glory." When the Lord Jehovah is the giver, and his grace* the gift ; let your wishes be unbounded, and your cravings insatiable. All that created beings can possibly covet, is but a very small pittance of that unknown happiness which the everlasting Benefactor is ready to bestow. Suppose every charitable disposition which warms the hearts of the human race, added to those more enlarged affections which glow in heavenly bosoms ; what were they all, even in their highest exercise, compared with the benignity of the divine nature ? Bless me, then, thou eternal source of love ; bless all that reverence thy holy name, according to thy own most profuse goodness, whose great prerogative it is to disdain all measure. O ! bless us, in proportion to that grace, the richness of which (unutterable by the tongues of men and of angels) was once spoken in the groans, and written in the wounds, of thy expiring Son !

Spacious indeed are these heavens ! where do they begin ? where do they end ? what is their extent ? Can angels answer my question ? have angels travelled the vast circuit ? can angels measure the bounds of space ? No ; it is boundless, it is unknown, it is amazing all. How charming, then, to reflect, that the mercy of God is " greater than the heavens ; is more extensive than the dimensions of the sky." Transporting reflection ! Let me indulge thee once more.† Let me think over the delightful displays of this lovely attribute ; and, while I admire the trophies of forgiving goodness, add one to the number. With what amiable and affecting colours is this represented in the

* The inspired penman, from these two occasions of distinguished joys, sets forth the incomparably greater delight which arises from the gift of a Saviour, and the blessing of redemption ; Isa. ix. ver. 3. compared with ver. 6.

† This refers, not only to the planets which pass and repass about our sun, but also to the other planetary worlds, which are supposed to attend the several fixed stars.

‡ The diameter of Jupiter is calculated at 130,650 miles, while its orbit is reckoned to consist of 895,134,000. Which computation, according to the maxims of astronomy, and the laws of proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to other planets revolving round other suns.

§ By *bounty*, I mean not the actual exercises, or the sensible effects, of this excellency in the Deity. These are, and always must be, through the immense perfection of the attribute, and the necessary scantiness of the recipient, bounded. But I would be understood as speaking of the divine power, and the divine will, to exert divine beneficence. These can have no real, no imaginable limits. These, after a profusion of blessings, distributed to unnumbered worlds, continued through unnumbered ages, must still have more to bestow, for ever have more to bestow, infinitely more to bestow, than it is possible for creation itself to receive.

* 2 Cor. ix. 8. " God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." How beautiful and emphatical is this description ; inferior to nothing but that extent of ability, and those riches of liberality which it so eloquently celebrates. Does it not exhaust all the powers of language, while it attempts to give us a specimen of the munificence of the Lord ?

† *Once more* refers to Reflections on a Flower Garden. Some of the following pages exhibit a digressive view of the divine mercy. I thought it proper to apprize my reader of this excursion ; though I hope it will be needless to offer any apology for enlarging upon a theme incomparably joyous. Who can complain of tediousness, while I speak consolation to distressed, and recovery to ruined creatures ? The divine mercy is the sole fountain of all our present and future blessings. In conformity to this benign attribute, human hopes arise, and human felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of viewing and reviewing, when the lengths and breadths of forgiving grace are the ravishing prospect ?

parable of the prodigal! What could induce that foolish youth to forsake his father's house? Had he not been tenderly cherished by the good parent, and loaded with benefits from his indulgent hand? Were not the restraints of parental government an easy yoke; or rather a preservative from ruin? Notwithstanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty; and launches into such scandalous irregularities, as were dishonourable to his family, and destructive to himself. When necessity, not choice, but sharp necessity drove him to a submissive return, does the injured father stand aloof or shut his doors? Quite the reverse. He espies him, while he is yet a great way off; and the moment he beholds the profligate youth, he has compassion on him. His bowels yearn, they "sound like a harp," touched with notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of his ungracious departure, and infamous debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, passes an act of oblivion; and in one instant, cancels a series of long-continued provocations. So strong are the workings of fatherly affection, that he is almost impatient to embrace the naked and destitute wretch. The son's pace is slow, he arose and came; the father's is swift, he sprung forth (aged as he was) and ran. And is there a single frown in his brow, an upbraiding word on his tongue? Instead of loathing the sordid creature, or reproaching him for his odious excesses, he falls on his neck, clasps him in his arms, and hugs him to his bosom. Instead of disowning the riotous spendthrift, or rejecting him for his undutiful behaviour, he receives and welcomes him with kisses of delight. He rejoices at his return from extravagance and vice, as he formerly rejoiced on the day of his nativity. When this companion of harlots opens his mouth—before he speaks, the father hears. He interrupts him in the midst of his intended speech. The overflowings of his compassionate heart can brook no delay. He seems to be uneasy himself, till he has made the afflicted penitent glad with the assurance of his acceptance, and the choicest of his favours. While the poor abashed offender seeks nothing more than not to be abhorred, he is thoroughly reconciled, and honoured before the whole family. While he requests no other indulgence than only to be treated as the meanest servant, he is clothed with the best robe; he is feasted with the fatted calf; he is caressed as the dearest of children. Was there ever so bright and winning a picture of the tenderest mercy, most freely vouchsafed, even to the most unworthy of creatures? Yet thus, my soul, and thus, my fellow-sinner, will the Lord God of everlasting compassions receive us, if, sensible of our misery, and thirsting for salvation, we turn to him through Jesus Christ.

Where sin has abounded, says the proclamation from the court of heaven, grace doth much more abound. Manasseh was a monster of barbarity; for he caused his own children to pass through the fire, and filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. Manasseh was an adept in iniquity; for he not only multiplied, and to an extravagant degree, his sacrilegious impieties, but he poisoned the principles and perverted the manners of his subjects, making them to do worse than the most detestable of the heathen idolaters, (2 Chron. xxxiii.) Yet, through this superabundant grace, he is humbled, he is reformed, and becomes a child of forgiving love, an heir of immortal glory. Behold that bitter and bloody persecutor Saul, when, breathing out threatenings,* and bent upon slaughter, he worried the lambs, and put to death the disciples of Jesus. Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced him a vessel of wrath, destined to unavoidable damnation? nay, would not have been ready to conclude, that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of woe, they must surely be reserved for such an implacable enemy of true godliness? Yet (admire, and adore the inexhaustible treasures of grace!) this Saul is admitted into the goodly fellowship of the prophets; is numbered with the noble army of martyrs; and makes a distinguished figure among the glorious company of the apostles. The Corinthians were flagitious even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abominable vices, and habituated themselves to such outrageous acts of injustice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet even these sons of violence, and slaves of sensuality "were washed, were sanctified, were justified, (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11): washed in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; sanctified by the powerful operations of the blessed Spirit; justi-

* Acts ix. 1. "Saul yet breathing out threatening and slaughter."—What a representation is here of a mind mad with rage, and abandoned to the fiercest extremes of barbarity! I scarce know whether I am more shocked at the persecutor's savage disposition, or charmed with the evangelist's lively description. The adverb *yet* seems referable to chap. viii. ver. 3. and has, in this connexion, a peculiar force. The havoc he had committed, the inoffensive families he had already ruined were not sufficient to assuage his vengeful spirit. They were only a taste; which, instead of glutting the blood-hound, made him more closely pursue the track, and more eagerly pant for destruction. He is still athirst for violence and murder. So eager and insatiable is his thirst that he even breathes out threatening and slaughter. His words are spears and arrows, and his tongue a sharp sword. It is as natural for him to menace the Christians, as to breathe the air. Nay, they bleed every hour, every moment, in the purposes of his rancorous heart. It is only owing to want of power, that every syllable he utters, every breath he draws, does not deal about deaths, and cause some of the innocent disciples to fall.

fied through the infinitely tender mercies of a gracious God. Those who were once the burden of the earth, are now the joy of heaven, and the delight of angels.

There is another instance of Scripture, which most loudly publishes that sweetest of the divine names! "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin," (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7,) an instance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which, if I was to forget, the very stones might cry out, and sound it in my ears: I mean the case of those sinners who murdered the Prince of peace and Lord of glory. These men could scarce have the shadow of an excuse for their crime, hardly a circumstance to extenuate their guilt. They were well acquainted with his exemplary conversation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; they were almost daily spectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore had all possible reason to honour him as the most illustrious of beings, and to receive his gospel as the most inestimable of blessings. Yet, notwithstanding all these engaging motives to love him, even above their own lives, they seize his person, asperse his character, drag him before a heathen tribunal, and extort a sentence of death against innocence and holiness itself. Never was the vilest slave so contumeliously abused; nor the most execrable malefactor so barbarously executed. The sun was confounded at the shocking scene; and one cannot but wonder how the avenging lightnings could withhold their flashes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed; and why, why did it not cleave asunder, and open a passage for such bloodthirsty miscreants into the nethermost hell? Shall these ever hope to obtain forgiveness from the righteous Judge? Shall not these be consigned over to inexorable wrath, and the severest torments? O the miraculous effects of divine grace! O the triumphant goodness of God our Saviour! Many, even of these impious wretches, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, were convinced of their miserable state; were wounded with penitential remorse, fled to the sanctuary of the cross, had their pardon ratified by the baptismal seal, and, continuing in the apostles' doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of heaven; where they now shine as so many everlasting monuments of most distinguished mercy, and receive beatitude past utterance from that very Redeemer whom once "with wicked hands they crucified and slew."

Well might the prophet cry out, with a pleasing amazement, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by transgression!" (Micah vii. 18.) Let all flesh know assuredly, let all flesh rejoice greatly, that with the Lord there is such mercy, and with his Christ such plentiful redemption. And O! for the voice of an archangel, to circulate the glad tidings through the universe, that the American savage, as well as the European sage, may learn the exceeding riches of grace in Christ, through whose infinitely great propitiation, all manner of sin, barbarity, and blasphemy, are freely forgiven unto men.

What a grand and majestic dome is the sky! Where are the pillars which support the stately concave? What art, most exactly true, balanced the pressure? What props of insuperable strength sustain the weight? How is that immeasurable arch upheld, unshaken and unimpaired, while so many generations of busy mortals have sunk and disappeared as bubbles upon the stream? If those stars are of such an amazing bulk, how are they also fastened in their lofty situation? By what miracle in mechanics are so many thousands of ponderous orbs kept from falling upon our heads; kept from dashing both the world to pieces and its inhabitants to death? Are they hung in golden or adamantine chains? Rest they their enormous load on rocks of marble or columns of brass? No; they are pendulous in fluid ether; yet are more immoveably fixed, than if the everlasting mountains lent their forests for an axle tree, or their ridges for a basis. The almighty Architect stretches out the north, and its whole starry train, over the empty place. He hangs the earth and all the etherial globes upon nothing. (Job xxvii. 7.) Yet are their foundations laid so sure, that they can never be moved at any time.

No unfit representation to the sincere Christian, of his final perseverance:* such

* With regard to the final perseverance of the true believer, I am sensible this point is not a little controverted. The sentiments which follow are my steadfast belief. It is by no means proper, in a work of this nature, to enter upon a discussion of the subject. Neither have I room so much as to hint what might be urged for its support. Let my reader observe, that I am far from delivering it as essential to Christianity, or necessary to salvation. Millions of the very contrary conviction are, I doubt not, high in the favour of God, and in a growing meetness for his heavenly kingdom. As I blame none for rejecting, none, I hope, will be offended with me for espousing this particular doctrine. To be of different opinions, at least in some inferior instances, seems an unavoidable consequence of our present state, where ignorance in part cleaves to the wisest minds, and prejudice easily besets the most impartial judgments. This may turn to our common advantage, and afford room for the display and exercise of those healing virtues, moderation, meekness, and forbearance. Let me only be permitted to ask, whether this tenet does not evidently tend to establish the comfort of the Christian, and to magnify the fidelity of God our Saviour? Whether, far from countenancing sloth, or encouraging remissness, to know that our labour should not be in vain, is not the most prevailing inducement to abound in the work of the Lord? 1 Cor. xv. 58.

as points out the cause which effects it, and constitutes the pledge which ascertains it. His nature is all enfeebled. He is not able of himself to think a good thought. He has no visible safeguard, nor any sufficiency of his own. And yet whole legions of formidable enemies are in a confederacy to compass his ruin. The world lays unnumbered snares for his feet; the devil is incessantly urging the siege, by a multitude of fiery darts, or wily temptations: the flesh, like a perfidious inmate, under colour of friendship, and a specious pretence of pleasure, is always forward to betray his integrity. But amidst all these threatening circumstances of personal weakness and imminent danger, an invisible aid is his defence: "I will uphold thee," says the blessed God, "with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa. xli. 10.) Comfortable truth! The arm which fixes the stars in their order, and guides the planets in their course, is stretched out to preserve the heirs of salvation. "My sheep," adds the great Redeemer, "are mine, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John x. 28.) What words are these! and did they come from him who hath all power in heaven and on earth? and were they spoken to the weakest of the flock; to every unfeigned follower of the great Shepherd? Then, Omnipotence itself must be vanquished before they can be destroyed, either by the seductions of fraud, or the assaults of violence.

If you ask, therefore, what security we have of enduring to the end, and continuing faithful unto death? the very same that establishes the heavens, and settles the ordinances of the universe. Can these be thrown into confusion? (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36,) then may the true believer draw back unto perdition. Can the sun be dislodged from his sphere, and rush lawlessly through the sky? Then, and then only, can the faith of God's elect be finally overthrown. (Titus i. 2.) Be of good courage, then, my soul, rely on those divine succours which are so solemnly stipulated, so faithfully promised. Though thy grace be languid as the glimmering spark, though the overflowings of corruption threaten it with total extinction, yet, since the great Jehovah has undertaken to cherish the dim principle, "many waters cannot quench it, nor all floods drown it." Nay, though it were feeble as the smoking flax,* goodness and faithfulness stand engaged to augment the heat, to raise the fire, and feed the flame, till it beam forth, a lamp of immortal glory in the heavens.

As to the faithfulness of a covenanting God, this may be emblematically seen in the stability of the heavenly bodies, and the perpetuity of their motion: (Psalm cxix. 89, 90.) Those that are fixed or stationary, continue unalterable in their grand elevations: no injurious shocks, no violence of conflicting elements, are able to displace those everlasting hinges on which dependant worlds revolve: through the whole flight of time, they recede not so much as a hair's breadth from the precise central point of their respective systems; while the erratic, or planetary, perform their prodigious stages without any intermission, or the least embarrassment. How soon, and how easily is the most finished piece of human machinery disconcerted! But all the celestial movements are so nicely adjusted, all their operations so critically proportioned, and their mutual dependencies so strongly connected, that they prolong their beneficial courses throughout all ages. While mighty cities are overwhelmed with ruin, and their very names lost in oblivion; while

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Is any one inclined to examine the reasons which made the author a proselyte to this persuasion? He may find them displayed in the memorial, delivered by several select and eminent divines of the church of England, at the renowned synod of Dordt. (See Acta Synod Dordrech. par. 2, page 246 of the Latin edition, published in a single quarto volume.) Those who have no opportunity of consulting the memoirs of that venerable assembly, I would refer to the works of the indefatigable and very learned Turrentin, or to those of the candid and elegant Witsius. Turrent. tom. ii. q. xvi. Wits. Oecon. lib. iii. cap. xiii.

The latest and fullest view of the point, which I ever remember to have met within any of our English writers, is in the Lime-street Lectures; which are a defence of several most important doctrines of the gospel, and contained in two octavo volumes, the united labours of nine modern divines, most of whom are well known to the world by their other evangelical and useful writings. In those lectures, the final perseverance of the saints is very particularly stated; and, to my apprehension at least, most satisfactorily proved; the arguments usually urged against it are impartially considered; and I cannot but think (with all due deference to the judgment of others) unanswerably confuted.

And here (not to swell this note any farther,) I shall only just hint, that the judicious Hooker, (an authority, perhaps, as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced) gives a solemn attestation of this tenet, in a short discourse on the perpetuity of faith, subjoined to his Ecclesiastical Polity. Fol edit.

* The tenderness and faithfulness of God to his people, are finely pictured by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xlii. ver. 3. Which passage, because of its rich consolation, and uncommon beauty, is deservedly adopted by St. Matthew, and ingrafted into the system of evangelical truths. *He will not* himself *break*, nor suffer to be broken by any other, *the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.* Was it possible to have chosen two more delicate and expressive representations? Could any image be more significant of a very infirm and enfeebled faith, than the flexile reed that bends before every wind; which, besides its natural weakness, is made abundantly weaker by being bruised, and so is ready to fall in pieces of itself! Or could any thing, with a more pathetical exactness describe the extreme imbecility of that other principle of the divine life, *love!* The state of the flax just beginning to burn is liable to be put out by the least blast; more liable still is the wick of the lamp, when it is not so much as kindled into a glimmering flame, but only *breathing smoke*, and uncertain whether it shall take fire or not. Yet true faith and heavenly love, though subsisting amidst such pitiable infirmities, will not be abandoned by their great Author, shall not be extinguished by any temptations, but be maintained, invigorated, and made finally triumphant. Matt. xii. 20.

vast empires are swept from their foundations, and leave not so much as a shadowy trace of their ancient magnificence; while all terrestrial things are subject to vicissitude and fluctuating in uncertainty;—these are permanent in their duration; these are invariable in their functions: Not one faileth. Who doubts the constant succession of day and night, or the regular returns of summer and winter? And why, O! why shall we doubt the veracity of God, or distrust the accomplishment of his holy word? Can the ordinances of heaven depart? Then only can God forget to be gracious, or neglect the performance of his promise. Nay, our Lord gives us yet firmer grounds of affiance, he affords us a surer bottom for our faith, than the fundamental laws of the universe. Heaven and earth, he says, shall pass away, but my words shall not in a single instance, or in one tittle of their import, pass away, No: his sacred word, whatever may obstruct it, whoever may oppose it, shall be fulfilled to the very uttermost.

O powerful word! How astonishing is its efficacy! When this word was issued forth, a thousand worlds emerged out of nothing. Should the mighty orders be repeated, a thousand more would spring into existence. By this word, the vast system of created things is upheld in constant and immutable perfection. Should it give command, or cease to exert its energy, the universal frame would be dissolved, and all nature revert to her original chaos. And this very word is pledged for the safety, the comfort, the happiness of the godly. This inviolable, this almighty word speaks in all the promises of the gospel. How strangely infatuated are our souls, that we should value it so little! What infidels are we in fact, that we should depend upon it no more! Did it create whatever has a being, and shall it not work faith in our breasts? Do unnumbered worlds owe their support to this word; and shall it not be sufficient to buoy up our souls in troubles, or establish them in trials? Is it the life of the universe, and shall it be a dead letter to mankind?

If I wish to be heard when I implore heavenly blessings, is not this privilege most clearly made over to my enjoyment in that well-known text, "Ask, and it shall be given you." (Matt. vii. 7.) If I long for the eternal Comforter to dwell in my heart, and sanctify my nature, have I not an apparent title to this high prerogative conferred in that sweet assertive interrogation, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him?" (Luke xi. 13.) If I earnestly covet the inestimable treasures that are comprised in the great Immanuel's mediation, can I have a firmer claim to the noble portion than is granted in that most precious scripture, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) What assurance of being interested in these unspeakable mercies would I desire? What form of conveyance, what deed of settlement, were it left to my own option, should I choose? Here is the word of a king, the king immortal and invisible; all whose declarations are truth itself.* If a monarch bestow immunities on a body of men, and confirm them by an authentic charter, no one controverts, no one questions their right to the royal favours. And why should we suspect the validity of those glorious grants which are made by the everlasting Sovereign of nature; which he has also ratified by an oath, and sealed with the blood of his Son? Corporations may be disfranchised, and charters revoked; even mountains may be removed, and stars drop from their spheres; but a tenure founded on the divine promise is unalienably secure, is lasting as eternity itself.

We have endeavoured to spell a syllable of the eternal name in the ancient manuscript of the sky. We have caught a glimpse of the Almighty's glory from the lustre of innumerable stars. But would we behold all his excellencies pourtrayed in full perfection, and drawn to the very life; let us attentively consider the Redeemer. I observe there are some parts of the firmament in which the stars seem as it were to cluster. They are sown thicker, they lie closer than usual, and strike the eye with redoubled splendour. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams, and reflect an increase of brilliancy on each other. Is there not such an assemblage, such a constellation of the divine honours, most amiably effulgent in the blessed Jesus?

Does not infinite wisdom† shine, with surpassing brightness, in Christ? To the making of a world there was no obstacle; but to the saving of man, there seemed to be insurmountable bars. If the rebel is suffered to escape, where is the inflexible justice which denounces death as the wages of sin? If the offender is thoroughly pardoned, where is the inviolable veracity which has solemnly declared, "The soul that sinneth shall die?" These awful attributes are set in terrible array, and, like an impenetrable battalion, oppose the salvation of apostate mankind. Who can suggest a method to absolve the traitorous race, yet vindicate the honours of almighty sovereignty? This is an intricacy which the most exalted of finite intelligencies are unable to clear. But behold the unsearchable secret revealed!

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* ——If these fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.——
Milton's Comus.

† See the next note.

revealed in the wonderful redemption accomplished by a dying Saviour! so plainly revealed, that, "he who runs may read," and even babes understand what minds of the deepest penetration could not contrive. The Son of God, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death in our stead. By this means, the threatened curse is executed in all its rigour, and free grace is exercised in all its riches. Justice maintains her rights, and with a steady hand administers impartial vengeance; while mercy dispenses her pardons, and welcomes the repentant criminal with the tenderest embraces. Hereby the seemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled; the sinner is saved not only in full consistence with the honour of the supreme perfections, but to the most illustrious manifestation of them all.

Where does the divine power* so signally exert itself as in the cross of Christ, and in the conquests of grace? Our Lord, in his lowest state of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory than when, through the dividing sea, and the waste howling wilderness, "he rode upon his chariots and horses of salvation." When his hands were rivetted with irons to the bloody tree, he disarmed death of its sting, and plucked the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in weakness, he vanquished the strong man, and subdued our most formidable enemies. Even then he spoiled principalities, triumphed over the powers of darkness, and led captivity captive. Now he is exalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth "conquering and to conquer!" By this the slaves of sin are rescued from their bondage, and restored to the liberty of righteousness. By this depraved wretches, whose appetites were sensual, and their dispositions devilish, are not only renewed, but renewed after the image of God, and made partakers of a divine nature. Millions, millions of lost creatures are snatched, by the interposition of grace, like brands from the burning; and, translated into everlasting mansions, shine brighter than the stars, shine bright as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Would you, then, see an incomparably more bright display of the divine excellence than the spotted firmament, the spangles of heaven, or the golden fountain of day exhibit? Contemplate Jesus of Nazareth! He is the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person. In his immaculate nature, in his heavenly temper, in his most holy life, the moral perfections of the Deity are represented to the highest advantage.* Hark! how mercy with her charming voice speaks in all he utters. See how benevolence pours her choicest stores, in all he does. Did ever compassion look so amiably soft, as in those pitying tears which swelled his eyes, and trickled down his cheeks, to bedew the rancour of his inveterate enemies? Was it possible for patience to assume a form so lovely, as that sweetly-winning conduct, which bore the contradiction of sinners? which intreated the obstinate to be reconciled; besought the guilty not to die? In other things, we may find some scattered rays of Jehovah's glory; but in Christ they are all collected and united, in Christ they beam forth with the strongest radiance, with the most delightful effulgence. Out of Sion, and in Sion's great Redeemer, hath God appeared in perfect beauty.

Search then, my soul, above all other pursuits, search the records of redeeming love. Let these be the principal objects of thy study. Here employ thyself with the most unwearied assiduity: In these are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:† Such wisdom as charms and astonishes the very angels, engages their closest attention, and fills them with the deepest adoration;‡ such knowledge, as qualifies the possessor, if not for offices of dignity on earth, yet for the most honourable advancements in the kingdom of heaven. Disunited from which knowledge, all application is but elaborate impertinence; and all science no better than pompous ignorance. These records contain the faultless model of duty, and the noblest motives to obedience. Nothing so

* Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. 1 Cor. i 24. To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, (by the amazing contrivance and accomplishment of its redemption, the deep,) extensive, and greatly diversified wisdom of God. Eph. iii. 10.

* In this sense, that saying of our Lord is eminently true, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" John xiv. 9.

† Col. ii. 3. Not a mean degree, but a treasure; not one treasure, but many; not many only, but all treasures of true wisdom and saving knowledge, are in Christ and his glorious gospel. The transcendent excellency of those treasures seems to be finely intimated in that expression, *hid:* which may be interpreted by the Hebrew, Job iii. 21, laid up with the utmost care, and the greatest safety: Not left, at all adventures, to be stumbled upon by every giddy wanderer, or to fall into the arms of the yawning sluggard, but, like jewels of the brightest lustre, or riches of the highest value, kept in store to adorn and reward the diligent searcher.

‡ This, I believe, is the import of the apostle's language, though it is not a literal translation of 1 Pet. i. 12. I never had such a lively apprehension of the beautiful significancy of the last word, as when I have attended a dissection of some part of the animal body. In order to discern the minutiæ of the admirable frame, the latent wonders of art and mechanism, the eye is so sharpened, and its application so intensely bended, as gives a very just experimental comment on that expressive phrase. With such earnest attention is the everlasting gospel contemplated by the angelic orders. How much more, if it were possible, does it deserve the devout and incessant consideration of human minds! Since by them, it is not only to be speculated as a bright and ravishing display of the divine attributes, but to be applied to their fallen nature as a most benign scheme of recovering grace; as the sure and only method of obtaining life and immortality.

powerful to work a lively faith and a joyful hope, as an attentive consideration of our Lord's unutterable merits. Nothing so sovereign to antidote the pestilential influence of the world, and deliver our affections from a slavery to ignoble objects, as an habitual remembrance of his extreme agonies. The genuine, the ever-fruitful source of all morality, is the unfeigned love of Christ; and the cross,* the CROSS is the appointed altar, from which we may fetch a coal† to kindle this sacred fire.

Behold, therefore, the man! the matchless and stupendous man! whose practice was a pattern of the most exalted virtue, and his person the mirror of every divine perfection. Examine the memoirs of his heavenly temper and exemplary conversation. Contemplate that choir of graces which were associated in his mind, and shed the highest lustre on all his actions. Familiarize to thy thoughts his instructive discourses, and enter into the very spirit of his refined doctrines; that the graces may be transfused into thy breast, and the doctrines transcribed in thy life. Follow him to Calvary's horrid eminence! to Calvary's fatal catastrophe! where innocence, dignity, and merit, were made perfect through sufferings; each shining, with all possible splendour, through the tragical scene; somewhat like his own radiant bow, then glowing with the greatest beauty when appearing in the darkest cloud. Be thy most constant attention fixed on that lovely and sorrowful spectacle. Behold the spotless victim nailed to the tree, and stabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out prayers for his murderers, before he poured out his soul for transgressors. See the wounds that stream with forgiveness, and bleed balm for a distempered world. O! see the justice of the Almighty and his goodness; his mercy and his vengeance; every tremendous and gracious attribute manifested—manifested with inexpressible glory in that most ignominious, yet grandest of transactions.

Since God is so inconceivably great as these his marvellous works declare;

Since the great Sov'reign sends ten thousand worlds,
To tell us, he resides above them all,
In glory's unapproachable recess;‡

how can we forbear hastening, with Moses, bowing ourselves to the earth, and worshipping! O! what an honourable, as well as advantageous employ, is prayer!—Advantageous: By prayer, we cultivate that improving correspondence with Jehovah, we carry on that gladdening intercourse with his spirit, which must begin here, in order to be completed in eternity.—Honourable: By prayer, we have access to that mighty Potentate, whose sceptre sways universal nature, and whose rich regalia fills the skies with lustre. Prayer places us in his presence-chamber; while the blood of sprinkling procures us a gracious audience.

Shall I then blush to be found prostrate before the throne of grace? Shall I be ashamed to have it known that I offer up social supplications in the family, or am conscientious in observing my private retirements? Rather let me glory in this unspeakable privilege. Let me reckon it the noblest posture, to fall low on my knees before his footstool; and the highest honour, to enjoy communion with his most exalted Majesty: Incomparably more noble, than to sit in person on the triumphal chariot, or to stand in effigy amidst the temple of worthies.

Most inestimable, in such a view, is that promise, which so often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, *I will be thy God*, (Heb. viii. 10.) Will this supremely excellent and almighty Being vouchsafe to be my portion? to settle upon a poor sinner, not the heritage of a country, not the possession of the whole earth, but his own ever-blessed self? May I, then, through his free condescending grace, and the unknown merits of his Son, look upon all these infinitely noble attributes as my treasure? May I regard the wisdom which superintends such a multitude of worlds, as my guide? the power which produced and preserves them in existence, as my guard? the goodness which, by an endless communication of favours, renders them all so many habitations of happiness, as my exceeding great reward? What a fund of felicity is included in such a blessing! How often does the Israelitish prince exult in the assurance, that this unutterable and boundless good *is his own!* Interested in this, he bids defiance to every evil that can be dreaded, and rests in certain expectation of every blessing that can be desired. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The Lord," with an air of exultation he repeats both his affiance and his

* "And I," says our Lord, "if I be lifted up from the earth, and extended on the cross, will draw all men unto me;" will give such a rich and transcendent display of my love, as shall constitute the most powerful and prevailing attractive of theirs. John xii. 32.

† Alluding to Isaiah vi. 6.

‡ For this quotation, and several valuable hints, I acknowledge myself indebted to those beautiful and sublime poems, entitled *Night Thoughts*; of which I shall only say, that I receive fresh pleasure and richer improvement from every renewed perusal. And I think I shall have reason to bless the indulgent Bestower of all wisdom, for those instructive and animating compositions, even in my last moments: than which nothing can more emphatically speak their superior excellence, nor give a more solid satisfaction to their worthy Author. Happy should I think myself, if these little sketches of contemplative devotion might be honoured with the most inferior degree of the same success; might receive a testimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the dying lips of some edified Christian.

challenge, "is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?" (Psalm xxvii. 1.) Nothing so effectual as this appropriating faith, to inspire a dignity of mind superior to transitory trifles; or to create a calmness of temper unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by death itself. "The Lord is my Shepherd," says the same truly gallant and heroic personage; "therefore shall I lack nothing." (Psalm xxiii. 1.) How is it possible he should suffer want, who has the all-sufficient fulness for his supply? So long as unerring wisdom is capable of contriving the means, so long as uncontrollable power is able to execute them, such a one cannot fail of being safe and happy, whether he continue amidst the vicissitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

Here let us stand a moment, and humbly contemplate this great God, together with ourselves, in a relative view. If we reflect on the works of material nature, their number incomprehensible, and their extent unmeasurable; each of them apart so admirably framed, the connexions of the whole so exquisitely regulated, and all derived from one and the same glorious agent: if we recollect the far more noble accomplishments of elegant taste and discerning judgment, of refined affections and exalted sentiments, which are to be found among the several orders of intelligent existence; and all of them flowing, in rich emanations, from the one sole fountain of intellectual light: if we farther consider this Author of material beauty and moral excellency, as a Guardian, a Governor, and Benefactor to all his creatures; supporting the whole system, and protecting each individual by an ever-watchful providence, presiding over the minutest affairs, and causing all events to terminate in the most extensive good; heaping, with unremitted liberality, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the circuit of the universe a seminary of happiness: is it possible for the human heart, under such captivating views, to be indifferent towards this most benign, most bountiful original of being and of bliss? Can any be so immersed in stupidity, as to say unto the Almighty—in the language of an irreligious temper and licentious life, to say "Depart from us, we implore not thy favour, nor desire the knowledge of thy ways?" Wonder, O heavens! be amazed, O earth! and let the inhabitants of both express their astonishment at this unparalleled complication of disingenuous, ungrateful, destructive perverseness!

If we consider our fallen and imperfect state—frail in our bodies; enfeebled in our minds; in every part of our constitution, and in all the occurrences of life, "like a tottering wall, or a broken hedge:" If we survey our indigent and infirm state—without holiness, without spiritual strength, our possession of present conveniences entirely dependent on God's sovereign pleasure; yea, forfeited, justly forfeited, with every future hope, by a thousand aggravated iniquities: If we add the various disasters of our condition—agitated as we are by tumultuous passions; oppressed with dispiriting fears; held in suspense by a variety of perplexing* cares; liable to pains, and exposed to troubles; troubles from every quarter, troubles of every kind: Can we, amidst so many wants, under such deplorable infirmities, and subject to such disastrous accidents; can we be unconcerned whether God's omnipotent, irresistible, all-conducting hand be against us, or for us? Imagination itself shudders at the thought! Can we rest satisfied, without a well-grounded persuasion, that we are reconciled to this supreme Lord, and the objects of his unchangeable goodness? If there be an abandoned wretch, whose apprehensions are so fatally blinded, who is so utterly lost to all sense of his duty and of his interest; let me bewail his misery, while I abhor his impiety—bewail his misery, though popularity, with her choicest laurels, adorn his brow; though affluence, with her richest delicacies, load his table; though half a nation, or half a world, conspire to call him happy.

May I, by a believing application, solace myself in this everlasting source of love, perfection and joy! Grant me this request, and I ask no more. Only that I may expect, not with a reluctant anxiety, but with a ready cheerfulness, the arrival of that important hour, when this veil of flesh shall drop, and the shadows of mortality flee away; when I shall no longer complain of obscure knowledge, languid affections, and imperfect fruition; but shall see the uncreated and immortal majesty—see him, not in this distant and unaffected method, of reasoning from his works, but with the most clear and direct intuition of the mind: when I shall love him, not with a cold and

* *Perplexing*—Those who read the original language of the New Testament, are sufficiently apprised, that such is the significancy of that benevolent dissuasive, urged by our Lord, Matth. vi. 25. I beg leave, for the sake of the unlearned reader, to observe, that our translation, though for the most part faithful and excellent, has here misrepresented our divine Master's meaning. Take no thought for your food, for your raiment, for your bodily welfare, is not only not the true sense, but the very reverse of this scriptural doctrine. We are required to take a prudent and moderate thought for the necessaries of life. The sluggard, who neglects this decent precaution, is severely reprimanded; is sent to one of the meanest animals, to blush for his folly, and learn discretion from her conduct, Prov. vi. 6. Our Saviour's precept, and the exact sense of his expression, is, Take no anxious thought; indulge no perplexing care; no such care as may argue an unreasonable distrust of Providence, or may rend and tear your minds with distressing, with pernicious solicitude.

contracted spirit, but with the most lively and enlarged emotions of gratititude: when I shall incessantly enjoy the light of his countenance, and be united, inseparably united, to his all-glorious Godhead. Take, ye ambitious, unenvied and unopposed, take to yourselves the toys of state. May I be enabled to rejoice in this blessed hope, and to triumph in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the Lord my God! And I shall scarce bestow a thought on the splendid pageantry of the world, unless it be to despise its empty pomp, and to pity its deluded admirers.

All these bodies, though immense in their size, and almost infinite in their multitude, are obedient to the divine command. The God of wisdom "telleth their numbers," and is intimately acquainted with their various properties. The God of power "calleth them all by their names," and assigns them whatsoever office he pleases. He marshalls all the starry legions, with infinitely greater ease and nicer order, than the most expert general arranges his disciplined troops. He appoints their posts, he marks their route, he fixes the time for their return: The posts which he appoints, they occupy without fail; in the route, which he settles, they persevere without the least deviation; and to the instant,* which he fixes for their return, they are precisely punctual. He has given them a law which, through a long revolution of ages, shall not be broken, unless his sovereign will interposes for its repeal. Then, indeed, the motion of the celestial orbs is controlled; their action remains suspended; or their influence receives a new direction.—The sun, at his creation, issued forth with a command to travel perpetually through the heavens; since which he has never neglected to perform the great circuit, "rejoicing as a giant to run his race." But, when it is requisite to accomplish the purposes of divine love, the orders are countermanded; the flaming courier remits his career, stands still in Gibeon;† and, for the conveniency of the chosen people, holds back the falling day. The moon was dispatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving course till day and night come to an end: But, when the children of Providence are to be favoured with an uncommon continuance of light, she halts in her march, makes a solemn pause in the valley of Ajalon,* and delays to bring on her attendant train of shadows. When the enemies of the Lord are to be discomfited, the stars are levied into the service; the stars are armed, and take the field; the stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera.†

So dutiful is material nature! so obsequious in all her forms to her Creator's pleasure! The bellowing thunders listen to his voice; and the vollied lightnings observe the direction of his eye. The flying storm and impetuous whirlwind wear his yoke. The raging waves revere his nod; they shake the earth, they dash the skies, yet never offer to pass the limits which he has prescribed. Even the planetary spheres, though vastly larger than this wide extended earth, are in his hand as clay in the hands of the potter. Though swifter than the northern blast, they sweep the long tracts of ether; yet are they guided by his reins, and execute whatever he enjoins. All those enormous globes of central fire, which beam through the boundless azure, in comparison of which, an army of planets were like a swarm of summer-insects; those, even those, are conformable to his will; as the melting wax to the impressed seal.

Since all—all is obedient throughout the whole ascent of things, shall man be the only rebel against the almighty Maker? Shall these unruly appetites reject his government, and refuse their allegiance? Shall these headstrong passions break loose from divine restraint, and run wild in exorbitant sallies after their own imaginations.

O my soul! be stung with remorse, and overwhelmed with confusion, at the thought! Is it not a righteous thing that the blessed God should sway the sceptre, with the

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* "The planets and all the innumerable host of heavenly bodies, perform their courses and revolutions with so much certainty and exactness, as never once to fail; but, for almost 6000 years, come constantly about to the same period, in the hundredth part of a minute."—*Stackhouse's History of the Bible.*

† This is spoken in conformity to the Scripture language, and according to the common notion. With respect to the power which affected the alteration, it is much the same thing, and alike-miraculous, whether the sun or the earth be supposed to move.

* Josh. x. 12, 13. The prophet Habbakkuk, according to his lofty manner, celebrates this event; and points out in very poetical diction, the design of so surprising a miracle. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; in the light, the long continued and miraculous light, thy arrows, edged with destruction, walked on their awful errand; in the clear shining of the day, protracted for this very purpose, thy glittering spear, launched by thy people, but guided by thy hand, sprung to its prey. Hab. iii. 11.

† Judg. v. 20. The scriptural phrase, *fought against*, will, I hope, be a proper warrant for every expression I have used on this occasion. The passage is generally supposed to signify, that some very dreadful meteors (which the stars were thought to influence,) such as fierce flashes of lightning, impetuous showers of rain, and rapid storms of hail, were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the enemies of Israel. If so, there cannot be a more clear and lively paraphrase on the text, than these fine lines of a Jewish writer. "His severe wrath shall he sharpen for a sword; and the world shall fight with him against the ungodly. Then shall the right-aiming thunderbolts go abroad, and from the clouds, as from a well-drawn bow, shall they fly to the mark. And hail-stones full of wrath shall be cast out of a stone bow; and the water of the sea shall rage against them; and the floods (as was the case of the river Kishon) shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them; and, like a storm, shall blow them away. Wisd. v. 20—23.

most absolute authority, over all the creatures which his power has formed? especially over those creatures whom his distinguishing favour has endued with the noble principle of reason, and made capable of a blissful immortality? Sure, if all the ranks of inanimate existence conform to their Maker's decree, by the necessity of their nature, this more excellent race of beings should pay their equal homage by the willing compliance of their affections.* Come, then, all ye faculties of my mind; come, all ye powers of my body; give up yourselves, without a moment's delay, without the least reserve, to his governance. Stand like dutiful servants at his footstool, in an everlasting readiness to do whatsoever he requires; to be whatsoever he appoints; to further, with united efforts, the purposes of his glory in this earthly scene; or else to separate, without reluctance, at his summons—the one to sleep in the silent dust; the other, to advance his honour in some remoter colony of his kingdom. Thus may I join with all the works of the Lord, in all places of his dominion, to recognise his universal supremacy, and proclaim him Sovereign of souls as well as Ruler of worlds.

At my first coming abroad, all these luminaries were eclipsed by the overpowering lustre of the sun. They were all placed in the very same stations, and played the same sprightly beams; yet not one of them was seen. As the daylight wore away, and the sober shades advanced, Hesperus, who leads the starry train, disclosed his radiant forehead, and catched my eye. While I stood gazing on his bright and beautiful aspect, several of his attendants peeped through the blue curtains. Scarce had I turned to observe these fresh emanations of splendour, but others dropt the veil, others stole into view. When, lo! faster and more numerous, multitudes sprung from obscurity; they poured, in shining troops, and in sweet confusion, over all the empyrean plain, till the firmament seemed like one vast constellation, and a flood of glory burst from all the skies.

Is not such the rise, and such the progress of a true conversion in the prejudiced infidel, or inattentive sinner? During the period of his vainer years, a thousand interesting truths lay utterly undiscovered, a thousand momentous concerns were entirely disregarded. But when divine grace dissipates the delusive glitter which dazzled his understanding and beguiled his affections, then he begins to discern, dimly to discern, the things which belong unto his peace. Some admonition of scripture darts conviction into his soul, as the glimmering of a star pierces the gloom of night. Then, perhaps, another awful or cheering text impresses terror or diffuses comfort. A threatening alarms his fears, or a promise awakens his hopes. This possibly is succeeded by some afflictive dispensation of providence, and improved by some edifying and instructive conversation. All which is established as to its continuance, and enlarged as to its influence, by a diligent study of the sacred word. By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence; scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto unknown delight, address him with their attractives. New desires take wing; new pursuits are set on foot. A new turn of mind forms his temper; a new habit of conversation regulates his life. In a word, old things are passed away, and all things become new. He who was sometime darkness, is now light, and life, and joy in the Lord.

The more attentively I view the crystal concave, the more fully I discern the riches of its decorations. Abundance of minuter lights, which lay concealed from a superficial notice, are visible on a closer examination; especially in those tracts of the sky, which are called the galaxy; and are distinguishable by a sort of milky path. There the stars are crowded, rather than disseminated. The regions seem to be all on a blaze, with their blended rays. Besides this vast profusion, which in my present situation the eye discovers, were I to make my survey from any other part of the globe, lying near the southern pole, I should behold a new choir of starry bodies, which have never appeared within our horizon. Was I, (which is still more wonderful,) either here or there, to view the firmament with the virtuoso's glass, I should find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, which, immersed in depths of ether, escape the keenest unassisted sight.* Yet, in these various situations, even with the aid of the

* This argument, I acknowledge, is not absolutely conclusive, but it is popular and striking. Nor can I think myself obliged in such a work, where fancy bears a considerable sway, to proceed always with the caution and exactness of a disputer in the schools. If there be some appearance of analogy between the fact and the inference, it seems sufficient for my purpose, though the deduction should not be necessary, nor the process strictly syllogistical. One of the apostolic fathers has an affecting and sublime paragraph, which runs entirely in this form: "The sun, the moon, and the starry choir, without the least deviation, and with the utmost harmony, perform the revolutions appointed them by the supreme decree." From which remark, and abundance of other similar instances observable in the economy of nature, he exhorts Christians to a cordial unanimity among themselves, and a dutiful obedience to God. *Vid.* Clem. Roman. 1. Eph. ad Corinth, Sect. 20. See also a beautiful Ode in Dr. Watt's lyric poems, entitled the Comparison and Complaint, which turns upon this very thought.

* Come forth, O man, yon azure round survey,
And view those lamps, which yield eternal day.
Bring forth thy glasses; clear thy wond'ring eyes,
Millions beyond the former millions rise;
Look farther—millions more blaze from remoter skies.

See an ingenious poem, entitled, The Universe.

telescopic tube, I should not be able to descry the half, perhaps not a thousandth part of those majestic luminaries, which the vast expansive heavens contain.* So, the more diligently I pursue my search into those oracles of eternal truth, the scriptures, I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever-increasing fund of spiritual treasures. I perceive the brighter strokes of wisdom, and the richer displays of goodness; a more transcendent excellency in the illustrious Messiah, and a more deplorable vileness in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in God's law, and more precious privileges in his gospel; yet, after a course of study ever so assiduous, ever so prolonged, I should have reason to own myself a mere babe in heavenly knowledge, or at most, but a puerile proficient in the school of Christ.

After all my most accurate inspection, those starry orbs appear but as glittering points. Even the planets, though so much nearer our earthly mansion, seem only like burning bullets. If, then, we have such imperfect apprehensions of visible and material things, how much more scanty and inadequate must be our notions of invisible and immortal objects! We behold the stars. Though every one is incomparably bigger than the globe we inhabit, yet they dwindle upon our survey into the most diminutive forms. Thus we see by faith the glories of the blessed Jesus, the atoning efficacy of his death, the justifying merit of his righteousness, and the joys which are reserved for his followers. But, alas! even our most exalted ideas are vastly below the truth; as much below the truth, as the report which our eyes make of those celestial edifices is inferior to their real grandeur. Should we take in all the magnifying assistances which art has contrived, those luminous bodies would elude our skill, and appear as small as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth travel towards the cope of heaven, and be carried forwards, in his aerial journey, more than a hundred and sixty millions of miles;† even in that advanced situation, those oceans of flame would look no larger than radiant specks. In like manner, conceive ever so magnificently of the Redeemer's honours, and of the bliss which he has purchased for his people, yet you will fall short. Raise your imagination higher; stretch your invention wider; give them all the scope which a soaring and excursive fancy can take: still your conceptions will be extremely disproportionate to their genuine perfections. Vast are the bodies which roll in the expanse of heaven; vaster far are those fields of ether, through which they run their endless round; but the excellency of Jesus, and the happiness laid up for his servants, are greater than either, than both, than all. An inspired writer calls the former, "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" and styles the latter, "an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory."

If those stars are so many great and inexhaustible magazines of fire, and immense reservoirs of light; there is no reason to doubt but they have some very grand uses, suitable to the magnificence of their nature. To specify or explain the particular purposes they answer, is altogether impossible in our present state of distance and ignorance. This, however, we may clearly discern; they are disposed in that very manner which is most pleasing and most serviceable to mankind. They are not placed at an infinite remove, so as to lie beyond our sight, neither are they brought so near our abode, as to annoy us with their beams. We see them shine on every side. The deep azure which serves them as a ground, heightens their splendour. At the same time, their influence is gentle, and their rays are destitute of heat. So that we are surrounded with a multitude of fiery globes which beautify and illuminate the firmament, without any risk, either to the coolness of our night, or the quiet of our repose. Who can sufficiently admire that wondrous benignity, which, on our account, strews the earth with blessings of every kind, and vouchsafes to make the very heavens subservient to our delight?

It is not solely to adorn the roof of our palace with costly gildings, that God commands the celestial luminaries to glitter through the gloom. We also reap considerable benefits from their ministry. They divide our time, and fix its solemn periods. They settle the order of our works; and are, according to the destination mentioned in sacred writ, "for signs and for seasons; for days and for years." The returns of heat and cold alone would have been too precarious a rule; but these radiant bodies, by the variation, and also by the regularity, of their motions, afford a method of calculating absolutely certain, and sufficiently obvious. By this the farmer is instructed when to commit his grain to the furrows,

* How noble, considered in this view, are the celebrations of the divine Majesty which frequently occur in the sacred writings! *It is the Lord that made the heavens.* Psalm xcvi. 5. What a prodigious dignity does such a sense of things give to that devout ascription of praise! "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host." Neh. ix. 6. Examined by this rule, the beautiful climax in our inspired hymn, is sublime beyond compare! "Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him all ye stars of light; praise him, ye heaven of heavens. Psalm cxlviii. 3, 4.

† This, incredible as it may seem, is not a mere supposition, but a real fact. For, about the 21st of December, we are above 160,000,000 of miles nearer the northern parts of the sky, than we are on 21st of June. And yet, with regard to the stars situate in that quarter, we perceive no change in their aspect, nor any augmentation of their magnitude.

and how to conduct the operations of husbandry. By this, the sailor knows when to proceed on his voyage with least peril, and how to carry on the business of navigation with most success.

Why should not the Christian, the probationer for eternity, learn from the same monitors, to number for nobler purposes, to number his days, and duly to transact the grand, grand affairs of his everlasting salvation? Since God has appointed so many bright measurers of our time, to determine its larger periods, and to minute down its ordinary stages; sure, this most strongly inculcates its value, and should powerfully prompt us to improve it. Behold! the supreme Lord marks the progress of our life, in that most conspicuous calendar above. Does not such an ordination tell us, and in the most emphatical language, that our life is given for use, not for waste; that no portion of it is delivered, but under a strict account; that all of it is entered, as it passes, in the divine register; and therefore, that the stewards of such a talent are to expect a future reckoning? Behold the very heavens are bidden to be the accountants of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them with a vigilant frugality: to part with them as misers with their hoarded treasure, warily and circumspectly; and, if possible, as merchants with their rich commodities, not without an equivalent, either in personal improvement, or social usefulness!

How bright the starry diamonds shine! the ambition of eastern monarchs could imagine no distinction more noble and sublime, than that of being likened to those beaming orbs. (Num. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.) They form night's richest dress; and sparkle upon her sable robe, like jewels of the finest lustre. Like jewels! I wrong their character. The lucid stone has no brilliancy, quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz, compared with those glowing decorations of heaven. How widely are their radiant honours diffused! No nation so remote but sees their beauty, and rejoices in their usefulness. They have been admired by all preceding generations, and every rising age will gaze on their charms with renewed delight. How animating then, is that promise made to the faithful ministers of the gospel! "They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.) Is not this a most winning encouragement "to spend and be spent" in the service of souls? Methinks the stars beckon as they twinkle. Methinks they show me their splendours, on purpose to inspire me with alacrity in the race set before me: on purpose to enliven my activity in the work that is given me to do. Yes, ye majestic monitors, I understand your meaning. If honour has any charms, if true glory, the glory which cometh from God, is any attractive, you display the most powerful incitements to exercise all assiduity in my holy vocation. I will henceforth observe your intimation; and when zeal becomes languid, have recourse to your heavenly lamps; if so be I may rekindle its ardour at those inextinguishable fires.

Of the polar star it is observable, that while other luminaries alter their situation, this seems invariably fixed.* While other luminaries now mount the battlements of heaven, and appear upon duty; now retire beneath the horizon, and resign to a fresh set the watches of the night; this never departs from its station. This, in every season, maintains an uniform position, and is always to be found in the same tract of the northern sky. How often has this beamed bright intelligence on the sailor, and conducted the keel to its desired haven! In early ages, those who went down to the sea in ships, and occupied their business in great waters, had scarce any other sure guide for their wandering vessel. This, therefore, they viewed with the most solicitous attention. By this they formed their observations and regulated their voyage. When this was obscured by clouds, or enveloped in mists, the trembling mariner was bewildered on the watery waste. His thoughts fluctuated as much as the floating surge; and he knew not where he was advanced, or whither he should steer. But when this auspicious star broke through the gloom, it dissipated the anxiety of his mind, and cleared up his dubious passage; he reassumed with alacrity the management of the helm, and was able to shape his course with some tolerable degree of satisfaction and certainty.

Such, only much clearer in its light, and much surer in its direction, is the holy word of God to those myriads of intellectual beings who are bound for the eternal shores; who, embarked in a vessel of feeble flesh, are to pass the waves of this tempestuous and perilous world. In all difficulties, those sacred pages shed an encouraging ray, in all uncertainties, they suggest the right determination, and point out the proper procedure. What is still a more inestimable advantage, they, like the star which conducted the eastern sages, make plain the way of access to a Redeemer. They display his unspeakable merits; they discover the method of being interested in his great atonement; and lead the weary soul, toss-

* I speak in conformity to the appearance of the object. For, though this remarkable star revolves round the pole, its motion is so slow, and the circle it describes so small, as renders both the revolution and change of situation hardly perceivable.

ed by troubles, and shattered by temptations, to that only harbour of peaceful repose. Let us therefore attend to this unerring directory, with the same constancy of regard, as the seafaring man observes his compass. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this sacred chart, as the pilot is with every trusty mark, that gives notice of a lurking rock, and with every open road that yields a safe passage into the port. Above all, let us commit ourselves to this infallible guidance, with the same implicit resignation; let us conform our conduct to its exalted precepts, with the same sedulous care, as the children of Israel, when sojourning in the trackless desert, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud. So will it introduce us, not into an earthly Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, but into an immortal paradise, where is the fulness of joy, and where are pleasures for evermore. It will introduce us into those happy, happy regions, where our sun shall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, shall be ended. (Isaiah lx. 20.)

I perceive a great variety in the size and splendour of those gems of heaven. Some are of the first magnitude; others of an inferior order. Some glow with intense flames; others glimmer with fainter beams. Yet all are beautiful, all have their peculiar lustre, and distinct use; all tend in their different degrees to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night. This circumstance is remarked by an author, whose sentiments are a source of wisdom, and the very standard of truth. "One star," says the apostle of the Gentiles, "differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead."

In the world above, are various degrees of happiness, various seats of honour. Some will rise to more illustrious distinctions, and richer joys.* Some, like vessels of ample capacity, will admit more copious accessions of light and excellence. Yet there will be no want, no deficiency in any, but a fulness both of divine satisfactions and personal perfections. Each will enjoy all the good, and be adorned with all the glory, that his heart can wish or his condition receive. None will know what it is to envy. Not the least malevolence, nor the least selfishness, but everlasting friendship prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, cordial love, will give every particular saint a participation of all the fruitions which are diffused through the whole assembly of the blessed. No one eclipses, but each reflects light upon his brother. A sweet interchange of rays subsist, all enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communication of pleasure and amity, each will be continually receiving from, each incessantly adding to, the general felicity.

Happy, supremely happy they, who are admitted into the celestial mansions. Better to be a doorkeeper in those "ivory palaces," (Psalm xlv. 8.) than to fill the most gorgeous throne on earth. The very lowest place at God's right hand is distinguished honour and consummate bliss. O that we may, in some measure, anticipate that beatific state while we remain in our banishment below! May we, by rejoicing in the superior prosperity of another, make it our own; and provided the general result is harmony, be content, be pleased, with whatsoever part is assigned to our share in the universal choir of affairs.

While I am considering the heavenly bodies, I must not entirely forget those fundamental laws of our modern astronomy, projection and attraction. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the ever-operative spring, of the mighty frame. In the beginning the all-creating fiat impressed a proper degree of motion on each of those whirling orbs; which, if not controlled, would have carried them on in straight lines, and to endless lengths, till they were even lost in the abyss of space. But, the gravitating property being added to the projectile force, determined their courses to a circular form,* and obliged the reluctant rovers to perform their destined rounds. Were either of those causes to suspend their action, all the harmoniously moving spheres would be disconcerted, would degenerate into sluggish, inactive masses, and, falling into the central fire, be burnt to ashes; or else would exorbitate into wild confusion, and each, by the rapidity of its whirl, be dissipated into atoms. But the impulsive and attractive energy being most nicely at-

* 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. The great Mr. Mead prefers the sense here given, and the learned Dr. Hammond admits it into his paraphrase. Whose joint authority, though far from excluding any other, yet is a sufficient warrant for this application of the words.

* I am aware the planetary orbits are not strictly circular, but rather elliptical. However, as they are but a small remove from the perfectly round figure, and partake of it incomparably more than the trajectories of the comets, I choose to represent the thing in this view; especially, because the notion of a circle is so much more intelligible to the generality of readers, than that of an ellipsis; and because I laid it down for a rule, not to admit any such abstruse sentiment, or difficult expression, as should demand a painful attention, instead of raising an agreeable idea. For which reason, I have avoided technical terms; have taken no notice of Jupiter's satellites, or Saturn's ring; have not so much as mentioned the names of the planets, nor attempted to wade into any depths of the science; lest, to those who have no opportunity of using the telescope, or of acquainting themselves with a system of astronomy, I should propound riddles, rather than display entertaining and edifying truths.

tempered to each other; and, under the immediate operation of the Almighty, exerting themselves in perpetual concert, the various globes run their radiant races without the least interruption, or the least deviation, so as to create the alternate changes of day and night, and distribute the useful viscissitudes of succeeding seasons; so as to answer all the great ends of a gracious Providence, and procure every comfortable convenience for universal nature.

Does not this constitution of the material, very naturally lead the thoughts to those grand principles of the moral and devotional world—faith and love? These are often celebrated by the inspired apostle, as a comprehensive summary of the gospel; (Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5.) These inspirit the breast, and regulate the progress of each private Christian. These unite the whole congregation of the faithful to God, and one another;—to God, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and devotion; to one another, by a reciprocal intercourse of brotherly affections and friendly offices. If you ask, Why is it impossible for the true believer to live at all adventures? to stagnate in sloth, or habitually to deviate from duty? We answer, it is owing to "his faith working by love." (Gal. v. 6.) He assuredly trusts, that Christ has sustained the infamy, and endured the torment due to his sins. He firmly relies on that divine propitiation for the pardon of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlasting salvation as the purchase of his Saviour's merits. This produces such a spirit of gratitude, as refines his inclinations, and animates his whole behaviour. He cannot, he cannot run to excess of riot; because love to his adorable Redeemer, like a strong, but silken curb, sweetly restrains him. He cannot, he cannot lie lulled in a lethargic indolence; because love to the same infinite Benefactor, like a pungent but endearing spur, pleasingly excites him. In a word, faith supplies the powerful impulse, while love gives the determining bias, and leads the willing feet through the whole circle of God's commandments. By the united efficacy of these heavenly graces, the Christian conduct is preserved, in the uniformity and beauty of holiness; as by the blended power of those Newtonian principles, the solar system revolves in a steady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified, is the force of this single principle, *attraction!** This penetrates the very essence of all bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest limits of the mundane system. By this the worlds, impressed with motion, hang self-balanced on their centres, and, though orbs of immense magnitude, require nothing but this amazing property for their support. To this we ascribe a phenomenon of a very different kind—the pressure of the atmosphere, which, though an yielding and expansive fluid, yet, constipated by an attractive energy, surrounds the whole globe, and incloses every creature, as it were, with a tight bandage. An expedient this, absolutely necessary to preserve the texture of our bodies, and indeed to maintain every species of animal existence. Attraction! Urged by this wonderful impetus, the rivers circulate, copious and unintermitted, among all the nations of the earth; sweeping with rapidity down the steeps, or softly ebbing through the plains. Impelled by the same mysterious force, the nutritious juices are detached from the soil, and ascending the trees, find their way through millions of the finest meanders, in order to transfuse vegetative life into all the branches. This confines the ocean within proper bounds; though the waves thereof roar, though they toss themselves, with all the madness of indigent rage; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to pass even the slight barrier of sand. To this the mountains owe that unshaken firmness, which laughs at the shock of careering winds, and bids the tempest, with all its mingled horrors, impotently rave. By virtue of this invisible mechanism, without the aid of crane or pully, or any instrument of human device, many thousand tuns of water are raised every moment into the regions of the firmament: by this they continue suspended in thin air, without any capacious cistern to contain their substance, or any massy pillars to sustain their weight: By this same variously acting power, they return to the place of their native residence, distilled in gentle falls of dew, or precipitated in impetuous showers of rain; they slide into the fields in fleecy flights of snow, or are darted upon the houses in clattering storms of hail. This occasions the strong cohesion of solid bodies; without which, our large machines could exert themselves with no vigour, and the nicer utensils of life would elude our expectations of service. This affords a foundation for all those delicate or noble mechanic arts, which furnish mankind with numberless conveniences, both of ornament and delight. In short, this is the prodigious ballast, which composes the equilibrium, and constitutes the stability of things; this is the great chain, which forms the connexions of universal nature; and the mighty engine which prompts, facilitates, and in good measure, accomplishes all her operations. What complicated effects from a single cause!*

* I mean the attraction both of gravitation and cohesion.

* See another remarkable instance of this kind, in the Reflections on a Flower-Garden, page 38, 39, to-

What profusion, amidst frugality! an unknown profusion of benefits, with the utmost frugality of expense!

And what is this attraction? Is it a quality, in its existence inseparable from matter, and in its acting independent on the Deity? Quite the reverse. It is the very finger of God; the constant impression of divine power; a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intelligible by mortals. Does it not, however, bear a considerable analogy to the agency of the Holy Ghost, in the Christian economy? Are not the gracious operations of the blessed Spirit thus extensive, thus admirable, thus various? That almighty Being transmits his gifts through every age, and communicates his graces to every adherent on the Redeemer. *All*, either of illustrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word all the good that is done upon earth, he doth it himself. Strong in his aid, and in the power of his might, the saints of all times have trod vice under their feet, have triumphed over this abject world, and conversed in heaven while they dwelt on earth. Not I, but the grace of God, which was with me (1 Cor. xv. 10.) is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all. By the same kindly succours, the whole church is still enlightened, quickened, and governed. Through his benign influences, the scales of ignorance fall from the understanding; the leprosy of evil concupiscence is purged from the will; and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters of habitual iniquity, drop off from the conversation. He breathes even upon dry bones,* and they live: they are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly desire; they exercise themselves in all the duties of godliness. His real, though secret inspiration, dissolves the flint in the impenitent breast, and binds up the sorrows of the broken heart; raises the thoughts high in the elevations of holy hope, yet lays them low in the humiliations of inward abasement; steels the soul with impenetrable resolution and preserving fortitude, at the same time softens it into a dove-like meekness, and melts it in penitential sorrow.

When I contemplate those ample and magnificent structures erected over all the etherial plains; when I look upon them as so many splendid repositories of light, or fruitful abodes of life; when I remember, that there may be other orbs, vastly more remote than those which appear to our unaided sight; orbs, whose effulgence, though travelling ever since the creation, is not yet arrived upon our coasts;* when I stretch my thoughts to the innumerable orders of being which inhabit all those spacious systems, from the loftiest seraph to the lowest reptile, from the armies of angels which surround the throne of Jehovah to the puny nations which tinge with blue the surface of the plum,† or mantle the standing pool with green—how various appear the links in this immense chain! how vast the gradations in this universal scale of existence! Yet all these, though ever so vast and various, are the work of God's hand, and are full of his presence.

He rounded in his palm those dreadfully large globes which are pendulous in the vault of heaven. He kindled those astonishingly bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are suspended in fluid ether, and cannot be shaken; by him they dispense a perpetual tide of beams, and are never exhausted. He formed, with inexpressible nicety, that delicately fine collection of tubes, that unknown multiplicity of subtle springs, which organize and actuate the frame of the minutest insect. He bids the crimson current roll, the vital movements play, and associates a world of wonders even in an animated point.‡ In all these is a single ex-

gether with a fine observation quoted in the corresponding note.

* See that beautiful piece of sacred and allegorical imagery displayed, Ezek. xxxvii.

* If this conjecture (which has no less a person than the celebrated Mr. Huygens for its author) concerning unseen stars, be true; if to this observation be added, what is affirmed by our skilful astronomers, that the motion of the rays of light is so surprisingly swift, as to pass through ten millions of miles in a single minute: how vast—beyond imagination vast and unmeasurable—are the spaces of the universe! While the mind is distended with the grand idea; or rather while she is despatching her ablest powers of piercing judgment, and excursive fancy; and finds them all dropt short; all baffled by the amazing subject; permit me to apply that spirited exclamation, and noble remark;

> ——Say, proud arch
> Built with divine ambition; in disdain
> Of limit built; built in the taste of heaven!
> Vast concave! ample dome! wast thou designed
> A meet apparent for the deity?
> Not so; that thought alone thy state impairs;
> Thy lofty sinks; and shallows thy profound;
> And straitens thy diffusive——
>
> *Night-Thoughts*, No ix.

† Even the blue down the purple plum surrounds
A living world thy failing sight confounds:
To him a peopled habitation shows,
Where millions taste the bounty God bestows.
See a beautiful and instructive Poem styled—Deity.

‡ There are living creatures abundantly smaller than the mite. Mr. Bradley in his treatise on gardening, mentions an insect which, after an accurate examination, he found to be a thousand times less than the least visible grain of sand. Yet such an insect, though quite imperceptible to the naked eye, is an elephant, is a whale, compared with other animalcules, almost infinitely more minute, discovered by Mr. Lewenhock. If we consider the several limbs which compose such an organized particle; the different muscles which actuate such a set of limbs; the flow of spirits, incomparably more attenuated, which put those muscles in motion: the various fluids which circulate: the different secretions which are performed: together with the peculiar minuteness of the solids before they arrive at their full growth—not to mention other more astonishing modes of diminution, sure we shall have the utmost reason to acknowledge that the adored Maker is *maximus in minimis*, greatly glorious even in his smallest works.

hibition of creating power; to all these are extended the special regards of preserving goodness. From hence let me learn to rely on the providence, and to revere the presence of the supreme Majesty.

To rely on his providence: For amidst that inconceivable number and variety of beings which swarm through the regions of creation, not one is overlooked, not one is neglected by the great Omnipotent cause of all. However inconsiderable in its character, or diminutive in its size, it is still the production of the universal Maker, and belongs to the family of the Almighty Father. What though enthroned archangels enjoy the smiles of his countenance; yet the low inhabitants of earth, the most despicable worms of the ground, are not excluded from his providential care. Though the manifestation of his perfections is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual essences, his ear is open to the cries of the young raven; his eye is attentive to the wants and to the welfare of the very meanest births of nature. How much less, then, are his own people disregarded? those for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy. They disregarded! No; they are kept as the apple of an eye. The very hairs of their head are all numbered. The fondest mother may forget the infant that is dandled upon her knees, and sucks at her breast,* much sooner than the Father of everlasting compassion can discontinue or remit his watchful tenderness to his people; his children, his heirs.

Let this teach me also a more lively sense of the divine presense. All the rolling worlds above, all the living atoms below, together with all the beings that intervene betwixt these wide extremes, are vouchers for an ever-present Deity. "God has not left himself without a witness." The marks of his footsteps are evident in every place, and the touches of his finger distinguishable in every creature. "Thy name is so nigh, O thou all-supporting, all-informing Lord; and that do thy wondrous works declare." (Psalm lxxv. 1.) Thy goodness warms in the morning sun, and refreshes in the evening breeze. Thy glory shines in lamps of midnight, and smiles in the blossoms of spring. We see a trace of thy incomprehensible grandeur in the boundless extent of things; and a sketch of thy exquisite skill, in those almost evanescent sparks of life—the insect race." How stupid is this heart of mine, that, amidst such a multitude of remembrancers thronging on every side, I should forget thee a single moment! Grant me, thou great I am! thou source and support of universal existence; Oh! grant me an enlightened eye to discern thee in every object, and a devout heart to adore thee on every occasion. Instead of living without God in the world, may I be ever with him, and see all things full of him.

> ———The glittering stars
> By the deep ear of meditation heard,
> Still in their midnight watches sing of him.
> He nods a calm. The tempest blows his wrath.
> The thunder is his voice; and the red flash
> His speedy sword of justice. At his touch
> The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth,
> And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone—
> In ev'ry common instance God is seen.
> *Thomson's Spring.*

If the beautiful spangles which a clear night pours on the beholder's eye; if those other fires which beam in remoter skies, and are discoverable only by that revelation to the sight—the telescope; if all those bright millions are so many fountains of day, enriched with native and independent lustre, illuminating planets, and enlivening systems of their own;* what pomp, how majestic and splendid! is disclosed in the midnight scene! What riches are disseminated through all those numberless provinces of the great Jehovah's empire! Grandeur beyond expression! Yet there is not the meanest slave but carries greater wealth in his own bosom, possesses superior dignity in his own person. The soul that informs

* Isa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. How delicate and expressive are the images in this charming scripture! How full of beauty if beheld in a critical, how rich with consolation if considered in a believing view! *Can a woman?* one of the softer sex, whose nature is most impressible and whose passions are remarkably tender—can such a one, not barely disregard, but entirely forget; not suspend her care for a while, but utterly erase the very memory of her child—her own child, not anothers? a child that was formed in her womb, and is a part of herself? Her *son*, the more important, and therefore more desirable species, to whom it peculiarly belongs to preserve the name, and build up the family; her only son—for the word is singular, and refers to a case where the offspring, not being numerous, but centered in a single birth, must be productive of the fondest endearment: Can she divest herself of all concern for such a child; not when he is grown up to maturity, or gone abroad from her house, but while he continues in an infantile state, and must owe his whole safety to her kind attendance; while he lies in her bosom, rests on her arm, and even sucks at her breast? especially if the poor innocent be racked with pain, or seized by some severe affliction; and so become an object of compassion as well as of love? Can she hear its piercing cries; can she see it all restless, all helpless under its misery, and feel no emotions of parental pity? If one such monster of inhmuanity might be found, could all (here the prophet, to give his comparison the utmost energy, changes the singular number into the plural) could *all* mothers be so degenerate? This, sure, cannot be suspected, need not be feared; much less need the true believer be apprehensive of the failure of my kindness. An universal extinction of those strongest affections of nature is a more supposable case, than that I should ever be unmindful of my people, or regardless of their interests.

* Consult with reason. Reason will reply,
Each lucid point, which glows in yonder sky,
Informs a system in the boundless space,
And fills with glory its appointed place;
With beams unborrow'd brightens other skies;
And worlds, to thee unknown, with heat and life supplies.—*The Universe.*

his clay: the soul that teaches him to think, and enables him to choose, that qualifies him to relish rational pleasure, and to breathe sublime desire;* the soul that is endowed with such noble faculties; and, above all, is distinguished with the dreadful, the glorious capacity of being pained or blessed for ever: this soul surpasses in worth whatever the eye can see, whatever of material the fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual being, all the treasure, and all the magnificence of unintelligent creation, becomes poor and contemptible.† For this soul Omnipotence itself has waked and worked through every age. To convince this soul, the fundamental laws of nature have been controlled, and the most amazing miracles have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To instruct this soul, the wisdom of heaven has been transfused into the sacred page, and missionaries have been sent from the great King, who resides in light unapproachable. To sanctify this soul, the Almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove, and with a sweet transforming influence, broods on the human heart. And O! to redeem this soul from guilt, to rescue it from hell, the heaven of heavens was bowed, and God himself came down to dwell in dust.

Let me pause a while upon this important subject. What are the schemes which engage the attention of eminent statesmen, and mighty monarchs, compared with the grand interests of an immortal soul? The support of commerce, and the success of armies, though extremely weighty affairs, yet, if laid in the balance against the salvation of a soul, are lighter than the downy feather poised against talents of gold. To save a navy from shipwreck, or a kingdom from slavery, are deliverances of the most momentous nature which the transactions of mortality can admit. But, O! how they shrink into an inconsiderable trifle, if (their aspect upon immortality forgot) they are set in competition with the delivery of a single soul from the anguish and horrors of a distressed eternity!‡

Is such the importance of the soul? what vigilance then can be too much, or rather, what holy solicitude can be sufficient, for the overseers of the Saviour's flock, and the guardians of this great, this venerable, this invaluable charge? Since such is the importance of the soul, wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preservation of thy own? Shall every casual incident awaken thy concern, every transitory toy command thy regard? And shall the welfare of thy soul, a work of continual occurrence, a work of endless consequence, sue in vain for thy serious care! Thy soul, thy soul is thy all. If this be secured, thou art greatly rich, and will be unspeakably happy. If this be lost, a whole world acquired will leave thee in poverty, and, all its delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to misery.

I have often been charmed and awed at the sight of the nocturnal heavens, even before I knew how to consider them in their proper circumstances of majesty and beauty. Something like magic has struck my mind, on a transient and unthinking survey of the etherial vault, tinged throughout with the purest azure, and decorated with innumerable starry lamps. I have felt I know not what powerful and aggrandizing impulse, which seemed to snatch me from the low entanglements of vanity, and prompted an ardent sigh for sublimer objects. Methought I heard, even from the silent spheres, a commanding call to spurn the abject earth, and pant after unseen delights. Henceforward I hope to imbibe more copiously this moral emanation of the skies, when, in some such manner as the preceding, they are rationally seen, and the sight is duly improved. The stars, I trust, will teach as well as shine, and help to dispel both nature's gloom, and my intellectual darkness. To some people they discharge no better service than that of holding a flambeau to their feet and softening the horrors of their night. To me and my friends may they act as ministers of a superior order, as counsellors of wisdom, and guides to happiness! Nor will they fail to execute this nobler office, if they gently light our way into the knowledge of their adored Maker; if they point out with their silver rays our path to his beatific presence.

I gaze, I ponder! I ponder, I gaze! and think ineffable things. I roll an eye of awe and admiration. Again and again I repeat my ravished views, and can never satiate either my curiosity or my inquiry. I spring my thoughts into this immense field, till even fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders ever new; wonders more and more amazing. Yet, after all my present inquiries, what a mere nothing do I know! by all my future researches, how little shall I be able to learn of those vastly distant suns, and their circling retinue of worlds! Could I pry with Newton's piercing sagacity, or launch into his extensive

* In this respect, as vested with such capacities, the soul even of fallen man has an unquestionable greatness and dignity—is majestic, though in ruin.

† I beg leave to transcribe a pertinent passage, from that celebrated master of reason, and universal literature, Dr. Bentley, whom no one can be tempted to suspect either tinctured with enthusiasm, or warped by bigotry. "If we consider," says he, "the dignity of an intelligent being, and put that in the scale against brute and inanimate matter, we may affirm, without over-valuing human nature, that the soul of one virtuous and religious man is of greater worth and excellency than the sun, and his planets, and all the stars in the world.

See his Sermons at Boyle's Lect. No. 8.

‡ Not all your luminaries quench'd at once
Were half so sad, as one benighted mind
Which gropes for happiness and meets despair.
Night Thoughts, No. ix.

surveys, even then my apprehensions would be little better than those dim and scanty images which the mole, just emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic. This, sure, should repress all impatient or immoderate ardour to pry into the secrets of the starry structures, and make me more particularly careful to cultivate my heart. To fathom the depths of the divine essence, or to scan universal nature with a critical exactness, is an attempt which sets the acutest philosopher very nearly on a level with the idiot; since it is almost, if not altogether, as impracticable by the former, as by the latter.

Be it then my chief study, not to pursue what is absolutely unnattainable, but rather to seek what is obvious to find, easy to be acquired, and of inestimable advantage when possessed. O! let me seek that charity which edifieth,* that faith which purifieth. Love, humble love, not conceited science, keeps the door of heaven. Faith, a child-like faith in Jesus, not the haughty self-sufficient spirit which scorns to be ignorant of any thing, presents a key† to those abodes of bliss. This present state is the scene destined to the exercise of devotion, the invisible world is the place appointed for the enjoyment of knowledge. There, the dawn of our infantile minds will be advanced to the maturity of perfect day; or rather, there our midnight shades will be brightened into all the lustre of noon. There the souls which come from the school of faith, and bring with them the principles of love, will dwell in light itself; will be obscured with no darkness at all; will know, even as they are known. (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) Such an acquaintance, therefore, do I desire to form, and to carry on such a correspondence with the heavenly bodies, as may shed a benign influence on the seeds of grace implanted in my breast. Let the exalted tracts of the firmament sink my soul into deep humiliation. Let those eternal fires kindle in my heart an adoring gratitude to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which rest on his supporting arm, teach me an unshaken affiance in their incarnate Maker; then shall I be, if not wise as the astronomical adept, yet wise unto salvation.

Having now walked and worshipped in this universal temple, that is arched with skies, emblazed with stars, and extended even to immensity; having cast an eye, like the enraptured patriarch, (Gen. xv. 5,) an eye of reason and devotion through the magnificent scene; with the former, having discovered an infinitude of worlds, and with the latter, having met the Deity in every view; having beheld, as Moses in the flaming bush, a glimpse of Jehovah's excellencies, reflected from the several planets, and streaming from myriads of celestial luminaries; having read various lessons in that stupendous book of wisdom,* where unmeasurable sheets of azure compose the page; and orbs of radiance write, in everlasting characters, a comment upon our creed. What remains but that I close the midnight solemnity, as our Lord concluded his grand sacramental constitution, with a song of praise? And behold a hymn, suited to the sublime occasion, indited by Inspiration itself, (Psalm xix.) transferred into our language, by one† of the happiest efforts of human ingenuity.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue etherial sky,
And spangled heav'ns—a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim:
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to ev'ry land,
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the ev'ning shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly, to the list'ning earth,
Repeats the story of her birth:
While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
"The hand that made us is divine."—*Addison.*

* 1 Cor. viii. 1. I need not inform my reader, that in this text in that admirable chapter, 1 Cor. xiii. and in various other passages of scripture, the word charity, should by no means be confined to the particular art of alms-giving, or external beneficence. It is of a much more exalted and extensive nature. It signifies that divinely precious grace which warms the soul with supreme love to God, and enlarges it with disinterested affection for men, which renders it the reigning care of the life, and chief delight of the heart, to promote the happiness of the one, and the glory of the other. This, this is that charity of which so many excellent things are everywhere spoken; which can never be too highly extolled, or too earnestly coveted, since it is the image of God, and the very spirit of heaven.

† *The Righteousness of Christ.*—This is what Milton beautifully styles

——————The golden key
That opens the palace of eternity.

* ——————For heaven
Is as the book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous works.—*Milt.*

† Addison, Spect. Vol. vi. No. 465.

A

WINTER-PIECE.

It is true, in the delightful seasons, his tenderness and his love are most eminently displayed. In the vernal months, all is beauty to the eye, and music to the ear: The clouds drop fatness; the air softens into balm; and flowers in rich abundance spring wherever we tread, bloom wherever we look. Amidst the burning heats of summer, he expands the leaves and thickens the shades; he spreads the cooling arbour to receive us, and awakes the gentle breeze to fan us: The moss swells into a couch for the repose of our bodies; while the rivulet softly rolls and sweetly murmurs, to soothe our imagination. In autumn, his bounty covers the fields with a profusion of nutrimental treasure, and bends the boughs with loads of delicious fruit; he furnishes his hospitable board with present plenty, and prepares a copious magazine for future wants. But is it only in these smiling periods of the year that God, the all-gracious God, is seen? Has winter, stern winter, no tokens of his presence? Yes, all things are eloquent of his praise: "His way is in the whirlwind;" storms and tempests fulfil his word, and extol his power; even piercing frosts bear witness to his goodness, while they bid the shivering nations tremble at his wrath. Be winter, then, for a while, our theme.* Perhaps those barren scenes may be fruitful in intellectual improvement; perhaps that rigorous cold which binds the earth in icy chains, may serve to enlarge our hearts, and warm them with holy love.

See! how the day is shortened! The sun, detained in fairer climes, or engaged in more agreeable services, rises, like an unwilling visitant, with tardy and reluctant steps. He walks with a shy indifference along the edges of the southern sky; casting an oblique glance, he just looks upon our dejected world, and scarcely scatters light through the thick air. Dim is his appearance, languid are his gleams, while he continues; or, if he chance to wear a brighter aspect, and a cloudless brow, yet, like the young and gay in the house of mourning, he seems uneasy till he is gone, is in haste to depart. And let him depart: Why should we wish for his longer stay, since he can show us nothing but the creation in distress? The flowery families lie dead, and the tuneful tribes are struck dumb; the trees, stript of their verdure, and lashed by storms, spread their naked arms to the enraged and relentless heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the air, but chilling damps hover, or cutting gales blow. Nature, divested of all her beautiful robes, sits, like a forlorn disconsolate widow in her weeds; while winds in doleful accents howl, and rains in repeated showers weep.

We regret not, therefore, the speedy departure of the day. When the room is hung with funeral black, and dismal objects are all around, who would desire to have the glimmering taper kept alive, which can only discover spectacles of sorrow, can only make the horror visible? And since this mortal life is little better than a continual conflict with sin, or an unremitted struggle with misery, is it not a gracious ordination, which has reduced our age to a span? Fourscore years of trial for the virtuous, are sufficiently long; and more than such a term allowed to the wicked, would render them beyond all measure vile. Our way to the kingdom of heaven lies through tribulations. Shall we then accuse, shall we not rather bless the Providence, which has made the passage short? Soon, soon we cross the vale of tears; and then arrive on the happy hills where light for ever shines, where joy for ever smiles.

* A sketch of this nature, I must acknowledge, is quite different from the subject of the book; and, I cannot but declare, was as far distant from the thoughts of the author. But the desire of several acquaintances, together with an intimation of its usefulness, by a very polite letter from an unknown hand, (which has undesignedly furnished me with the best motto I could recollect,) prevailed with me to add a few descriptive touches and improving hints, on what is so often experienced in these northern regions. I hope the attempt I have made to oblige these gentlemen will obtain the approbation, or at least the excuse of my readers.

Sometimes the day is rendered shorter still; is almost blotted out from the year. The vapours gather, they thicken into an impenetrable gloom, and obscure the face of the sky. At length the rains descend; the sluices of the firmament are opened, and the low-hung clouds pour their congregated stores. Copious and unintermitted, still they pour, and still are unexhausted. The waters drop incessantly from the eaves, and rush in rapid streams from the spouts: They roar along the channelled pavements, and stand in foul shallows on the village streets. Now, if the inattentive eye, or negligent hand, has left the roof but scantily covered, the insinuating element finds its way into every flaw, and oozing through the ceiling, at once upbraids and chastises the careless inhabitant. The ploughman, soaked to the skin, leaves his half-tilled acre; the poor poultry, dripping with wet, crowd into shelter; the tenants of the bough fold up their wings, afraid to launch into the streaming air; the beasts, joyless and dispirited, ruminate under their shades; the roads swim and the brooks swell. The river, amidst all this watery ferment, long contained itself within its appointed bounds; but swollen by innumerable currents, and roused at last into incontrollable rage, bursts over its banks, shoots into the plain, bears down all opposition, spreads itself far and wide, and buries the meadow under a brown, sluggish, soaking deluge.

How happy for man, that this inundation comes when there are no flowery crops in the valley to be overwhelmed, no field standing thick with corn to be laid waste! At such a juncture, it would have been ruin to the husbandman and his family: but thus timed, it yields manure for his ground, and promises him riches in reversion. How often, and how long has the divine Majesty borne with the most injurious affronts from sinners! His goodness triumphed over their perverseness, and graciously refused to be exasperated. But, O presumptuous creatures, multiply no longer your provocations; urge not, by repeated iniquities, the almighty arm to strike; lest his long suffering cease, and his fierce anger break forth: break forth like a flood of waters, (Hosea v. 10,) and sweep you away into irrecoverable and everlasting perdition.

How mighty, how majestic, and O! how mysterious are thy works, thou God of heaven, and Lord of nature! When the air is calm, where sleep the stormy winds, in what chambers are they reposed, or in what dungeons confined, till thou art pleased to awaken their rage, and throw open their prison doors? Then, with irresistible impetuosity, they fly forth, scattering dread and menacing destruction.

The atmosphere is hurled into the most tumultuous confusion. The aereal torrent bursts its way over mountains, seas, and continents. All things feel the dreadful shock. All things tremble before the furious blast. The forest, vexed and torn, groans under the scourge, her sturdy sons are strained to the very root, and almost sweep the soil they were wont to shade. The stubborn oak, that disdains to bend, is dashed headlong to the ground, and with shattered arms, with prostrate trunk, blocks the road. While the flexile reed, that springs up in the marsh, yielding to the gust (as the meek and pliant temper to injuries, or the resigned and patient spirit to misfortunes) eludes the force of the storm, and survives amidst the wide-spread havoc.

For a moment the turbulent and outrageous sky seems to be assuaged; but it intermits its wrath, only to increase its strength. Soon the sounding squadrons of the air return to the attack, and renew their ravages with redoubled fury. The stately dome rocks amidst the wheeling clouds; the impregnable tower totters on its basis, and threatens to overwhelm whom it was intended to protect: The ragged rock is rent in pieces, (1 Kings xix. 11,) and even the hills, the perpetual hills, on their deep foundations, are scarcely secure. Where, now, is the place of safety, when the city reels, and houses become heaps? Sleep affrighted flies; diversion is turned into horror: all is uproar in the element; all is consternation among mortals; and nothing but one wide scene of rueful devastation through the land. Yet this is only an inferior minister of divine displeasure; the executioner of milder indignation. How then, O! how will the lofty looks of man be humbled, and the haughtiness of men be bowed down,* when the Lord God Omnipotent shall meditate terror, when he shall set all his terrors in array, when he arises to judge the nations, and to shake terribly the earth!

The ocean swells with tremendous commotions. The ponderous waves are heaved from their capacious bed, and almost lay bare the unfathomable deep. Flung into the most rapid agitation, they sweep over

* ——Mortalia corda
Per gentis humilis stravit pavor.—*Virg.*
One would almost imagine, that Virgil had read Isaiah, and borrowed this idea from chap. ii. ver. 11. The humilis and stravit of the one, so exactly correspond with the—humbled—bowed down—of the other. But, in one circumstance, the prophet is very much superior to the poet. The prophet, by giving a striking contrast to his sentiments, represents them with incomparably greater energy. He says, not men in the gross, or the human heart in general; but men of the most elated looks, hearts big with the most arrogant imaginations. Even these shall stoop from their supercilious heights, even these shall grovel in the dust of abasement, and shudder with all the extremes of an abject pusillanimity.

the rocks, they lash the lofty cliffs, and toss themselves into the clouds. Navies are rent from their anchors ; and, with all their enormous load, are whirled, swift as the arrow, wild as the winds, along the vast abyss. Now, they climb the rolling mountain, they plough the frightful ridge, and seem to skim the skies ; anon, they plunge into the opening gulf, they lose the sight of day, and are lost themselves to every eye. How vain is the pilot's art ! how impotent the mariner's strength ! They reel to and fro, and stagger in the jarring hold, or cling to the cordage, while bursting seas foam over the deck. Despair is in every face, and death sits threatening on every surge. But why, O ye astonished mariners ! why should you abandon yourselves to despair ? Is the Lord's hand shortened, because the waves of the sea rage horribly ? Is his ear deafened by the roaring thunders, and the bellowing tempest ? Cry, cry unto him, who "holdeth the winds in his fist, and the waters in the hollow of his hand." He is all-gracious to hear, and almighty to save. If he command, the storm shall be hushed to silence ; the billows shall subside into a calm ; the lightnings shall lay their fiery bolts aside ; and, instead of sinking in a watery grave, you shall find yourselves brought to the desired haven.

Sometimes, after a joyless day, a more dismal night succeeds. The lazy louring vapours had wove so thick a veil as the meridian sun could scarcely penetrate. What gloom then must overwhelm the nocturnal hours ! The moon withdraws her shining ; not a single star is able to struggle through the deep arrangement of shades ; all is pitchy darkness, without one enlivening ray. How solemn ! how awful ! It is like the shroud of nature, or the return of chaos ! I do not wonder that it is the parent of terrors, and so apt to engender melancholy. Lately the tempest marked its rapid way with mischief ; now, the night dresses her silent pavilion with horror.

I have sometimes left the burning tapers, withdrawn from the ruddy fire, and plunged into the thickest of these sooty shades ; without regretting the change, rather exulting in it as a welcome deliverance. The very gloom was pleasing, was exhilarating, compared with the conversation I quitted. The speech of my companions (how does it grieve me, that I should even once have occasion to call them by that name !) was the language of darkness—was horror to the soul, and torture to the ear.* Their teeth were spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword, to stab and assassinate their neighbour's character. Their throat was an open sepulchre, gaping to devour the reputation of the innocent, or tainting the air with their virulent and polluted breath. Sometimes their licentious and ungovernable discourse shot arrows of profaneness against heaven itself, and, in proud defiance challenged the resentment of Omnipotence. Sometimes, as if it were the glory of human nature to cherish the grossest appetites of the brute, or the mark of a gentleman to have served an apprenticeship in a brothel, the filthiest jests of the stews (if low obscenity can be a jest) were nauseously obtruded on the company. All the modest part were offended and grieved ; while the other besotted creatures laughed aloud, though the leprosy of uncleanness appeared on their lips. Are not these persons prisoners of darkness, though blazing sconces pour artificial day through their rooms. Are not their souls immured in the most baleful shades, though the noontide sun is brightened by flaming on their gilded chariots ? They discern not that great and adorable Being, who fills the universe with his infinite and glorious presence ; who is all eye to observe their actions, all ear to examine their words. They know not the all-sufficient Redeemer, nor the unspeakable blessedness of his heavenly kingdom. They are groping for the prize of happiness, but will certainly grasp the thorn of anxiety : They are wantonly sporting on the brink of a precipice ; and are every moment in danger of falling headlong into irretrievable ruin, and endless despair.

They have forced me out, and are, perhaps, deriding me in my absence ; are charging my reverence for the ever-present God, and my concern for the dignity of our rational nature, to the account of humour and singularity ; to narrowness of thought, or sourness of temper. Be it so. I will indulge no indignation against them. If any thing like it should arise, I will convert it into prayer : "Pity them, O thou Father of mercies ! Show them the madness of their profaneness ! show them the baseness of their vile ribaldry ! Let their dissolute rant be turned into silent sorrow and confusion, till they open their lips to adore thy insulted majesty, and to implore thy gracious pardon ; till they devote to thy service those social hours, and those superior faculties, which they are now abusing to

* What has been said, I ask'd my soul, what done ?
How flow'd our mirth ? or whence the source begun ?
Perhaps the jest, that charmed the sprightly crowd,
And made the jovial table laugh so loud.
To some false notion ow'd its poor pretence,
To an ambiguous word's perverted sense ;
To a wild sonnet, or a wanton air,
Offence and torture to the sober ear.
Perhaps, alas ! the pleasing stream was brought
From this man's error, from another's fault :
From topics, which good nature would forget,
And prudence mention with the last regret.
Prior's Solomon.

the dishonour of thy name, to the contamination of their own souls, and (unless timely repentance intervene) to their everlasting infamy and perdition.

I ride home amidst the gloomy void. All darkling and solitary, I can scarce discern my horse's head, and only guess out my blind road. No companion but danger, or perhaps destruction ready at my side. (Job xviii. 12.) But why do I fancy myself solitary? Is not the Father of lights, the God of my life, the great and everlasting friend, always at my right hand? Because the day is excluded, is his omnipresence vacated? Though I have no earthly acquaintance near to assist in case of a misfortune, or to beguile the time and divert uneasy suspicions by entertaining conferences; may I not lay my help upon the Almighty, and converse with God by humble supplication? For this exercise, no place is improper, no hour unseasonable, and no posture incommodious. This is society, the best of society, even in solitude: This is a fund of delights, easily portable, and quite inexhaustible. A treasure this of unknown value, liable to no hazard from wrong or robbery; but perfectly secure to the lonely wanderer in the most darksome paths.

And why should I distress myself with apprehensions of peril? This access to God is not only an indefeasible privilege, but a kind of ambulatory garrison. Those who make known their requests unto God, and rely upon his protecting care, he gives his angels charge over their welfare. His angels are commissioned to escort them in their travelling, and to hold up their goings, that they dash not their foot against a stone, (Psalm xci. 11, 12.) Nay, he himself condescends to be their guardian, and "keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken." Between these persons, and the most mischievous objects, a treaty of peace is concluded. The articles of this grand alliance are recorded in the book of Revelation; and will, when it is for the real benefit of believers, assuredly be made good in the administrations of Providence. "In that day," saith the Lord, "I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and they shall be in league with the stones of the field." (Job v. 23. Hos. ii. 18.) Though they fall headlong on the flints, even the flints, fitted to fracture the skull, shall receive them as into the arms of friendship, and not offer to hurt whom the Lord is pleased to preserve.

May I then enjoy the presence of this gracious God, and darkness and light shall be both alike. Let Him whisper peace to my conscience, and this dread silence shall be more charming than the voice of eloquence, or the strains of music. Let him reveal his ravishing perfections in my soul, and I shall not want the saffron beauties of the morn, the golden glories of noon, or the empurpled evening sky. I shall sigh only for those most desirable and distinguished realms, where the light of his countenance perpetually shines, and consequently there is no night there. (Rev. xxi. 25.)

How surprising are the alterations of nature! I left her the preceding evening plain and unadorned; but now a thick rime has shed its hoary honours over all: It has shagged the fleeces of the sheep, and crisped the traveller's locks: The hedges are richly fringed, and all the ground is profusely powdered: The downward branches are tasselled with silver, and the upright are feathered with the plumy wave.

The fine are not always the valuable. The air, amidst all these gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and unwholesome damps: The raw hazy influence spreads wide, sits deep, hangs heavy and oppressive on the springs of life. A listless languor clogs the animal functions, and the purple stream glides but faintly through its channels. In vain the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers; in vain he attempts to disperse this insurrection of vapours. The sullen malignant cloud refuses to depart; it invelopes the world, and intercepts the prospect. I look abroad for the neighbouring village; I send my eye in quest of the rising turret; but am scarce able to discern the very next house. Where are the blue arches of heaven? where is the radiant countenance of the sun? where the boundless scenes of creation? Lost, lost are their beauties; quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the universe seems an empty void, and all its elegant pictures an undistinguished bland. Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the gospel had not come in to our relief. We should have known neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourselves; the present state all confusion, and the future impenetrable darkness. But the Sun of Righteousness, arising with potent and triumphant beams, has dissipated the interposing cloud; has opened a prospect more beautiful than the blossoms of spring, more cheering than the treasures of autumn, and far more enlarged than the extent of the visible system; which, having led the eye of the mind through fields of grace, over rivers of righteousness, and hills crowned with knowledge, terminates at length in the heavens, sweetly losing itself in regions of infinite bliss and endless glory.

As I walk along the fog, it seems, at some little distance, to be almost solid gloom; such as would shut out every glimpse of light, and totally imprison me

in obscurity. But when I approach and enter it, I find myself agreeably mistaken, and the mist much thinner than it appeared. Such is the case with regard to the sufferings of the present life; they are not, when experienced, so dreadful as a timorous imagination surmised. Such also is the case with reference to the gratifications of sense; they prove not, when enjoyed, so substantial as a sanguine expectation represented. In both instances, we are graciously disappointed. The keen edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable anguish: the exquisite relish of the prosperity is palled, that it may not captivate our affections, and enslave them to inferior delights.

Sometimes the face of things wears a more pleasing form, the very reverse of the foregoing. The sober evening advances to close the short-lived day: The firmament, clear and unsullied, puts on its brightest blue: The stars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanse, while the frost pours its subtile and penetrating influence all around. Sharp and intensely severe, all the long night, the rigid ether continues its operations. When, late and slow, the morning opens her pale eye, in what a curious and amusing disguise is nature dressed! The icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendent on the houses: A whitish film incrusts the windows, where mimic landscapes rise, and fancied figures swell: The fruitful fields are hardened to iron; the moistened meadows are congealed to marble; and both resound (an effect unknown before) with the peasant's hasty tread. The stream is arrested in its career, and its everflowing surface chained to the banks: The fluid paths become a solid road: where the finny shoals were wont to rove, the sportive youth slide, or the rattling chariots roll. And (what would seem, to an inhabitant of the southern world, as unaccountable as the deepest mysteries of our religion) that very same breath of heaven, which cements the lakes into a crystal pavement, cleaves the oaks, as it were with invisible wedges; "breaks in pieces the northern iron and the steel," even while it builds a bridge of icy rock over the seas.*

The air is all serenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the most distinct views and extensive prospects. The seeds of infection are killed, and the pestilence destroyed, even in embryo. So, the cold of affliction tends to mortify our corruptions, and subdue our vicious habits. The crowded atmosphere constringes our bodies, and braces our nerves. The spirits are buoyant, and sally briskly on the execution of their office. In the summer months, such an unclouded sky, and so bright a sun, would have melted us with heat, and softened us into supineness. We should have been ready to throw our limbs under the spreading beach, and to lie at ease by the murmuring brook. But now none loiters in his path; none is seen with folded arms: All is in motion, all is activity. Choice, prompted by the weather, supplies the spur of necessity. Thus, the rugged school of misfortune often trains up the mind to a vigorous exertion of its faculties. The bleak climate of adversity often inspires us with a manly resolution; when a soft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous springs of the soul, and have left it enervated with pleasure, or dissolved in indolence.

"Cold cometh out of the north; (Job xxxvii. 9.) The winds, having swept those deserts of snow, arm themselves with millions of frozen particles, and make a fierce descent upon our isle. Under black and scowling clouds, they drive, dreadfully whizzing, through the darkened air. They growl around our houses, assault our doors, and, eager for entrance, fasten on our windows: walls can scarce restrain them; bars are unable to exclude them: through every cranny they force their way: Ice is on their wings; they scatter agues through the land; and winter, all winter, rages as they go. Their breath is as a searing iron* to the little verdure left on the plains. Vastly more pernicious to the tender plants than the sharpest knife, they kill their branches, and wound the very root. Let not the corn venture to peep too freely from the entrenchment of the furrow; let not the fruit-bearing blossoms dare to come abroad from their lodgment in the bark; lest these murderous blasts intercept and seize the unwary strangers, and destroy the hopes of the advancing year.

O, it is severely cold! Who is so hardy as not to shrink at this excessively pinching weather? See! every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue; and the teeth hardly forbear chattering. Ye that sit easy and joyous amidst your commodious apartments, solacing yourselves in the diffusive warmth of your fire, be mindful of your brethren in the cheerless

* Job xxxviii. 30. The waters are hid, locked up from the cattle's lips, and secured from the fisher's net, as wells were wont to be closed with a ponderous and impenetrable stone. And not only lakes and rivers, but the surface of the great deep, with its restless and uncontrollable surges, is taken captive by the frost, and bound in shining fetters.

* This, I suppose, is the meaning of that figurative expression used by the prophet Habakkuk: who, speaking of the Chaldeans invading Judea, says, their faces, or the incursions they make, shall sup up, shall swallow greedily, shall devour utterly, the inhabitants of the country, and their valuable effects; as the keen corroding blasts of the east wind destroy every green thing in the field. Hab. i. 9.

tenement of poverty. Their shattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment scarcely covers their shivering flesh; while a few faint and dying embers on the squalid hearth, rather mock their wishes than warm their limbs. While the generous juices of Oporto sparkle in your glasses; or the streams, beautifully tinged and deliciously flavoured with the Chinese leaf, smoke in the elegant porcelain; O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidst all the rigour of these inclement skies, are emaciated with sickness, benumbed with age, and pining with hunger. Let "their loins bless you," for comfortable clothing. Restore them with medicine; regale them with food; and baffle the raging year. So, may you never know any of their distresses, but only by the hearing of the ear, the seeing of the eye, or the feeling of a tender commiseration! Methinks, the bitter blustering winds plead for the poor indigents. May they breathe pity into your breasts, while they blow hardships into their huts. Observe those blue flames and ruddy coals in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively, and glow more strongly:—silent but seasonable admonition to the gay circle, that chat and smile around them! Thus may your hearts, at such a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar benevolence! Detain not your superfluous piles of wood; let them hasten to the relief of the starving family; bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the severity of the season, and cheer the bleak abodes of want. So shall they ascend, mingled with thanksgivings to God, and ardent prayers for your welfare; ascend more grateful to heaven, than columns of the most costly incense.

Now the winds cease. Having brought their load, they are dismissed from service. They have wafted an immense cargo of clouds, which empty themselves in snow. At first, a few scattered shreds come wandering down the saddened sky. This slight skirmish is succeeded by a general onset. The flakes, large and numerous, and thick wavering, descend. They dim the air, and hasten the approach of night. Through all the night, in softest silence, and with a continual flow, this fleecy shower falls. In the morning, when we awake, what a surprising change appears! Is this the same world? Here is no diversity of colour: I can hardly distinguish the trees from the hills on which they grow; which are the meadows and which the plains; where are the green pastures, and where the fallow lands. All things lie blended in bright confusion,—so bright, that it heightens the splendour of day, and even dazzles the organs of sight. The lawn is not so fair as the snowy mantle which invests the fields; and even the lily, were the lily to appear, would look tarnished in its presence. I can think of but one thing which excels or equals the glittering robe of winter. Is any person desirous to know my meaning? He may find it explained in that admirable hymn,* composed by the Royal penitent. Is any desirous to possess this matchless ornament? He will find it offered to his acceptance in every page of the gospel.

See! (for the eye cannot satisfy itself without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate scene,) see how the hedges are habited, like spotless vestals. The houses are roofed with uniformity and lustre. The meadows are covered with a carpet of the finest ermine.† The groves bow beneath the lovely burden; and all, all below is one wide, immense, shining waste of white. By deep snows, and heavy rains, God sealeth up the hand of every man, and, for this purpose, adds our sacred philosopher, that all men may know his work. (Job xxxvii. 7.) He confines them within their doors, and puts a stop to their secular business, that they may consider the things which belong to their spiritual welfare; that, having a vacation from their ordinary employ, they may observe the works of his power, and become acquainted with the mysteries of his grace.

And worthy, worthy of all observation, are the works of the great Creator. They are prodigiously various, and perfectly amazing. How pliant and ductile is nature under his forming hand! At his command, the self-same substance assumes the most different shapes, and is transformed into an endless multiplicity of figures. If he ordain, the water is moulded into hail, and discharged upon the earth like a volley of shot; or it is consolidated into ice, and defends the rivers, "as it were with a breast-plate." At the bare intimation of his will, the very same element is scattered in hoar-frost, like a sprinkling of the most attenuated ashes; or is spread over the surface of the ground, in these couches of swelling and flaky down.

The snow, however it may carry the appearance of cold, affords a warm garment for the corn; screens it from nipping frosts, and cherishes its infant growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting

* Can any thing be whiter than the snow? Yes, saith David; if God be pleased to wash me from my sins in the blood of Christ, "I shall be even whiter than the snow." Psalm li. 7.

† This animal is milk-white. As for those black spots which we generally see in linings of ermine, they are added by the furrier, in order to diversify the appearance, or heighten the beauty of the native colour.

care, and exercise a fostering influence. Then, touched by the sun, or thawed by a softening gale, the furry vesture melts into genial moisture; sinks deep in the soil, and saturates its pores with the dissolving nitre: replenishing the globe with those principles of vegetative life, which will open into the bloom of Spring, and ripen into the fruits of Autumn. Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable representation of the divine word, both in the successful and advantageous issue of its operation! "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I send it." (Isaiah lv. 10, 11.)

Nature at length puts off her lucid veil. She drops it in a trickling thaw. The loosened snow rolls in sheets from the houses. Various openings spot the hills, which, even while we look become larger and more numerous. The trees rid themselves by degrees of the hoary incumbrance. Shook from the springing boughs, part falls heavy to the ground, part flies abroad in shining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, rise plain and distinct to view. Since we see nature once again, has she no verdant traces, no beautiful features left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and therefore the more particularly to be regarded, the more highly to be valued. Here and there the holly hangs out her glowing berries, the laurustinus spreads her graceful tufts, and both under a covert of unfading foliage. The plain but hardy ivy clothes the decrepit crazy wall, nor shrinks from the friendly office, though the skies frown and the storm roars. The laurel, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In spite of the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and frost, it preserves an undismayed lively look, and maintains its post, while withering millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged force of winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow. Nor must I forget the bay-tree, which scorns to be a mean pensioner on a few transient sunny gleams, or, with a servile obsequiousness, to vary its appearance in conformity to the changing seasons; by such indications of sterling worth, and staunch resolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius, while it weaves the chaplet for his temples. These, and a few other plants, clad with native verdure, retain their comely aspect in the bleakest climes, and in the coldest months.

Such, and so durable, are the accomplishments of a refined understanding, and an amiable temper. The tawdry ornaments of dress, which catch the unthinking vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied lip, and the rosy cheek, fade. Even the sparkling wit,* as well as the sparkling eye, please but for a moment. But the virtuous mind has charms, which survive the decay of every inferior embellishment, charms which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the permanency of the ever-green.

Such likewise is the happiness of the sincerely religious, like a tree, says the inspired moralist, "whose leaf shall not fall." He borrows not his peace from external circumstances; but has a fund within, and is "satisfied from himself;" (Prov. xiv. 14.) Even though impoverished by calamitous accidents, he is rich in the possession of grace, and richer in the hope of glory. His joys are infinitely superior to, as well as nobly independent of, the transitory glow of sensual delight, or the capricious favours of what the world calls, *Fortune.*

If the snow composes the light-armed troops of the sky, methinks the hail constitutes its heavy artillery.† When driven by a vehement wind, with what dreadful impetuosity does that stony shower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen ground, and rattles on the resounding dome! It attenuates the rivers into smoke, or scourges them into foam. It crushes the infant flowers, cuts in pieces the gardener's early plants, and batters the feeble fortification

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* "How little does God esteem the things that men count great! the endowments of wit and eloquence that men admire in some; alas! how poor are they to him! He respecteth not any who are wise in heart; they are nothing, and less than nothing in his eyes. Even wise men admire how little it is that men know; how small a matter lies under the sound of these popular wonders, *a learned man, a great scholar, a great statesman.* How much more doth the all-wise God meanly account of these! He often discovers even to the world their meanness: He befools them. So valour, or birth, or worldly greatness, these he gives, and gives as things he makes no great reckoning of, to such as shall never see his face; and calls to the inheritance of glory, poor despised creatures, that are looked on as the offscourings and refuse of the world."

Thus says an excellent author, who writes with the most amiable spirit of benevolence, with the most unaffected air of humility, and, like the sacred originals, from which he copies, with a majestic simplicity of style; whose select works I may venture to recommend, not only as a treasure, but as a mine of genuine, sterling, evangelical piety. See page 520 of Archbishop Leighton's select works, the Edinburgh edition, 8vo: which it is necessary to specify, because the London edition does not contain that part of his writings which has supplied me with the preceding quotation.

† He casteth forth his ice like morsels, Psalm cxlvii. 17. Which in modern language, might be thus expressed: "He poureth his hail like a volley of shot." The word inadequately translated *morsels*, alludes, I think, to those fragments of the rock, or those smooth stones from the brook, which, in the battle, the warriors hurled from their slings.

of his glasses into shivers. It darts into the traveller's face: he turns with haste from the stroke, or feels on his cheek for the gushing blood. If he would retreat into the house, it follows him even thither, and, like a determined enemy, that pushes the pursuit, dashes through the crackling panes. But the fierce attack is quickly over. The clouds have soon spent their shafts; soon unstrung their bow. Happy for the inhabitants of the earth, that a sally so dreadfully furious should be so remarkably short! What else could endure the shock, or escape destruction?

But, behold a bow, of no hostile intention! a bow painted in variegated colours, on the disburdened cloud. How vast the extent, how delicate the texture of that showery arch! It compasseth the heavens with a glorious circle, and teaches us to forget the horrors of the storm. Elegant its form, and rich its tincture, but more delightful its sacred significancy. While the violet and the rose blush in its beautiful aspect, the olive branch smiles in its gracious import. It writes in radiant dyes, what the angels sung in harmonious strains, "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men." It is the stamp of insurance, for the continuance of seed-time, and harvest; for the preservation and security of the visible world: (Gen. ix. 12, 16.) It is the comfortable token (Rev. iv. 3.) of a better state, and a happier kingdom; a kingdom where sin shall cease, and misery be abolished; where storms shall beat, and winter pierce no more; but holiness, happiness, and joy, like one unbounded spring, for ever, ever bloom.

A

TABLE OF THE TEXTS

MORE OR LESS ILLUSTRATED IN THE MEDITATIONS.

N.B.—As Dr. Shaw, in the supplement to his excellent book of Travels, and several other Authors of the greatest eminence, have given an Index of Scriptures occasionally explained in their writings, I doubt not but I shall oblige many of my readers by what is here subjoined; those especially, whose taste is happily formed to relish the beauties of the Sacred Records.

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THERON AND ASPASIO;

OR, A

SERIES OF DIALOGUES AND LETTERS

ON THE

MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY FRANCES SHIRLEY.

MADAM,

IF Christianity was inconsistent with true politeness, or prejudicial to real happiness, I should be extremely injudicious, and inexcusably ungrateful, in presenting these Essays to your Ladyship. But as the religion of Jesus is the grand ornament of our nature, and a source of the sublimest joy, the purport of the following pages cannot be unworthy the countenance and protection of the most accomplished person. Neither can there be a wish more suitable to the obligations or the dictates of a grateful heart, than that you may experience what you read, and be what you patronize.

Did religion consist in a formal round of external observances, or a forced submission to some rigorous austerities, I would not scruple to join with the infidel and the sensualist to dread it in one view, and to despise it in another. You need not be informed, Madam, that it is as much superior to all such low and forbidding singularities, as the heavens are higher than the earth. It is described by an author, who learned its theory in the regions of Paradise, and who displayed its efficacy in his own most exemplary conversation;—it is thus described by that incomparable author:—The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

To be reconciled to the omnipotent God; to be interested in the unsearchable riches of Christ; to be renewed in our hearts, and influenced in our lives, by the sanctifying operations of the divine Spirit—this is evangelical righteousness; this is genuine religion; this, Madam, is the kingdom of God established in the soul. How benign and inviting is such an institution! How honourable and advantageous such a state! And from such privileges, what other effects can flow, but that "peace, which passeth all understanding;" that "joy, which is unspeakable and glorious!"

Is there any thing in the amusements of the gay, and pursuits of the ambitious, of greater, of equal, of comparable value? Is not all that wealth can purchase, all that grandeur can bestow, somewhat like those glittering bubbles, which, when

viewed, are emptiness, when grasped, are nothing? Whereas the comforts, the benefits, the hopes of Christianity, are at once supremely excellent, and infinitely durable; a portion suited to the dignity of a rational soul; large as its faculties, and immortal as its being.

All these blessings are centered in Christ; were purchased by Christ; are communicated from Christ. It is for want of knowing those boundless and everlasting treasures of pardoning, justifying, saving merit, which the Lord Jesus Christ possesses, and which he freely dispenses even to sinners, that so many unthinking persons are attached to ignoble objects, and beguiled by delusory pleasures. Unhappy creatures! what can they do but catch at shadows, and stoop to trifles, while they are ignorant of the grand, the substantial, the exalted good? It is for want of duly attending to that fulness of grace, and that plenteousness of redemption, which dwell in our most adorable Saviour, that so many serious persons are strangers to the tranquillity and sweetness of religion, are subject to all its restraints, but enjoy few, if any, of its delights. Mistaken zealots! How can they avoid the gloomy situation, and the uncomfortable circumstance, so long as they withdraw themselves from the Sun of Righteousness, and his all-cheering beams?

May your Ladyship live continually under his heavenly light and healing wings; be more fully assured of his dying love, and have brighter, still brighter manifestations of his immense perfections! By these delightful views, and by that precious faith, may your heart be transformed into his holy, his amiable, his divine image! Your happiness will then be just such as is wished, but far greater than can be expressed, by,

MADAM,

Your most obliged, and

Most obedient humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

WESTON FAVEL,
Jan. 6, 1755.

PREFACE.

THE Reader will probably expect some account of the ensuing Work; and to gratify him in this particular will be a real pleasure to the Author.

The beauty and excellency of the Scriptures;—the ruin and depravity of human nature,—its happy recovery, founded on the atonement, and effected by the Spirit of Christ;—these are some of the chief points vindicated, illustrated, and applied in the following sheets. But the grand article, that which makes the principal figure, is the *imputed righteousness* of our Divine Lord; from whence arises our justification before God, and our title to every heavenly blessing; an article which, though eminent for its importance, seems to be little understood, and less regarded; if not much mistaken and almost forgotten.

The importance of this great evangelical doctrine,—how worthy it is of the most attentive consideration, and of universal acceptance,—is hinted in the second dialogue; so that I need, in this place, do nothing more than give the sense of a passage from Witsius, which is there introduced in a note. "The doctrine of justification," says that excellent author, "spreads itself through the whole system of divinity. As this is either solidly established or superficially touched, fully stated or slightly dismissed; accordingly, the whole structure of religion either rises graceful and magnificent, superior to assault and beyond the power of decay, or else it appears disproportionate and defective, totters on its foundation, and threatens an opprobrious fall."

The design is executed in the form of dialogue; those parts only excepted in which it was not easy to carry on a conversation, and assign to each person a proper degree of significancy. Here, to avoid the common imputation of bringing upon the stage a mute or a shadow,—one who fights without weapons, and submits without a contest,—the scene shifts. Our gentlemen separate, and, instead of conversing, enter upon an epistolary correspondence.

The dialogue form seems, on many considerations, a very eligible way of writing. Hereby the author gives an air both of dignity and of modesty to his sentiments. Of dignity; by delivering them from the mouths of persons in every respect superior to himself. Of modesty; because we no longer consider him in the raised, but invidious capacity of a teacher. Instead of calling us to his feet, and dictating his precepts, he gratifies our curiosity. He turns back a curtain, and admits us to some remarkable interviews, or interesting conferences. We overhear, by a kind of innocent or imaginary stealth, the debates which pass in the recesses of privacy, which are carried on with the most unreserved freedom of speech, and openness of heart; a circumstance which will apologize for some peculiarities that might otherwise be inconsistent with humility, or offensive to delicacy. Particularly it may obviate the disgust which generally, and indeed deservedly, attends the frequent intrusion of that ambitious and usurping little monosyllable, *I*.

The names of the persons are prefixed, each to his respective share of

the discourse, in imitation of Cicero, and for the reasons which he assigns; "Quasi enim ipsos induxi loquentes: ne *inquam* et *inquit* sæpius interponerentur. Atque id eo feci, ut tanquam præsentibus coram haberi sermo videretur."* This method, he very justly intimates, is removed farthest from the narrative, and makes the nearest approaches to life and reality. It quite secretes the author, and, by introducing the persons themselves, renders all that passes entirely their own. It prevents likewise the repetition of those interlocutory words—he said, he replied; which, unless the speeches are very long, must frequently recur, and have no pleasing effect upon the ear. And if the speeches are long, the spirit of conversation is lost. The associates are no longer talking; but one of them, or the author, is lecturing.

Though I have so much to say in behalf of the model, I have very little to say with regard to the execution, unless it be to confess the deficiency. There is not, I am sensible, that peculiar air and distinguishing turn, which should mark and characterise each speaker. This is what the nature of finished dialogue requires, and what the author applauds in some very superior writers. But not having the ability to copy it, he has not the vanity to affect it. Nevertheless, the attentive reader, will, all along, perceive a difference in the sentiment, if not in the language. The materials vary, even when they run into the same mould, and take the same form. In the diction also there must be some diversity; because several of the objections are proposed in the very words of one or two eminent writers who have appeared on the other side of the question. These are not particularized by the mark of quotation; because the man of reading will have no occasion for the assistance of such an index, and the man of taste will probably discern them by the singularity of the style.

Some of the following pieces, it must be acknowledged, are of the controversial kind: a species of writing least susceptible of the graces which embellish composition; or rather, most destitute of the attractives which engage attention and create delight. Yet I have sometimes thought, that it is not absolutely impossible to make even the stern face of controversy wear a smile, and to reap some valuable fruit from the rugged furrows of disputation. Whether this is effected in the present work, the public must judge; that it has been attempted, the author may be permitted to declare.

To soften the asperities of argument, views of nature are interspersed; that if the former should carry the appearance of a rude entangled forest, or of a frowning gloomy recess, there may be some agreeable openings, and lightsome avenues, to admit a prospect of the country; which is always arrayed in charms, and never fails to please.

The author confesses a very peculiar fondness for the amiable scenes of creation. It is therefore not at all improbable but his excursions on this topic may be of the diffusive kind, and his descriptions somewhat luxuriant. It is hoped, however, that the benevolent reader will indulge him in this favourite foible. If any should feel the same prevailing passion for the beauties of nature, it is possible these persons may be inclined not only to excuse, but to approve the fault; and may take part with the lover, even in opposition to the critic.

Further to diversify the piece, sketches of philosophy are introduced; easy to be understood, and calculated to entertain the imagination, as well as to improve the heart; more particularly, to display the wise and beneficent design of Providence, in the various appearances and numberless productions of the material world. Neither are these

* De Amicitia.

remarks altogether foreign to the main point; but, as far as the wonders of creation may comport with the riches of free grace, subserve the general end.

As to the choice of my subjects, some people have desired to see an invective against the fashionable and predominant vices of the age. This, I apprehend, would be like picking off the leaves, or clipping away the twigs, from some overgrown and noxious tree. Waving this tedious and ineffectual toil, I would rather lay the axe to the root. Let the knowledge and love of Christ take place in the heart, and not only a few of the branches, but the whole body of sin will fall at once.

Some would have the author insist upon the conscientious observance of the Sabbath, inculcate the daily worship of God in the family, and urge a devout attendance on the public ordinances of religion. But when a person is convinced of sin, and made sensible of misery: when he has "tasted the good word of God," Heb. vi. 5, "and seen by faith the Lord's Christ," Luke ii. 26, he will want no solicitation or incitement to these means of grace and exercises of godliness. He will have just the same disposition to them all, as the hungry appetite has to wholesome food, or the new-born babe* to the milk of the breast.

Others may imagine, that I have neglected the interests of morality; because here is no professed attempt to delineate its duties, or enforce its practice. Let these persons remember, that morality never makes such vigorous shoots, never produces such generous fruit, as when ingrafted on evangelical principles. And if I do not crop the pink, the rose, and the carnation—if I do not gather the peach, the nectarine, and the pine-apple—and put them into my reader's hand, for his immediate enjoyment; I am endeavouring to sow the seeds and plant the roots in his garden, which, if cherished by the favourable influence of heaven, will yield him, not an occasional, but a constant supply of all.

As several texts of Scripture come under consideration, criticisms upon the original are frequently subjoined, in order to clear up some difficulties, to rectify some mistranslations, or point out the many delicate and masterly strokes which occur in the Bible. And glad should I be, extremely glad, if I might recommend and endear that invaluable book; if, as the divine Redeemer "rideth on in the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness," Psalm xlv. 4, this hand might scatter a palm-branch, or this performance might lie as a flowret, to strew his way,* and solemnize his triumph.

In the course of disputation, I dare not suppose that I have discussed all the arguments which sagacity may devise, or sophistry urge. Perhaps, I have not removed all the scruples, which may awaken prejudice or embarrass integrity. This, however, I may venture to affirm, that I myself have met with no considerable objection, which is not either expressly answered, or virtually refuted, in these conferences. And, though I should neither satisfy nor silence the gainsayer, I shall think my endeavours happily employed, if they may throw light upon the dim apprehension, establish the wavering faith, or comfort the afflicted conscience.

If any should burlesque or ridicule these venerable truths, and ex-

* 1 Pet. ii. 2. This comparison is, perhaps, the most exact and expressive that words can form, or fancy conceive. Babes covet nothing but the milk of the breast. They are indifferent about all other things. Give them riches, give them honours, give them whatever you please, without this rich, delicious, balmy nutriment, they will not, they cannot be satisfied. How finely does this illustrate, and how forcibly inculcate, what our Lord styles, "the single eye," and "the one thing needful!" or the salutary doctrines and delightful privileges of the gospel; together with that supreme value for them, and undivided complacency in them, which are the distinguishing character of the Christian?

* Alluding to Matt. xxi. 8.

alted privileges, I shall only say with my divine Master, "O! that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hid," it is evident from such a procedure, "they are hid from thine eyes," Luke xix. 42. Should any, in the spirit of decency and candour, either start new, or revive old objections, I doubt not but they will receive both a due examination and a proper reply. As these doctrines enter into the very essence of the gospel, and constitute the glory of our religion, they can never want a succession of advocates, so long as the sun and moon endure. For my own part, I must beg leave to retire from the lists, and lay down the weapons of controversy. Virgil's language is my resolution;

"Discedam, explebo numerum, reddarque tenebris."

This declaration is made, not from any the least suspicion that my tenets are indefensible, but because I would apprise my friends, and the friends of our common Christianity, that the field is clear and open for them to advance; that I resign to others the glorious combat, and shall content myself with wishing them success in the name of the Lord: Because it becomes a person in my declining state to be more peculiarly intent upon encountering a different adversary, who is sure to overcome, and never allows quarter. Yet by this "word of my testimony, and by the blood of the Lamb," Rev. xii. 11, I hope to triumph even when I fall; and to be more than conqueror, through Jehovah my righteousness.

Should any thing be urged forcible enough to overthrow my arguments, or detect a mistake in my sentiments, the world may depend upon seeing a free and undissembled retraction. I shall look upon it as a duty which I owe to my conscience, to my readers, and to my God, publicly to acknowledge the error.—It is one thing to be silent, another to be obstinate. As I shall inflexibly adhere to the first, I would with equal steadiness renounce the last. Though I withdraw from the strife of pens and of tongues, I shall take care to preserve a mind ever accessible to truth, ever open to conviction; a mind infinitely more concerned for the purity and prosperity of the everlasting gospel, than for the prevalence of my own opinion, or the credit of my own performance.

As I have the happiness of being a member, and the honour of being a minister of the reformed established church, I cannot but reflect, with a peculiar pleasure, that every doctrine of note maintained in these Dialogues and Letters, is either implied in our Liturgy, asserted in our Articles, or taught in our Homilies. It affords me likewise some degree of satisfaction to observe, that the most material of the sentiments have been adopted by Milton, are incorporated into his Paradise Lost, and add dignity to the sublimest poem in the world. To have the highest human authority, and the first genius of the nation, on a writer's side, is no contemptible support. This must surely give a sanction, wherever our religious establishment is reverenced, or polite literature is held in repute. Yet even this sanction, compared with the oracle of revelation, is only like a range of ciphers connected with the initial figure—which, were they detached, would be insignificant, but, in such a subordination, are considerable.

Perhaps it should be farther acknowledged, that I have not always confined myself to the method of our systematic writers, nor followed their train of thoughts with a scrupulous regularity. I would conduct my fellow-creature to the supreme and eternal good, Christ Jesus. I have chosen the path which seemed most agreeable and inviting, rather than most beaten and frequented. If this leads, with equal certainty, to the great and desirable end, I dare promise myself an easy excuse. However, that method and order, in the doctrinal parts of the plan, are not wholly neglected, the preceding summary of contents may show.

THERON AND ASPASIO;

OR, A

SERIES OF DIALOGUES AND LETTERS

ON THE

MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

DIALOGUE I.

THERON was a gentleman of fine taste, of accurate rather than extensive reading, and particularly charmed with the study of nature. He traced the planets in their courses, and examined the formation of the meanest vegetable, not merely to gratify a refined curiosity, but chiefly to cultivate the nobler principles of religion and morality. Several discoveries he made, and every discovery he improved to this important end—to raise in his mind more exalted apprehensions of the Supreme Being, and to enlarge his affections with a disinterested benevolence, conformable, in some degree, to that boundless liberality which pervades and animates the whole creation.

Aspasio was not without his share of polite literature, and philosophical knowledge. He had taken a tour through the circle of the sciences; and, having transiently surveyed the productions of human learning, devoted his final attention to the inspired writings. These he studied with the unbiassed impartiality of a critic, yet with the reverential simplicity of a Christian. These he regarded as the unerring standard of duty—the authentic charter of salvation—and the brightest mirror of the Deity, affording the most satisfactory and sublime display of all the divine attributes.

Theron was somewhat warm in his temper; and would, upon occasion, make use of a little innocent raillery, not to expose his friend, but to enliven the conversation; sometimes disguising his real sentiments, in order to sift the subject, or discover the opinion of others. Aspasio seldom indulges the humorous or satirical vein, but argues with "meekness of wisdom;"* never puts on the appearance of guile, but always speaks the dictates of his heart.

Aspasio was on a visit at Theron's seat. One evening, when some neighbouring gentlemen were just gone, and had left them alone, the conversation took the following turn.

Asp. I would always be ready, both to acknowledge and applaud whatever is amiable in the conduct of others. The gentlemen who gave us their company at dinner, seem to be all of a different character; yet each, in his own way, is extremely agreeable.

Lysander has lively parts, and is quick at repartee; but he never abuses his wit to create uneasiness in the honest heart, and flush the modest cheek with confusion. What solidity of judgment, and depth of penetration, appear in Crito! yet how free are his discourses from the magisterial tone or the dictatorial solemnity. Philenor's taste in the polite arts is remarkably correct; yet without the least tincture of vanity, or any weak fondness for applause. He never interrupts the progress, or wrests the topic of conversation, in order to shine in his particular province. Trebonius, I find, has signalized his valour in several campaigns. Though a warrior and a traveller, he gives himself no overbearing or ostenta-

* ——Mitis sapientia Læli.—*Hor.* is a most amiable character, and delicately drawn, but is, I think expressed with greater strength and superior beauty by the sacred penman; "Let him show out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom," Jam. iii. 13.

tious airs. In Trebonius you see the brave officer, regulated by all the decency of the academic, and sweetened with all the affability of the courtier.

No one affects a morose silence, or assumes an immoderate loquacity.* To engross the talk is tyrannical, to seal up the lips is monkish. Every one, therefore, from a fund of good sense, contributes his quota; and each speaks, not with an ambition to set off himself, but from a desire to please the company.

Ther. Indeed, Aspasio, I think myself happy in this accomplished set of acquaintance; who add all the complaisance and politeness of the gentleman, to the benevolence and fidelity of the friend.

Their conversation is as innocent as their taste is refined. They have a noble abhorrence of slander, and detest the low, ungenerous artifices of detraction. No loose jest has either the service of their tongue, or the sanction of their smile. Was you to be with them, even in their freest moments, you would hear nothing that so much as borders upon profaneness, or is in the least injurious to purity of morals.

Asp. There is but one qualification wanting to render your friends completely valuable, and their social interviews a continual blessing.

Ther. Pray, what is that?

Asp. A turn for more serious conferences. Their literary debates are beautiful sketches of whatever is most curious in the sciences, or most delicate in the arts. From their remarks on our national affairs, and on foreign occurrences, a person may almost form a system of politics. But they never touch upon any topic of morality; never celebrate the sublime perfections of the Deity; never illustrate the beauties, nor enforce the truths——

Ther. Fie upon you, Aspasio, for your unpolite hint! Who can forbear interrupting the harangue, which pleads for such an outrageous violation of the mode? would introduce edifying talk into our fashionable assemblies? How is it that you, who, in other instances, are a gentleman of refinement, can be so strangely inelegant in this particular?

Asp. For such a practice, Theron, we have no inconsiderable precedents. Thus Socrates,† the wisest of the Athenian sages; thus Scipio,‡ the most accomplished of the Roman generals, conversed. Thus Cicero,* the prince of orators, improved his elegant retirement, at the Tusculan villa. And Horace,† the brightest genius in the court of Augustus, formed the most agreeable hours of his conversation upon this very plan.

Were I to enumerate all the patrons of this, forgive me if I say, more honourable mode, the most illustrious names of antiquity would appear on the list.

Ther. This practice, however extolled by the philosophic gentry of ancient times, would make a very singular figure in the present age.

Asp. And should not the copy, after which the generality of mankind write, be singularly correct? Persons of exalted fortune are the pattern for general imitation; are the copy, in conformity to which the inferior world adjust their manners and regulate their behaviour. They, therefore, are under the strongest obligations not to give a contemptible stamp to the fashion. Benevolence to their fellow-creatures calls loudly upon them—a concern for the public good challenges it at their hands, that they signalize themselves by a pre-eminence in all that is excellent.

Ther. Away, away with these austere notions! such a strain of conversation would damp the gaiety of our spirits, and flatten the relish of society. It would turn the assembly into a conventicle, and make it Lent all the year round.

Asp. Can it then be an austere practice, to cultivate the understanding and improve the heart? Can it damp the gaiety of our spirits, to refine them upon the plan of the highest perfection? or will it flatten the relish of society, to secure and anticipate everlasting delights?

Ther. Everlasting delights, Aspasio! to talk of such a subject, would be termed, in every circle of wit and gallantry, an usurpation of the parson's office; a low method of retailing by scraps, in the parlour, what the man in black vends by wholesale from the pulpit. It would infallibly mark us out for pedants; and, for aught I know, might expose us to the suspicion of enthusiasm.

Asp. Your men of wit must excuse me, if I cannot persuade myself to admire either the delicacy of their language or the justness of their opinion.

The first, be it ever so humane and graceful, I resign to themselves. As for the other, I would beg leave to inquire,

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* Zeno being present, where a person of this loquacious disposition played himself off, said, with an air of concern in his countenance, "That poor gentleman is ill, he has a violent flux upon him." The company was alarmed, and the rhetorician stopped in his career. "Yes, (added the philosopher,) the flux is so violent that it has carried his ears into his tongue."

† Vid. Socratis Memorabilia, per Xenoph.

‡ See Cicero's Dialogue, de amicitia; in which we are informed, that it was a customary practice with Scipio, with his polite friend, Lælius, and some of the most distinguished nobility of Rome, to discourse upon the interests of the republic, and the immortality of the soul.

* Vid. Tuscul. Quæst.

† Such were the interviews of which he speaks with a kind of rapture, "O noctes, cœnæque deum!"

"are the clergy, then, the only persons who should act the becoming part, and converse like rational beings? Is solid wisdom and sacred truth the privilege of their order; while nothing is left for you and me, but the play of fancy, or the luxuries of sense?"

I would next ask the circles of gallantry, "where is the impropriety of interweaving the noble doctrines displayed by the preacher with our common discourse? or what the inconvenience of introducing the amiable graces, recommended by his lectures, into our ordinary practice?" Will such an exercise of our speech rank us among pedants? is this the badge of enthusiasm? A splendid and honourable badge truly! such as must add weight to any cause, and worth to any character.

Ther. This would curb the sprightly sallies of wit, and extinguish that engaging glow of good humour which enlivens our genteel intercourses. Accordingly you may observe, that if any formal creature takes upon him to mention, in polite company, a religious truth or a text of Scripture, the pretty chat, though ever so profusely flowing, stagnates in an instant. Each voluble and facetious tongue seems to be struck with a sudden palsy. Every one wonders at the strange man's face; and they all conclude him either mad or a Methodist.

Asp. Agreeable strokes of wit are by no means incompatible with useful conversation, unless we mistake an insipid vivacity, or fantastic levity, for wit and facetiousness. Neither have I heard, that among all our acts of parliament, any one has passed to divorce good sense and good humour. Why may they not both reside on the same lips, and both circulate through the same assembly? For my own part, I would neither have our discourse soured with austerity, nor evaporate into impertinence; but unite (as a judicious ancient advises) the benefits of improvement, with the blandishments of pleasantry.* And as to your polite people, if they can find more music in the magpie's voice, than in the nightingale's note, I must own myself as much surprised at their ears, as they are at the strange man's face.

Ther. With all your grey-headed authorities, I fancy you will find very few proselytes among the professors of modern refinement. Fashion is, with the world, the standard of morals, as well as of clothes; and he must be of a very peculiar turn indeed, who would choose to be ridiculous in either.

* "Cum quadam illecebra ac voluptate utiles."—*Aul. Gel.*

Asp. Rather, Theron, he must be of a very pliant turn, who tamely delivers up his conduct to be moulded by a fashion, which has neither true elegance to dignify it, nor the least usefulness to recommend it. And which, I beseech you, is most ridiculous? He who servilely imitates every idle fashion, and is the very ape of corrupt custom? Or he who asserts his native liberty, and resolutely follows where wisdom and truth lead the way?

Ther. Would you then obtrude religious discourse upon every company? Consider, Aspasio, what a motley figure this would make. A wedding, and a sermon! quadrille, and St. Paul! the last new play, and primitive Christianity!

Asp. You know the rule, Theron, which is given by the great Master of our Assemblies, "Cast not your pearls before swine." (Matt. vii. 6.) Some there are so immersed in sensuality, that they can relish nothing but the coarsest husks of conversation. To these, neither offer your pearls, nor prostitute your intimacy. But when persons of a liberal education and elevated sentiments—when these meet together, why should not their discourse be suitable to the eminence of their rank, and the superiority of their genius? raised far above the level of that trite and effeminate strain, "Upon my honour, the actress topt her part. Heavens! how charmingly she sung. how gracefully she trode the stage!"

Ther. Indeed my Aspasio, I am entirely in your way of thinking, however I have hitherto put on the mask. The gift of speech is one great prerogative of our rational nature. And it is a pity that such a superior faculty should be debased to the meanest purposes. Suppose all our stately vessels, that pass and repass the ocean, were to carry out nothing but tinsel and theatrical decorations—were to import nothing but glittering baubles, and nicely-fancied toys—would such a method of trading be well-judged in itself, or beneficial in its consequences? Articulate speech is the instrument of a much nobler commerce, intended to transmit and diffuse the treasures of the mind. And will not the practice be altogether as injudicious, must not the issue be infinitely more detrimental, if this vehicle of intellectual wealth is freighted only with pleasing fopperies?

Asp. Such folly and extravagance would be hissed out of the commercial world. Why then are they admitted and cherished in the social?

Ther. Why indeed? He must be far more acute than your Theron, who can assign a single reason to countenance them. To explode them, ten thousand arguments occur. A continual round of gay and

trifling conversation,* of visits quite modish, and entertainments not moral, must give a most indolent turn to the mind; such as will enervate its powers, indispose it for generous action, and gradually sap the very foundation of virtue. Whereas, a frequent conference on the glories of the Godhead, or the wonders of creation, would invigorate and ennoble the soul; would enlarge her faculties, and elevate her desires.

Asp. "Did not our hearts burn within us," said the travellers at Emmaus, while he talked with us by the way?" (Luke xxiv. 32.) Those discourses, it is true, were conducted with a spirit, and enforced with an energy, absolutely unequalled; yet the same happy effects would in some degree result from our friendly conferences, if they turned upon the same important points. We also should feel our hearts warmed with holy zeal, and glowing with heavenly love.

Ther. Such conferences would not only be productive of present advantage, but yield a renewed pleasure in the retrospect. We might reflect, with real complacency, on hours spent in so rational a manner. And who would not prefer the silent applause of the heart, to all those tumultuous joys which wanton jests create, or the circling glass inspires?

Asp. One† who thoroughly knew mankind, and had tried the merits of the jovial board, very pertinently compares such flashes of mirth to the "crackling of thorns under a pot." (Eccl. vii. 6.) The transient blaze of the one, and the senseless noise of the other, continue but for a moment, and then expire; that in smoke and darkness, this in spleen and melancholy.

I said spleen and melancholy. For however jauntee and alert the various methods of modish trifling may seem, whatever ease or grace they are supposed to give the conversation; sure am I, it will be afflictive to look back upon interviews squandered away in very vanity, and shocking to look forward upon the account which we must all shortly render. What figure will such an article make in the final reckoning, and at the decisive bar! "Our social hours, which might have promoted our mutual edification, and been subservient to our Creator's glory, all lost in merriment and whim; or worse than lost, in flattery and detraction: A blank, or a blot."

Ther. Venus, we find, has her zealous knight-errants, and Bacchus, his professed votaries, in almost every company. And is it not truly deplorable, that the God of nature alone has none to assert his honour, none to celebrate his perfections? though he is the original of all beauty, and the parent of all good.

When I have taken my morning walk amidst dews and flowers, with the sun shedding lustre round him, and unveiling the happy landscape, how has my eye been charmed with the lovely prospect! how has my ear been ravished with the music of the grove! Methought every note was a tribute of harmony; and all nature seemed one grand chorus, swelling with the Creator's praise. But how has the scene been reversed, when leaving my rural elysium, I entered the haunts of men! where I saw faculties divine, meanly engaged in trifles; where I heard the tongue, prompt to utter, and fluent to express, every thing but its Maker's glory.

I assure you, I have often been chagrined on this occasion; and sometimes said within myself, "What! shall trifles be regarded, and the majesty of heaven neglected? Shall every friend, and every visitant, receive his share of respect, and no acknowledgments be paid to that exalted Being, who is worthy, more than worthy, of all our veneration?"

Asp. This will be still more afflictive to an ingenuous mind, if we consider that the infinite and glorious God is present at all our interviews, vouchsafes to express his satisfaction, and acknowledges himself magnified, when, with admiration and love, we talk of his transcendent excellencies. Nay, we are assured that the Lord of all lords not only hearkens, but keeps a book of remembrance; and will distinguish such persons at the day of universal retribution. When the loose train of licentious talkers are driven away as the despicable chaff, these shall be selected for his peculiar treasure, and numbered among the jewels of Jehovah.*

Ther. If the gentlemen who make high pretensions to reason, think themselves discharged from these doctrines of revelation, they should not forget their own Scriptures. A philosopher will tell them the duty of employing their time, as in the awful presence, and under the immediate inspection of the Supreme Being.† An orator will show them the egregious impropriety of

* The significancy and importance of such conversation was smartly represented by the philosopher; who being asked, How he left the company employed? made answer, some in milking the ram, others in holding the pail.

† King Solomon.

* Mal. iii. 16, 17. This is a passage much to be observed. A most emphatical recommendation of religious discourse, perhaps the most emphatical that ever was used, and the most endearing that can possibly be conceived.

† "Sic certe vivendum est, tanquam in conspectu vivamus: sic cogitandum, tanquam aliquis in pectus intimum inspicere possit: et potest. Quid enim prosit ab homine aliquid esse secretum? Nihil Deo clausum est. Interest animis nostris, et cogitationibus mediis, inte: venit." Senec. Epist. 83.

wasting their friendly interviews in the fumes of drollery, or the froth of impertinence.*

Asp. Who then, that is wise, would not habituate himself to a practice, which comes recommended by the voice of reason, and is enforced by the authority of God?—a practice, which will administer present good, will afford pleasing reviews, and terminate in everlasting honour?

Ther. It is strange, that subjects which deserve to be received as the universal topic, are almost universally banished from our discourse. Was this cabinet enriched with a series of antique medals, or a collection of the finest gems, my friends would naturally expect to be entertained with a sight of those rarities, and an explanation of their meaning. Why should we not as naturally expect, and as constantly agree, to entertain each other with remarks on those admirable curiosities which are deposited in the boundless museum† of the universe?

When a general has won some important victory, or an admiral has destroyed the enemy's fleet, every company resounds with their achievements, every tongue is the trumpet of their fame. And why should we not celebrate, with equal delight and ardour, that Almighty hand which formed the structure, and furnished the regions, of this stupendous system?

Asp. Especially, if to his immensely glorious, we add his supremely amiable perfections. When the victorious commander is our most cordial friend—when he has professed the tenderest love, done us the most signal good, and promised us a perpetual enjoyment of his favours—it will be impossible to neglect such an illustrious and generous person. His name must be engraven upon our hearts, must slide insensibly into our tongues, and be as music to our ears.

Is not all this true, and in the most super-eminent degree, with regard to the blessed God? Can greater kindness be exercised, or greater love be conceived, than to deliver up his own Son to torments and death for the expiation of our sins? Can benefits more desirable be granted, than to adopt us for his children, and sanctify us by his Spirit? Can promises more invaluable be made, than those which ensure to us the preferments of heaven, and the riches of eternity?—All this is attested, concerning the Almighty Majesty, in the Scriptures of truth. What a fund, therefore, for pleasing and delicate conversation are the Scriptures?

Ther. Here also I have the pleasure of concurring with my Aspasio, though I believe he suspects me to be somewhat wavering or defective in my veneration for the Scriptures.

Asp. No, Theron, I have a better opinion of your taste and discernment than to harbour any such suspicion.

Ther. The Scriptures are certainly an inexhaustible fund of materials for the most delightful and ennobling discourse. When we consider the author of those sacred books; that they came originally from heaven, were dictated by divine wisdom, have the same consummate excellence as the works of creation; it is really surprising that we are not always searching, by study, by meditation, or converse, into one or other of these grand volumes.

Asp. When Secker preaches, or Murray pleads, the church is crowded and the bar thronged. When Spence produces the refinements of criticism, or Young displays the graces of poetry, the press toils, yet is scarcely able to supply the demands of the public. Are we eager to hear, and impatient to purchase, what proceeds from such eloquent tongues and masterly pens? And can we be coldly indifferent, when, not the most accomplished of mankind, not the most exalted of creatures, but the adorable Author of all wisdom, speaks in his revealed word? Strange! that our attention does not hang* upon the venerable accents, and our talk dwell upon the incomparable truths!

Ther. I admire, I must confess, the very language of the Bible. In this, methinks, I discern a conformity between the book of nature and the book of Scripture.

In the book of nature the divine Teacher speaks, not barely to our ears, but to all our senses. And it is very remarkable how he varies his address! Observe his grand and august works. In these he uses the style of majesty. We may call it the true sublime. It strikes with awe, and transports the mind.—View his ordinary operations. Here he descends to a plainer dialect. This may be termed the familiar style. We comprehend it with ease, and attend to it with pleasure.—In the more ornamented parts of the creation, he clothes his meaning with elegance. All is rich and brilliant. We are delighted, we are charmed. And what is this, but the florid style?

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* Cicero says, with an air of graceful indignation, "Quasi vero clamorum virorum aut tacitos congressus esse oporteat, aut ludicros sermones, aut rerum colloquia leviorum."—*Academ. Quaest.* lib. 4.

† Museum—alluding to a remarkable edifice in the city of Oxford, distinguished by this name, and appropriated to the reception of curiosities, both natural and artificial, and to the British Museum in London.

* St. Luke, in his evangelical history, uses this beautiful image, "The people hung upon the lips of their all-wise Teacher." Luke xix. 48. Which implies two very strong ideas, an attention that nothing could interrupt, and an eagerness scarce ever to be satisfied.

——"Pendetque loquentes ab ore.—*Virg.*

A variety, somewhat similar, runs through the Scriptures. Would you see history in all her simplicity, and all her force, most beautifully easy, yet irresistibly striking? See her, or rather feel her energy, touching the nicest movements of the soul, and triumphing over our passions, in the inimitable narrative of Joseph's life. The representation of Esau's bitter distress, (Gen. xxvii. 30. &c.) the conversation pieces of Jonathan and his gallant friend, (1 Sam. xviii. xix. xx.;) the memorable journal of the disciples going to Emmaus, (Luke xxiv. 13. &c.;) are finished models of the impassioned and affecting. Here is nothing studied; no flights of fancy; no embellishments of oratory. Yet how inferior is the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, though worked up by the most masterly hand in the world, to the undissembled artless fervency of these scriptural sketches!*

Are we pleased with the elevation and dignity of an heroic poem, or the tenderness and perplexity of a dramatic performance? In the book of Job they are both united, and both unequalled. Conformably to the exactest rules of art, as the action advances the incidents are more alarming, and the images more magnificent. The language glows, and the pathos swells; till at last the Deity himself makes his entrance. He speaks from the whirlwind, and summons the creation—summons heaven and all its shining host, the elements and their most wonderful productions—to vouch for the wisdom of his providential dispensations. His word strikes terror, and flashes conviction; decides the momentous controversy, and closes the august drama, with all possible solemnity and grandeur.

If we sometimes choose a plaintive strain, such as softens the mind and soothes an agreeable melancholy; are any of the ancient tragedies superior, in the eloquence of mourning, to David's pathetic elegy on his beloved Jonathan, (2 Sam. i. 19, &c.) to his most passionate and inconsolable moan over the lovely but unhappy Absalom;† or to that melodious woe, which warbles and bleeds in every line of Jeremiah's Lamentations.

Would we be entertained with the daring sublimity of Homer, or the correct majesty of Virgil? with the expressive delicacy of Horace, or the rapid excursions of Pindar? Behold them joined, behold them excelled, in the odes of Moses, and the eucharistic hymn of Deborah; in the exalted devotion of the Psalms, and the glorious enthusiasm of the Prophets.

Asp. Only with this difference, that the former are tuneful triflers, and amuse the fancy with empty fiction; the latter are teachers sent from God, and make the soul wise unto salvation. The Bible is not only the brightest ornament, but the most invaluable depositum. On a right, a practical knowledge of these lively oracles, depends the present comfort and the endless felicity of mankind. Whatever, therefore, in study or conversation, has no connexion with their divine contents, may be reckoned among the toys of literature, or the ciphers of discourse.

Ther. Here again the book of Scripture is somewhat like the magazine of nature. What can we desire for our accommodation and delight, which this storehouse of conveniences does not afford? What can we wish for our edification and improvement, which that fund of knowledge does not supply? Of these we may truly affirm, each in its respective kind is "profitable unto all things."

Are we admirers of antiquity?—Here we are led back beyond the universal deluge, and far beyond the date of any other annals. We are introduced among the earliest inhabitants of the earth. We take a view of mankind in their undisguised primitive plainness, when the days of their life were but little short of a thousand years. We are brought acquainted with the original of nations; with the creation of the world; and with the birth of time itself.

Are we delighted with vast achievments? Where is any thing comparable to the miracles in Egypt, and the wonders in the field of Zoan? to the memoirs of the Is-

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* Let a person of true taste peruse, in a critical view, the two first chapters of St. Luke. He will there find a series of the most surprising incidents related with the greatest simplicity, yet with the utmost majesty. All which, extremely affecting in themselves, are heightened and illuminated by a judicious intermixture of the sublimest pieces of poetry. For my own part, I know not how to characterise them more properly than by Solomon's elegant comparison: "They are as gold rings set with the beryl, or as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires."—*Cant.* v. 1. 4.

† "The king was vehemently affected, and went up to the chamber and wept; and as he went he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!" 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Such a picture, and so much pathos; so artless both, and both so exquisite, I must acknowledge, I never met with, among all the representations of dignity in distress. The king's troops had gained a signal victory. His crown and his life were rescued from the most imminent danger. Yet all the honours and all the joys of this successful day were swallowed up and lost in Absalom's death. The news of Absalom's death struck, like a dagger, the afflicted father. He starts from his seat. He hastens into retirement, there to pour out his soul in copious lamentation. But his anguish is too impetuous to bear a moment's restraint. He bursts immediately into a flood of tears, and cries as he goes, "O Absalom," &c.

What says Mezentius, when his son is slain? when, to sharpen his sorrow, the pale corpse, the miserable spectacle is before his eyes, and within his arms! The most pathetic word he utters is,

"Heu! nunc misero mihi demum
Exilium infelix, nunc alte vulnus adactum."

How languid is Virgil, how inexpressive the prince of Latin poetry, compared with the royal mourner in Israel? Most evident from this and many other instances, is the superiority of the Scriptures, in copying nature, and painting the passions.

raelites, passing through the depths of the sea, sojourning amidst the inhospitable deserts, and conquering the kingdoms of Canaan? Where shall we meet with instances of martial bravery equal to the prodigious exploits of the Judges; or the adventurous deeds of Jesse's valiant son, and his matchless band of worthies? (2 Sam. xxiii. 8, &c. 1 Chron. xi. 10, &c.) Here we behold the fundamental laws of the universe, sometimes suspended, sometimes reversed; and not only the current of Jordan, but the course of nature controlled. In short, when we enter the field of Scripture, we tread—on enchanted, shall I say? rather, on consecrated ground; where astonishment and awe are awakened at every turn; where is all, more than all, the marvellous of romance, connected with all the precision and sanctity of truth.

If we want maxims of wisdom, or have a taste for the laconic style, how copiously may our wants be supplied, and how delicately our taste gratified! especially in the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some of the minor prophets. Here are the most sage lessons of instruction, adapted to every circumstance of life, formed upon the experience of all preceding ages, and perfected by the unerring spirit of inspiration. These delivered with such remarkable conciseness, that one might venture to say, every word is a sentence; at least, every sentence may be called an apophthegm, sparkling with brightness of thought, or weighty with solidity of sense. The whole, like a profusion of pearls, each containing, in a very small compass, a value almost immense, all heaped up (as an ingenious critic speaks) with a confused magnificence, above the little niceties of order.

If we look for the strength of reasoning, and the warmth of exhortation; the insinuating arts of genteel address, or the manly boldness of impartial reproof; all the thunder of the orator, without any of his ostentation; all the politeness of the courtier, without any of his flattery—let us have recourse to the Acts of the Apostles, and to the Epistles of St. Paul.* These are a specimen, or rather these are the standard, of them all.

I do not wonder, therefore, that a taste so refined, and a judgment so correct as Milton's, should discern higher attractives in the volume of inspiration, than in the most celebrated authors of Greece and Rome.

——"Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the muses haunt,
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery banks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit."——

Asp. Another recommendation of the Scriptures is, that they afford the most awful and most amiable manifestations of the Godhead. His glory shines, and his goodness smiles, in those divine pages, with unparalleled lustre. Here we have a satisfactory explanation of our own state. The origin of evil is traced; the cause of all our misery discovered; and the remedy, the infallible remedy, both clearly shown, and freely offered. The merits of the bleeding Jesus lay a firm foundation for all our hopes; while gratitude for his dying love suggests the most winning incitements to every duty. Morality, Theron, your (and let me add, my) admired morality, is delineated in all its branches, is placed upon its proper basis, and raised to its highest elevation. The spirit of God is promised to enlighten the darkness of our understandings, and strengthen the imbecility of our wills. What an ample—Can you indulge me on this favourite topic?

Ther. It is, I assure you, equally pleasing to myself. Your enlargements, therefore, need no apology.

Asp. What ample provision is made, by these blessed books, for all our spiritual wants! And, in this respect, how indisputable is their superiority to all other compositions!

Is any one convinced of guilt, as provoking heaven and ruining the soul? Let him ask reason to point out a means of reconciliation, and a refuge of safety. Reason hesitates as she replies, "The Deity may, perhaps, accept our supplications, and grant forgiveness." But the Scriptures leave us not to the sad uncertainty of conjecture: They speak the language of clear assurance: "God has set forth a propitiation." (Rom. iii. 25.) "He does forgive our iniquities." (Psalm ciii. 3.) "He will remember our sins no more." (Heb. viii. 12.)

Are we assaulted by temptation, or averse to duty? Philosophy may attempt to parry the thrust, or to stir up the reluctant mind, by disclosing the deformity of vice, and urging the fitness of things. Feeble expedients! Just as well calculated to accomplish the ends proposed, as the flimsy fortification of a cobweb to defend us from the ball of a cannon; or as the gentle vibrations of a lady's fan to make a wind-bound navy sail. The Bible recommends no such incompetent succours. "My grace," says its almighty Author, "is sufficient for thee." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) "Sin shall not have dominion over you." (Rom. vi. 14.) The great Jehovah, in whom is

* Another very remarkable instance of propriety in St. Paul's writings is, that though diffuse in the doctrinal, they are concise in the preceptive parts. On the former, it was absolutely necessary to enlarge: on the latter, it is always judicious to be short. The celebrated rule of Horace, "Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis," was never more exactly observed, nor more finely exemplified, than by our Apostolic author.

everlasting strength, "he worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.)

Should we be visited with sickness, or overtaken by any calamity, the consolation which Plato offers is, that such dispensations coincide with the universal plan of divine government. Virgil will tell us, for our relief, that afflictive visitations are, more or less, the unavoidable lot of all men. Another moralist whispers in the dejected sufferer's ear, "Impatience adds to the load; whereas a calm submission renders it more supportable." Does the word of revelation dispense such spiritless and fugitive cordials? No: Those sacred pages inform us, that tribulations are fatherly chastisements, tokens of our Maker's love, and fruits of his care; that they are intended to work in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and to work out for us an eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

Should we, under the summons of death, have recourse to the most celebrated comforters of the heathen world, they would increase our apprehensions rather than mitigate our dread. Death is represented by the great master of their schools, as "the most formidable of all evils." They were not able positively to determine whether the soul survived; and never so much as dreamed of the resurrection of the body. Whereas, the book of God strips the monster of his horrors, or turns him into a messenger of peace; gives him an angel's face, and a deliverer's hand; ascertaining to the souls of the righteous an immediate translation into the regions of bliss, and ensuring to their bodies a most advantageous revival at the restoration of all things.

Inestimable book! It heals the maladies of life, and subdues the fear of death. It strikes a lightsome vista through the gloom of the grave, and opens a charming, a glorious prospect of immortality in the heavens.

These, with many other excellencies peculiar to the Scriptures, one would imagine more than sufficient to engage every sensible heart in their favour, and introduce them with the highest esteem into every improved conversation. They had such an effect upon the finest genius, and most accomplished person, that former or latter ages can boast; insomuch that he made, while living, this public declaration, and left it when he died upon everlasting record: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth." (Psalm cxix. 103.) "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." (Psalm cxix. 97.) "Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I may be occupied in thy precepts; and I will speak of thy testimonies even before kings." (Psalm cxix. 46.) If David tasted so much sweetness in a small, and that the least valuable part of the divine word; how much richer is the feast to us, since the Gospel is added to the Law, and the canon of Scripture completed! since (to borrow the words of a prophet) the Lord God "has sealed up the sum;" has put the last hand to his work; and rendered it "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." (Ezek. xxviii. 12.)

Ther. Another very distinguishing peculiarity of the sacred writings just occurs to my mind. The method of communicating advice, or administering reproof, by parables. A method which levels itself to the lowest apprehension, without giving offence to the most supercilious temper; yet it is as much superior to plain unornamented precept, as the enlivened scenes of a well-wrought tragedy are more impressive and affecting than a simple narration of the plot.

Our Lord was asked by a student of the Jewish law, "Who is my neighbour?" which implied another question, "How is he to be loved?" The inquirer was conceited of himself, yet ignorant of the truth, and deficient in his duty. Had the wise instructor of mankind abruptly declared, "You neither know the former, nor fulfil the latter," probably the querist would have reddened with indignation, and departed in a rage. Therefore to teach, and not disgust—to convince the man of his error, and not exasperate his mind—the blessed Jesus frames a reply, as amiable in the manner as it was pertinent to the purpose.

A certain person going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, (Luke x. 30.) Not content to rob him of his treasure, they strip him of his garments, wound him with great barbarity, and leave him half dead. Soon after this calamitous accident, a traveller happens to come along that very road; and what renders him more likely to administer relief, he is one of the sacred order; one who taught others the lovely lessons of humanity and charity, and was therefore under the strongest obligations to exemplify them in his own practice. He just glances an eye upon the deplorable object; sees him stretched on the cold ground, and weltering in his blood; but takes no further notice; nay, to avoid the trouble of an inquiry, passes by on the other side. Scarce was he departed, when a Levite approaches. This man comes nearer, and looks on the miserable spectacle; takes a leisurely and attentive survey of the case.* And though every gash in the bleeding flesh cried and pleaded for compassion, this mi-

* This seems to be the import of ἐλθων και ἰδων, Luke x. 32. This diversifies the idea, and heightens the description, of Jewish inhumanity.

nister of the sanctuary neither speaks a word to comfort, nor moves a hand to help. Last comes a Samaritan,* one of the abhorred nation, whom the Jew hated with the most implacable malignity. Though the Levite had neglected an expiring brother; though the priest had withheld his pity from one of the Lord's peculiar people; the very moment the Samaritan sees the unhappy sufferer, he melts into commiseration. He forgets the imbittered foe, and considers only the distressed fellow-creature. He springs from his horse, and resolves to intermit his journey. The oil and wine, intended for his own refreshment, he freely converts into healing unguents. He binds up the wounds; sets the disabled stranger upon his own beast; and, with all the assiduity of a servant, with all the tenderness of a brother, conducts him to an inn. There he deposits money for his present use; charges the host to omit nothing that might conduce to the recovery or comfort of his guest; and promises to defray the whole expense of his lodging, his maintenance, and his cure.

What a lively picture this of the most disinterested and active benevolence! A benevolence which excludes no persons, not even strangers or enemies, from its tender regards; which disdains no condescension, grudges no cost, in its labours of love. Could any method of conviction have been more forcible, and at the same time more pleasing, than the interrogatory proposed by our Lord, and deduced from the story? "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" Or can there be an advice more suitable to the occasion, more important in its nature, or expressed with a more sententious energy, than "Go thou, and do likewise?" In this case, the learner instructs, the delinquent condemns, himself. Bigotry bears away its prejudice; and pride, (when the moral so sweetly, so imperceptibly insinuates,) even pride itself lends a willing ear to admonition.

Asp. It has been very justly remarked, That this eloquence of similitudes is equally affecting to the wise, and intelligible to the ignorant. It shows, rather than relates, the point to be illustrated. It has been admired by the best judges in all ages; but never was carried to its highest perfection, till our Lord spoke the parable of the prodigal, (Luke xv. 11. &c.;) which has a beauty that no paraphrase can heighten, a perspicuity that renders all interpretation needless, and a force which every reader not totally insensible must feel.

Ther. The condescension and goodness of God are everywhere conspicuous. In the productions of nature, he conveys to us the most valuable fruits, by the intervention of the loveliest blossoms. Though the present is in itself extremely acceptable, he has given it an additional endearment, by the beauties which array it, or the perfumes which surround it.—In the pages of revelation likewise, he has communicated to us the most glorious truths, adorned with all the graces of composition; such as may polish the man of genius, and improve the man of worth; such as highly delight our imagination, even while they cultivate and refine our morals. So that they really are, as one of their divine authors very elegantly speaks, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver."*

Asp. Who then would not gladly receive that gracious exhortation, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly?" (Col. iii. 16.) Who would not willingly obey that benign command, "Thou shalt talk of it when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up?" (Deut. vi. 7.)

When I consider the language of the Scriptures, and sometimes experience their energy on my soul, I am inclined to say, "Other writings, though polished with the nicest touches of art, only tinkle on the ear, or affect us like the shepherd's reed. But these, even amidst all their noble negligence, strike, alarm, transport us somewhat like the voice of thunder, or the archangel's trumpet."

When I consider the contents of the Scriptures, and believe myself interested in the promises they make, and the privileges they confer, I am induced to cry out, "What are all the other books in the world, compared with these invaluable volumes? No more than an entertaining novel, or a few prudential rules for domestic economy, compared with a parent's will, a royal charter, or an imperial grant of titles and manors."

All these circumstances remind me of an encomium most deservedly given to the Bible; which, though quite artless, is, I think, abundantly more expressive than the most elaborate efforts of rhetoric. It came from the lips of a martyr; who, being condemned to die for his inviolable adherence to the doctrines of Scripture, when he arrived at the stake, and had composed himself for his execution, took his final leave in these affecting words; "Farewell sun and moon!

* If this was a parable, we cannot but admire the accuracy of our Lord, both in laying the scene, and selecting the circumstances.

* Prov. xxv. 11.—Theron follows the received translation. I should prefer the expression of Glassius, who supposes משביתי בסף to signify, "Retiacula argentea, in quibus oculi sunt minutissimi, penetrabiles tamen visu." According to this interpretation, the passage will present us with apples of gold in net-work, or lattice-work of silver; where the fine fruit receives a new charm, by showing itself through the elegant apertures of the silver.

farewell all the beauties of creation, and comforts of life! farewell my honoured friends! farewell my beloved relations! and farewell, thou precious, precious Book of God!"

Aspasio had scarce uttered the last sentence, when a servant came to let them know "supper was upon the table."—Very opportunely, said Theron, has our repast waited till our conference is ended. We have showed what a large field of delightful speculation the Scriptures open; and what ample materials for the most refined discourse they afford. As nothing can be more ungraceful, than to neglect in our own conduct what we recommend to the practice of others, let us, this very night, begin to ennoble our interviews with these improving subjects,—let us endeavour to make religious conversation, which is in all respects desirable, in some degree fashionable.

DIALOGUE II.

The next morning, when breakfast was over, Theron and Aspasio took a walk into the garden—their spirits cheered, and their imaginations lively—gratitude glowing in their hearts, and the whole creation smiling around them.

The spot adjoining to the house was appropriated to the cultivation of flowers. In a variety of handsome compartments were assembled the choicest beauties of blooming nature. Here the hyacinth hung her silken bells, or the lilies reared their silver pyramids. There stood the neat narcissus, loosely attired in a mantle of snowy lustre: or the splendid ranunculus wore a full-trimmed suit of radiant scarlet. Pinks were rising to enamel the borders; roses were opening to dress the walls; surrounded on all sides with a profusion of beauteous forms, either latent in the stalk, or bursting the buds, or blown into full expansion.

This was bounded by a slight partition, a sort of verdant parapet, through which they descend by an easy flight of steps, and are presented with the elegant simplicity of the kitchen garden. In one place you might see the marigold flowering, or the beans in blossom. In another, the endive curled her leaves, or the lettuce thickened her tufts; cauliflowers sheltered their fair complexion under a green umbrella; while the burrage dishevelled* her locks, and braided them with blooming jewels, of a finer azure than the finest sapphires. On the sunny slopes, the cucumber and melon lay basking in the collected beams. On the raised beds, the artichoke seemed to be erecting a standard, while the asparagus shot* into ranks of spears. The level ground produced all manner of cooling salads and nourishing esculents. Nothing was wanting to furnish out the wholesome luxury of an antediluvian banquet.

Soon a high wall intervenes, through which a wicket opens, and transmits them into the regular and equidistant rows of an orchard. This plantation is so nicely adjusted, that it looks like an arrangement of rural piazzas, or a collection of diversified vistas. The eye is everywhere entertained with the exactest uniformity, and darts with unobstructed ease from the one end of the branching files to the other. On all the boughs lay a lovely evolution of blossoms, arrayed in milky white, or tinged with the softest red. Crowding into one general cluster, without relinquishing any vacant space for leaves, they formed the fairest, the gayest, the grandest alcove that fancy itself can imagine. It is really like the court of the Graces. None can approach it without finding his ideas brightened, and feeling his temper exhilarated.

Contiguous to this correct disposition of things, nature had thrown a wilderness, hoary, grotesque, and magnificently confused. It stretched itself, with a large circular sweep, to the north; and secured both the olitory and the orchard from incommoding winds. Copses of hazel and flowering shrubs filled the lower spaces, while poplars quivered aloft in air, and pines pierced the clouds with their leafy spears. Here grew clumps of fir, clad in everlasting green; there stood groves of oak, that had weathered for ages the wintry storm. Amidst this woody theatre ran a winding walk, lined with elms of insuperable height, whose branches, uniting at the top, reared a stately arch, and projected a solemn shade. It was impossible to enter this lofty labyrinth without being struck with a pleasing dread. As they proceed, every inflection diffuses a deeper gloom, and awakens a more pensive attention.

Having strolled in this darksome avenue without a speck of sunshine, without a glimpse of the heavens, on a sudden they step into open day.—Surprising! cries Aspasio, what a change is this! what delightful enchantment is here!—One instant whelmed in Trephonius' cave,† where hor-

* Referring to the loose irregular manner of its foliation.

* Alluding, not only to the shape, but also to the growth of this plant, which is so unusually quick, that it may almost be said to start, rather than to rise out of the earth.

† The reader may find a curious account of this cave, together with a very humorous, and (which should always accompany humour, or else it will be like a sting without the honey) an improving description of its effects, in the *Spectator*, Vol. viii. No. 598, 599.

ror frowns, and darkness lowers, and solitude reigns: transported the next into the romantic scenes of Arcadia, where all is populous, all is lightsome, and all is gay.—Quick as thought, the arches of heaven expand their azure; turrets and spires shoot into the skies; towns, with their spacious edifices, spread themselves to the admiring view. Those lawns, green with freshest herbage; those fields, rich with undulating corn; where were they all a moment ago?—It brings to my mind that remarkable situation of the Jewish lawgiver, when, elevated on the summit of Pisgah, he surveyed the goodly land of promise; "surveyed the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter;" surveyed "the mountains dropping with wine, and the hills flowing with milk," (Job xx. 17. Joel iii. 18.) surveyed all with those eyes, which, for forty tedious years, had been confined to dry sands, ragged rocks, and the irksome wastes of a desolate howling wilderness.

Here they seated themselves on the first mossy hillock which offered its couch. The rising sun had visited the spot, to dry up the dews, and exhale the damps that might endanger health; to open the violets, and expand the primroses that decked the green. The whole shade of the wood was collected behind them; and a beautiful, extensive, diversified landscape spread itself before them.

Theron, according to his usual manner, made many improving remarks on the prospect and its furniture. He traced the footsteps of an all-comprehending contrivance, and pointed out the strokes of inimitable skill. He observed the grand exertions of power, and the rich exuberance of goodness, most signally, most charmingly conspicuous through the whole.—Upon one circumstance he enlarged with a particular satisfaction.

Ther. See, Aspasio, how all is calculated to administer the highest delight to mankind. Those trees and hedges, which skirt the extremities of the landscape, stealing away from their real bulk, and lessening by gentle diminutions, appear like elegant pictures in miniature. Those which occupy the nearer situations are a set of noble images, swelling upon the eye, in full proportion, and in a variety of graceful attitudes; both of them ornamenting the several apartments of our common abode, with a mixture of delicacy and grandeur.

The blossoms that array the branches, the flowers that embroider the mead, address and entertain our eyes with every charm of beauty;* whereas, to other creatures, they are destitute of all those attractives which result from a combination of the loveliest colours and most alluring forms. Yonder streams, that glide with smooth serenity along the valleys, glittering to the distant view like sheets of polished crystal, or soothing the attentive ear with the softness of aquatic murmurs, are no less exhilarating to the fancy than to the soil through which they pass. The huge enormous mountain, the steep and dizzy precipice, the pendent horrors of the craggy promontory, wild and tremendous as they are, furnish out an agreeable entertainment to the human mind, and please even while they terrify; whereas the beasts take no other notice of those majestic deformities, than only to avoid the dangers they threaten.

Asp. How wonderfully do such considerations exalt our idea of the Creator's goodness, his very distinguishing goodness to mankind! And should they not proportionably endear that eternal Benefactor to our affections? His ever-bountiful hand has scattered blessings, and with profuse liberality, among all the ranks of animated existence. But to us he exercises a beneficence of a very superior kind. We are treated as his peculiar favourites. We are admitted to scenes of delight, which none but ourselves are capable of relishing.

Ther. Another remark, though very obvious, is equally important: The destination of all those external things is no less advantageous, than their formation is beautiful. The bloom, which engages the eye with its delicate hues, is cherishing the embryo fruit, and forming within its silken folds the rudiments of a future desert. Those streams, which shine from afar like fluid silver, are much more valuable in their productions, and beneficial in their services, than they are amiable in their appearance. They distribute, as they roll along their winding banks, cleanliness to our houses, and fruitfulness to our lands. They nourish, and at their own expense, a never-failing supply of the finest fish. They visit our cities, and attend our wharfs, as so many public vehicles, ready to set out at all hours.

Those sheep, which give their udders to be drained by the busy frisking lambs, are fattening their flesh for our support; and while they fill their own fleeces, are providing for our comfortable clothing. Yonder kine—some of which are browsing upon the tender herb, others, satiated with pasturage, ruminate under the shady covert—though conscious of no such design, are concocting, for our use, one of the

* Therefore, when the prophet describes the Christian church, adorned with all the "beauties of holiness," he borrows his imagery from these amiable objects; "Israel shall bud and blossom," Isa. xxvii. 6.—Nay, the very "wilderness, even the Gentile nations, being converted unto Christ, "shall blossom as a rose, Isa. xxxv. 1.—"I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon: Hos. xiv. 5. What an elegant picture! and what a comfortable promise!

softest, purest, healthiest liquors in the world. The bees that fly humming about our seat, and pursue their work on the fragrant blossoms, are collecting balm and sweetness, to compose the richest of syrups; which, though the produce of their toil, is intended for our good.

Nature, and her whole family, are our obsequious servants, our ever-active labourers. They bring the fruits of their united industry, and pour them into our lap, or deposit them in our store-rooms.

Asp. Who can ever sufficiently admire this immense benignity?—The supreme Disposer of events has commanded delight and profit to walk hand in hand through his ample creation; making all things so perfectly pleasing, as if beauty was their only end; yet all things so eminently serviceable, as if usefulness had been their sole design. And, as a most winning invitation to our gratitude, he has rendered man the centre, in which all the emanations of his beneficence, diffused through this terrestrial system, finally terminate.

But, my dear Theron, is not this apparent, in a much more wonderful manner, throughout the whole economy of redemption? It were a small thing for this inferior class of unintelligent creatures, to be continually employing themselves for our benefit. Even the Son of the most high God, through all his incarnate state acted the very same part. He took flesh, and bore the infirmities of human nature, not for himself, but for us men, and our salvation. He suffered want, and endured misery in all its forms, that we might possess the fulness of joy, and abound in pleasures for evermore. When he poured out his soul in agonies, under the curse of an avenging law, was it not with a compassionate view to make us partakers of eternal blessedness? When he fulfilled, perfectly fulfilled the whole commanding law, was it not for this gracious purpose that his merits might be imputed to us, that we by his obedience might be made righteous? Yes;

——"For us he liv'd,
Toil'd for our ease, and for our safety bled."

Nothing in the whole course—

Ther. Pardon me for interrupting you, Aspasio. I have no objection to the general drift of your discourse; but that particular notion of imputed righteousness has always appeared to me in a very ridiculous light. And I must say, that such a puritanical nostrum makes a very unbecoming figure amongst your other manly and correct sentiments of religion.

Asp. You know, Theron, I have long ago disavowed that ignoble prejudice, which rejects doctrines, or despises persons, because they happen to be branded with contemptible names. It is true the writers styled Puritans, are remarkable for their attachment to this peculiarity of the gospel. It runs through all their theological works, and very eminently distinguishes them from the generality of our modern treatises. But must it therefore be wrong, because maintained by that particular set of people? Or, are they only advocates for this important truth?

Ther. Ay; it is as I suspected. I have lately conjectured, from several hints in my Aspasio's discourse, that he has been warping to the low ungentleman-like peculiarities of those whimsical fanatics.

Asp. I cannot conceive why you should call them whimsical. To settle faith on its proper basis—the meritorious righteousness of the Redeemer; and to deduce from its true origin—the love of God shed abroad in the heart; to search the conscience, and convince the judgment; to awaken the lethargic, and comfort the afflicted soul; and all from a thorough knowledge, joined to a masterly application, of the divine word;—these, sure, are not whimsical talents, but real excellencies. Yet these, if we may credit history, entered into the preaching; these, if we will examine impartially, are to be found in the writings of the Puritans.—And a pearl, you will please to remember, is a pearl still, though it should hang in the Ethiopian's ear.

Ther. Ethiopian indeed! You have truly characterised that demure and gloomy generation. I hope you do not intend to introduce their affected solemnity and forbidden reserve, into your own easy and engaging conversation. Though, for aught I can judge, this would be no more ungraceful, than to patch such antiquated notions on the refined scheme of Christianity.

Asp. My dear friend, you are too ludicrous; and I begin to catch the infection. We had better return to our first topic. Let us contemplate the wonders of creation, and as we admire the works, learn to adore the Maker.

Ther. None of your evasions, good Aspasio. You must not think to put me off at this rate. I have wanted an opportunity to rally you upon this head, and to argue or laugh you out of these religious oddities.

Asp. If you will not agree to terms of peace, I hope you will allow some cessation of arms. At least till I can muster my forces, and prepare for the vindication of my principles.

Ther. No; upon the spot, and out of hand, you are required to answer for yourself, and these same queer opinions.—I shall serve you as the Roman consul served the procrastinating monarch. When he demurred about his reply to the demands of the senate, and said, "he would consider of

the matter;" the resolute ambassador drew a circle round him with his cane, and insisted upon a positive answer, before he stepped over those limits.

Asp. This, however, you will give me leave to observe, that the affair is of a very serious nature. Upon condition that you will dismiss your flourishes of wit, and strokes of satire, I will acquaint you with the reasons which have made me a thorough convert to this doctrine. Once I held it in the utmost contempt, and pitied the simplicity of (as I then styled them) its deluded admirers. But I am now become such a fool, that I may be truly wise and substantially happy. I have seen my ruined state, and I bless God for this sovereign restorative. It is the source of my strongest consolations, and the very foundation of my eternal hopes.

Ther. Excuse me, Aspasio, if the vivacity of my temper, andt he seemingly uncouth tenet, kindled me into a more humorous gaiety than became the occasion. You speak of the point with so much seriousness, and in such weighty terms, as check my levity, and command my respect. Be pleased to execute what you have promised, and the most engaged attention of my mind shall atone for the petulent sallies of my tongue.

Asp. To conceive a dislike of any doctrine, only because persons of a particular denomination have been very officious to promote its reception; this is hardly consistent with an impartial inquiry after truth.

Ther. I grant it, Aspasio. And I should be ashamed of my opposition, if it was founded on so slight a bottom. But, abstracted from all party considerations, I can see nothing in this supposed article of our faith that may recommend it to the unprejudiced inquirer. What can be more awkward than the term, or more irrational than the sentiment?

Asp. The word *imputed,* when used in this connexion, may possibly convey a disagreeable sound to the ears of some people, because they look upon it as the peculiar phraseology of a few superstitious sectarists, and reject it merely on the foot of that unreasonable surmise.—But how can you be disgusted at the expression, Theron, who have so often read it in the most approved and judicious writers? St. Paul, who might affirm with relation to his epistles, much more truly than the painter concerning his portraits, "I write for eternity,"* scruples not to use this awkward language several times in the same chapter.† Milton, the correctness of whose taste, and the propriety of whose style, no person of genius will ever question, delights to copy, in various parts of his incomparable poem, the Apostle's diction. Authorized by such precedents, it is superior to cavil, and warranted beyond all exception.

As to the sentiment, I take it to be the very fundamental article of the gospel; and I believe, whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical history will allow that it bore the principal sway in extricating us from popish darkness, and introducing the Reformation. What says our Lord, with regard to the love of God and the love of our neighbour? "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Much the same would I venture to say concerning the imputation of our sins to Christ, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us: On these two doctrines hang all the privileges and the whole glory of the gospel.

Ther. In our last conversation, I must own, I saw a strong resemblance between the works and the word of God. But I never observed any thing in nature that bore the least analogy to imputed sin or imputed righteousness. To me your two doctrines seem very unaccountable and irrational.

Asp. That our sins should be charged upon the only begotten Son of God, and that his righteousness should be made over to sinful worms, is strange, exceeding strange. The Psalmist calls it, "marvellous loving kindness," (Psal. xvii. 7.) The Apostle styles it, "love that passeth knowledge," (Eph. iii. 19.) And it has sometimes, I must freely confess, been almost ready to stagger my belief. However, I have found myself relieved in this perplexity, not only by the testimonies of Scripture, but even from the contemplation of nature. All nature is full of strange and mysterious effects, consequently, is a voucher for the mysterious truths of Christianity.

How surprising are the experiments of electricity, and the occult qualities of the loadstone! How surprising those countless legions of effluvia which transpire from a small odoriferous body! and those infinite myriads of luminous particles, which issue from a smaller flaming substance!* There is not a blade of grass, but surpasses the comprehension of all mankind: and not a single atom, but is big with wonders; insomuch, that the intelligent observer can nowhere fix his thoughts, without being astonished, transported, and even lost in admiration.

* Alluding to the painter, who, apologizing for the slow procedure and scrupulously nice touches of his pencil, said, *Æternitati pingo,* "I paint for eternity."

† See Rom. iv. in which single chapter, some branch of the word λογιζομαι, "to be imputed," occurs no less than ten or eleven times.

* Dr. Nieuwentyt has computed, that from a lighted candle, about the size of six to the pound, there issues, in the second of a minute, an effusion of particles, vastly more than the number of sands which the whole globe of the earth contains.

Since the procedure of Providence in this visible system is a continued series of stupendous and unsearchable operations; need we be alarmed, can we reasonably be offended, if the scheme of redemption is equally stupendous, is far more amazing? Yet, though amazing, I hope it will not appear, what you was pleased to insinuate, irrational.

Suppose we state the signification of the terms, and adjust the boundaries of our subject, before we enter upon a survey of its contents?

Ther. Such a caution would have prevented, at least have shortened, many a vehement and tedious controversy.—You see, on yonder heath, the preparations for an approaching race. There stand the posts which are to mark out the limits of the course. Without this previous restrictive care, how irregular would be the excursions of the contending steeds! How difficult, rather how impossible, to declare the conqueror and award the prize!—A clear definition of terms seems equally necessary for candid disputants. Without it, they may wrangle for ages, and never come to a determination.

Asp. Justification is an act of God Almighty's grace; whereby he acquits his people from guilt, and accounts them righteous,* for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which was wrought out for them, and is imputed to them.

Ther. Two of your terms want some further explication. What do you understand by Christ's righteousness? And what is the meaning of imputed?

Asp. By Christ's *righteousness*, I understand the whole of his active and passive obedience; springing from the perfect holiness of his heart, continued through the whole progress of his life, and extending to the very last pang of his death.—By the word *imputed*, I would signify, that this righteousness, though performed by our Lord, is placed to our account; is reckoned or adjudged by God as our own. Insomuch, that we may plead it, and rely on it, for the pardon of our sins, for adoption into his family, and for the enjoyment of life eternal.—Shall I illustrate my meaning by a well-attested fact?

Ther. Nothing gives us so easy a conception of any difficult point, as this method of explaining by parallel facts, or proper similitudes.

Asp. I do not say the case is parallel.—I only produce it, to aid our conceptions.—Onesimus, you know, was Philemon's slave.† He had perfidiously deserted his master's service, and still more perfidiously stole his goods. The fugitive, in his guilty rambles, providentially meets with St. Paul. He is charmed and captivated with that gracious gospel, which proclaims mercy even for the vilest of sinners. He becomes a thorough convert to the religion of Jesus, and is received into the spiritual patronage of the apostle; who, learning his dishonest conduct and obnoxious state, undertakes to bring about a reconciliation with his offended master; dispatches him, for this purpose, with a letter to Philemon; and, amongst other persuasives, writes thus in the poor criminal's behalf: "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand; I will repay it." That which the zealous preacher of Christianity offered, the adored Author of Christianity executed.—We had revolted from the Lord of all lords, and broke his holy commandments. The Son of God, infinitely compassionate, vouchsafes to become our Mediator. That nothing might be wanting to render his mediation successful, he places himself in our stead. The punishment which we deserved, he endures: The obedience which we owed, he fulfils.—Both which, being imputed to us, and accepted for us, are the foundation of our pardon, are the procuring cause of our justification.

Ther. Is this the exact signification of the original word, which we translate *imputed?*

Asp. In the book of Numbers we meet with this phrase; and in such a connexion, as clears up its meaning. Jehovah enacts a decree concerning the Levites, who had no vintages to gather, nor any harvests to reap. He directs them to present the tenth part of their tithes, in the form of a heave-offering; adding, "and this your heave-offering" shall be reckoned* unto you, "as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the wine-press;" as satisfactory to me, and as beneficial to you, as if it was the tenth of your own labours, and the tithe of your own increase. So the expiatory sufferings which Christ endured, the complete obedience which he performed, are reckoned to true believers; and are altogether as effectual for obtaining their salvation, as if they were their own personal qualifications.

Ther. The imputation mentioned in your

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* Should any reader object to the definition, apprehending, that justification implies no more than the pardon of sins, I would desire him to suspend his judgment till he has perused Dialogue X. where this point is more circumstantially considered.

† See the Epistle to Philemon.

* Num. xviii. 27. ונחשב exactly answers to St. Paul's ἐλογισθη, Rom. iv. 9. The same phrase is used, and the same doctrine taught, Lev. xvii. 3, 4. Thus also saith the eternal Judge concerning the believers in Christ; "The righteousness of my Son is imputed to them: they are, in the eye of my justice, righteous; they shall be dealt with as righteous persons, and made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.

passage, is the imputation of something done by the Levites themselves, not of something done by another. This, I apprehend, is the true import of the word, when it occurs affirmatively in Scripture.

Asp. This is always the import,—should have been said, in order to make the objection forcible. But you could not so soon forget the instance just now alleged. St. Paul, speaking of the crimes which Onesimus had committed, and of the injuries which Philemon had sustained, says, "Charge them all on me; I will be responsible for the one and for the other, as much as if the whole guilt had been of my own contracting."—Here is supposed, not the imputation of something done by the apostle himself, but of another's criminal behaviour.

Under the law, Aaron is commanded to "put the iniquities of Israel upon the scapegoat," Lev. xv. 21.—The same sentiment is reinculcated, when the goat is said to "bear the iniquities of the poeple," Lev. xvi. 22. This was plainly an imputation, yet could not possibly be the imputation of any thing done by the devoted animal. The effects which took place upon the execution of this ordinance, indicate a translation of guilt: For the congregation was cleansed, but the goat polluted. The congregation so cleansed, that their iniquities were conveyed away, and to be found no more; the goat so polluted, that it communicated defilement to the person who conducted it into the land not inhabited. All this was God's own appointment, and designed, like the whole system of Mosaic ceremonies, to instruct his church in the knowledge of the great Mediator; in whose person and office that was done really, which elsewhere could be accomplished no otherwise than typically.

Ther. If this is your meaning, Aspasio, I am apt to think it will be a difficult matter to make me a proselyte. I must be content to pass for one of the stiff-necked generation, since I can see neither wisdom nor equity in ascribing to a person what he has not, or imputing to him what he does not.

Asp. It was not Aspasio, but his friend, who set out with a view of making proselytes. If I can maintain my ground, and vindicate my own belief, it will be no inconsiderable acquisition. However, I shall not despair of seeing the partner of my heart become a sharer of my faith. When we are convinced of our numberless sins, when we feel the depravity of our nature, and begin to discern the inconceivable sanctity of our Judge; then, perhaps, this exploded article may be found worthy of acceptance, its constitution admired as the wisdom of God, and its privilege coveted as the consolation of our souls.

Ther. I shall wave at present an examination of each particular, and only make some remote observations, which seem, nevertheless, pretty nearly to affect your scheme. Some persons, I dare be positive, have not so much as heard of your terms; many persons have no manner of acquaintance with your doctrine: Will you strike off all these from the list of Christians? will you condemn all these as desperate infidels?

Asp. Not heard of them! in a Protestant nation! where the gospel is publicly preached, and the Bible in every one's hand! This, if true, is much to be lamented.

In answer to your question:—It is not my custom, much less is it my prerogative, to condemn others. Has God committed all judgment unto me, that I should presume to anticipate the decisive sentence, or launch the thunderbolts of eternal vengeance? Neither do I affirm the condition of such persons to be desperate. There may be those who have no explicit knowledge of the doctrine, who are even prejudiced against the expressions, yet live under the belief of the truth, and in the exercise of the duty. "They are never diverted, by the splendour of any thing that is great, or by the conceit of any thing that is good in them, from looking upon themselves as sinful dust and ashes." Their whole dependence is upon that just One, who expired on the cross, and whom the heavens have received. They seek the sanctifying Spirit, in consequence of their Saviour's death, and give all diligence to "add to their faith virtue," (2 Pet. i. 5.)

Ther. If people may be safe, and their eternal interests secure, without any knowledge of these particularities, why should you offer to puzzle their heads about a few unnecessary scholastic terms?

Asp. Scriptural terms you should have said, Theron. However, we are not very solicitous as to the credit, or the use, of any particular set of phrases. Only let men be humbled as repenting criminals, at the Redeemer's feet; let them rely, as devoted pensioners, on his precious merits; and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blissful immortality. Yet will their way be less clear, and their steps more embarrassed, by not distinctly understanding the benign genius of the gospel. A proper information in this important point would shed light upon their paths, and encourage them in their journey; would further their progress in vital holiness, and increase their joy in the Lord.

Ther. The followers of your opinion, I have observed, are perpetually dwelling upon this one favourite topic, to the exclusion of that grand and truly essential part of Christianity—sanctification.

Asp. If you have ever taken notice of such a conduct, you are unquestionably right in withholding your approbation. It is a manifest incongruity, and deserves your cen-

sure. But, assure yourself, it proceeds from a misapprehension in the persons, and has no connexion with the nature of the doctrine.

I am far, very far, from reducing the various parts of Christianity (which when connected make up so well-proportioned a system) to this single, however, distinguished branch. Sanctification is equally necessary, both to our present peace and to our final felicity. Indeed they are as reciprocally necessary for the purposes of intellectual and eternal happiness, as the heart and the lungs are to the subsistence of the animal economy. The former must transmit, the latter must refine, the vital fluid; or else disease will take place, and death will ensue. My intention is, that those fundamental truths of the gospel, like these master organs of the body, may have each its proper office assigned; each concur to support the better health, and to promote the spiritual growth, of the Christian.

Ther. Other of your zealous folks I have known, who are all for the sanctifying influence of the Spirit, and reckon this affiance on the Saviour's merits among the beggarly elements of religion. They scarce ever mention what Christ has done for us, but insist wholly upon what he does in us. When the religious people are so divided among themselves,* how can a stranger act? which opinion shall he choose?

Asp. Which, Theron! Let him discard neither, but associate both. If the all-gracious Redeemer has poured out his blood on the cross, that my guilt may be expiated; and presents his intercession in heaven, that I may be endued with the Spirit; if he will be the meritorious cause of my justification, and the operative principle of my sanctification, why should I scruple to receive him, in either, in both capacities! Who would lop off the right-hand, in order to impart the higher dignity, or the greater importance to the left? I would be no partialist in Christianity; neither diminish her dowry, nor mutilate her privileges.

Ther. You seem, if not to mutilate, yet to split the merits of Christ, and parcel out the efficacy of his mediatorial undertaking; ascribing so much to his active, and so much to his passive righteousness; pardon to this, and life to that.

Asp. Some, perhaps, may be pleased with this way of stating the matter. But it is a method which I neither attempt to defend, nor wish to imitate. To distinguish between the active and passive righteousness, I think is not amiss; because this sets the fulness of our Lord's merit in the clearest light, and gives the completest honour to God's holy law. But to divide them into detached portions, independent on each other, seems to be fanciful, rather than judicious. For, had either part of the mediatorial obedience been wanting, I apprehend neither pardon, nor acceptance, nor any spiritual blessing, could have been vouchsafed to fallen man.

The two parts are inseparable; making, in their connexion, a necessary and noble whole for the accomplishment of our salvation; just as the light and the heat of yonder sun blend their operation, to produce this delightful day, and this fruitful weather. However, therefore, I may happen to express myself, I never consider them as acting in the exclusive sense; but would always have them understood as a grand and glorious aggregate; looking upon our Saviour's universal obedience, which commenced at his incarnation, was carried on through his life, and terminated in his death—looking upon all this, in its collective form, as the object of my faith, and the foundation of my hopes.*

Ther. I think, you lay too much stress upon this controverted, and perhaps merely speculative point.

Asp. Merely speculative! Say not thus, my dear friend. "How I may be justified before God, my Maker, my Governor, and my Judge," is an inquiry, of all others, the most interesting and important. It is the main hinge on which every instance of practical religion turns. True comfort, willing obedience, holy communion with the divine Majesty, all depend upon this capital point.

Far from being a merely speculative point, it ascribes the most undivided glory to the ever-blessed God and his free grace: It administers the most serene and substantial satisfactions to frail, but believing men. It cherishes, with the most kindly influence, that pure and undefiled religion, which has its seat in the heart, has its birth from love, and is a real antepast, both of the busi-

* Theron's inquiry concerning these two particulars is sometimes made an objection against all religion. But have those who adopt this objection never seen naturalists divided in their judgment, with relation to the design and use of several appearances in the material, the vegetable, the animal creation, while one decries as a nuisance what another admires as a beauty? Yet no one, I believe, ever took it into his head, from such a diversity of opinions, to doubt whether the frame of nature is a just, a regular, and a finished system; or to deny, that power, goodness, and wisdom, support, pervade, and direct the whole.

* In this opinion Aspasio has Milton's archangel for his precedent, Michael, speaking of his Lord and our Lord, says.

The law of God exact he shall fulfil
Both by obedience and by love: though love
Alone fulfil the law: thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death;
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption.—B. xii. l. 402.

According to the tenor of these very valuable lines, our Lord's fulfilling the law, and enduring the punishment, are the concurring causes, or the one compound cause of life and redemption to sinners.

ness and the bliss of saints in light. Can we, then, lay too much stress upon a doctrine so greatly momentous, upon a privilege so extensively beneficial?

Ther. When all this is proved, then for my reply, Aspasio. Nay, then you shall have more than a reply; I promise you my cordial assent.

Asp. And if all this be incapable of proof, I assure you, Theron, I will not solicit your assent. Nay more, I will revoke and renounce my own.

Ther. At present, I believe, we must go in, and prepare for our visitants. Some other interview will give us an opportunity to canvass this question more minutely.

Asp. Though I have never much inclination, even when there is the most leisure, for controversy, yet, if you insist upon it, I shall not absolutely refuse to engage in a debate with my Theron, because he will come to the amicable rencounter, without bringing angry passions for his second. My reasons will be impartially weighed, not artfully eluded, much less answered with invective. If some inadvertent expression should drop from my lips, he will not rigorously prosecute the slip; nor aggravate an unguarded sentence into the crime of heresy. Candour will form his judgment, and good nature dictate his expressions.

Ther. I thank you, my dear Aspasio, for your genteel admonition. What I am in the language of complaisance, means what I should be. Well; I shall endeavour to take your hint, and check this my impetuosity of spirit. I have admired, O that I could imitate! the beautiful example of St. Paul. When Festus, forgetting the dignity of the governor, and the politeness of the gentleman, uttered that indecent reflection, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad;" did the great preacher of Christianity kindle into resentment? The charge was unjust and abusive. But the apostle, with the most perfect command of himself, returned the softest, yet the most spirited answer imaginable. "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of truth and soberness."* Inexpressibly graceful was this calm and obliging reply. Though short, infinitely more convincing than a whole torrent of bitter or recriminating words. It disarmed the judge of his rising displeasure; it conciliated the favour of his royal assessor: and brought honour to the Christian cause.

This amiable self-regimen, and moderation of temper, I shall be sure to see exemplified in my friend's conversation, however I may fail of it myself, or be proof against all his arguments.

Asp. Ah! Theron, we want no monitor to remind us of our supposed excellencies. And if you begin with your compliments, it is time to put an end to our discourse.

Only let me just observe, that divine truths cannot be properly discerned but by the enlightening influences of the divine Spirit. We must address ourselves to this inquiry not only with unprejudiced minds, but likewise with praying hearts. We must bring to this dispute, not barely the quiver of logic, but that "unction from the Holy One which may teach us all things," (1 John ii. 20, 27.) Let us then adopt the poet's aspiration:

——————Thou celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse! *Milton*, B. iii. l. 51.

DIALOGUE III.

Ther. We are now, Aspasio, about two miles distant from my house. The horse-road lies through a narrow, dusty lane. The foot-path leads along a spacious pleasant meadow. Suppose we deliver our horses to the servant, and walk the remainder of the way?

Asp. You could not make a proposal more agreeable to my inclination; especially as the air is become cool, and the walk is so inviting.

What a magnificent and charming scene! hills on either side, gently rising, and widely spreading; their summits crowned with scattered villages, and clustering trees: their slops divided into a beauteous chequer-work; consisting partly of tillage, with its waving crops, partly of pasturage, with its grazing herds. Before us, the trefoil, the clover, and a variety of grassy plants, differently bladed, and differently branched, weave themselves into a carpet of living green. Can any of the manufactures formed in the looms, or extended in the palaces of Persia, vie with the covering of this ample area? vie with it, in grandeur of size, or delicacy of decoration?

What a profusion of the gayest flowers, fringing the banks, and embroidering the plain!

——————Nature here
Wantons, as in her prime, and plays at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous bliss!
Milton, B. v

* See Acts xxvi. 24, 25. where we have an apology, the most delicate, and most masterly, perhaps, that ever was made; eminent for fine address, clear reasoning, and important truth. Which, notwithstanding all these very superior recommendations, is deemed madness; and that by a nobleman from Rome; the seat of science, and fountain-head of polite literature. A proof this, no less demonstrative than deplorable, of the apostles assertion: The natural man, however ingenious or accomplished, "receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Nothing can be brighter than the lustre of those silver daisies, nothing deeper than the tinge of those golden crowfoots; yet both seem to acquire additional beauty, by succeeding to the deformity of winter, and flourishing amidst so much surrounding verdure.

Ther. Nature is truly in her prime. The vegetable tribes are putting on their richest attire. Those chesnuts, on our right hand, begin to rear their flowering pyramids; those willows, on our left, are tipt with tassels of grey; and yonder poplars, which overlook the river, and seem to command the meadows, are pointed with rolls of silver.

The hawthorn, in every hedge, is partly turged with silken gems, partly dissolved into a milk-white bloom: Not a straggling furze, nor a solitary thicket, but wears a rural nosegay. All is a delightful display of present fertility, and a joyous pledge of future plenty. Now we experience what the royal poet, in very delicate imagery, describes: "The winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs; and the vine, with the tender grapes, give a good smell;" (Cant. ii. 11, 12, 13.)

Asp. Your quotation and the scene remind me of a remark, which should have taken place in our last night's discourse. When we were enumerating the excellencies of the sacred writings, methinks we might have added,—Are you fond of pastoral, in all its flowery graces, and blooming honours? Never have we seen such exquisite touches of rural painting, or such sweet images of endeared affection, as in the "Song of songs, which is Solomon's." All the brilliant and amiable appearances in nature are employed, to delineate the tenderness of his heart, who is love itself; to portray the beauty of his person, who is the chiefest among ten thousand; and describe the happiness of those souls, whose "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ;" (I John i. 3.)

See, Theron, what the cheering warmth and the genial showers of spring have done! Such a change, so pleasing and so ennobling, the gospel of Christ introduces into the soul. Not a day, scarce an hour passes, but this season of universal fecundity produces something new. And is there any state, or any circumstance of life, on which the faith of Christ does not exert a similar efficacy, and bring forth fruit unto God?

This is supposed to be the spiritual meaning of that fine descriptive picture which you have borrowed from the Canticles. It displays the benign agency of grace and its doctrines, especially of our Lord's satisfaction for sin, and of his righteousness imputed to sinners. These operate with much the same favourable and happy energy, both on our morals and our comforts, as the sweet influences of the vernal sun operate on the sprouting herbs and opening flowers.

Ther. If such were the effects of your doctrine, it would stand the fairer chance for general acceptation. But there are several weighty scruples to be removed, before persons of a liberal and enlarged way of thinking can acquiesce in your opinion. Who, for instance, can persuade himself, that what you call the satisfaction of Christ is consistent with the dictates of reason, or with the perfections of the Deity?

Asp. Let gentlemen be candid in their inquiries, and truly liberal in their way of thinking; then, I flatter myself, these scruples may be removed without much difficulty.

God, the almighty Creator and supreme Governor of the world, having made man, gave him a law, with a penalty annexed in case of disobedience. This sacred law our forefather Adam presumptuously broke; and we, his posterity, were involved in his guilt. Or, should that point be controverted, we have undeniably made, by many personal transgressions, his apostacy our own; insomuch that all have sinned, have forfeited their happiness, and rendered themselves obnoxious to punishment.

Man being thus ruined, none could recover him, except his injured Maker. But shall he be recovered, shall he be restored, without suffering the punishment due to his crime, and threatened by his Creator? What then will become of the justice of the divine Lawgiver? and how shall the honour of his holy law be maintained? At this rate, who would reverence its authority, or fear to violate its precepts?

Sinners might be emboldened to multiply their transgressions, and tempted to think, that the God of immaculate holiness, the God of unchangeable veracity, is "altogether such an one as themselves."*

Does it not appear needful, that some expedient be devised, in order to prevent these dishonourable and horrid consequences?

Ther. Proceed to inform us what the expedient is.

Asp. To ascertain the dignity of the supreme administration, yet rescue mankind from utter destruction, this admirable purpose was formed, and in the fulness of time executed. The second person of the ever-blessed Trinity unites the human nature to the divine, submits himself to the

* This was actually the case, as we are informed by the Searcher of hearts, when, on a particular occasion, punishment was only retarded. How much more would such impious opinions have prevailed if on this grand act of disobedience, punishment had been entirely forborne? Psal. l. 21.

obligations of his people, and becomes responsible for all their guilt. In this capacity he performs a perfect obedience, and undergoes the sentence of death; makes a full expiation of their sins, and establishes their title to life. By which means the law is satisfied, justice is magnified, and the richest grace exercised. Man enjoys a great salvation, not to the discredit of any, but to the unspeakable glory of all, the divine attributes.

This is what we mean by Christ's satisfaction. And this, I should imagine, wants no recommendation to our unprejudiced reason; as I am sure it is most delightfully accommodated to our distressed condition. It is also confirmed by many express passages of Scripture, and illustrated by a variety of very significant images.

Ther. Pray, let me be favoured with some of your scriptural images. After which we may inquire, whether your doctrine will stand the test of reason.

Asp. What is your notion of a ransom? When Priam redeemed the dead body of Hector from the victorious Achilles, how was it done?

Ther. By paying a price. Thus Fabius recovered the captives which were taken by Hannibal. He transmitted the sum required, and they were discharged from their confinement.

Asp. Such is the redemption procured for sinners by our Lord Jesus Christ. Of such a nature, (though incomparably more grand and august in all its circumstances,) and expressed by the very same word, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for many."

Christ also paid a price, a real price, a most satisfactory price; in consideration of which, our freedom from every penal evil is granted. "Ye are redeemed,"* says the apostle, "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Let me add one text more, which, in the same style of commutative justice, asserts the same truth: "Christ has redeemed us,"† hath bought us off, "from the curse of the law," (Gal. iii. 13.) Yes, my friend,

> The ransom was paid down. The fund of heav'n,
> Heav'n's inexhaustible exhausted fund,
> Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
> All price beyond. Though curious to compute,
> Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum.
> *Night Thoughts, No.* IV.

* 1 Pet. i. 18. We have an equivalent expression, used in the same signification, by one of the correctest writers in the world,

Et fratrem Pollux alterna morte redemit.—Virg.

† Gal. iii. 13.—We are said to be bought, 1 Cor. vi. 20. not in a metaphorical sense, but really and properly, for here the price is mentioned, and by St. Peter the price is specified. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Ther. Hold a little, good Aspasio. Consider the consequence of what you maintain. If there was a ransom in the case, to whom was it paid? The devil had led sinners captive. They are said to be the slaves of Satan. And shall the blessed Jesus pay his life to that accursed fiend? Shocking to imagine! Yet, shocking as it is, it must follow from your own and your poet's assertion.

Asp. You misapprehend the case, Theron. The ransom was paid to God. "Thou hast redeemed us to God," (Rev. v. 9.) is the confession of the saints in light. Satisfaction was made to the divine law, and to the divine justice; the one of which was offended, the other violated, and both concurred to denounce the transgressor's doom; of which doom Satan was only the destined executioner, whose malignity, and implacable rage, God is pleased to make the instrument of inflicting his vengeance, as he formerly used the idolatrous kings of Assyria and Babylon to chastise the disobedient Israelites.

"When we were without strength," (Rom. v. 6.) utterly ruined, yet absolutely helpless; when none, in heaven or earth, could afford us any succour; then our Lord Jesus Christ most graciously and most seasonably interposed. He said, as it is very emphatically represented by Elihu, "Deliver them from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom," (Job. xxxiii. 24.) He did what is very beautifully described by our English classic:

> ——So man, as is most just,
> Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die;
> And dying rise, and rising with him raise
> His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.
> MILTON.

Ther. But pray, do not you allow that Christ is truly and properly God?

Asp. We not only allow it, but we insist upon it, and make our boast of it. This is the very foundation of his merit, and the support of our hope.

Ther. This may aggrandize the merit of Christ, but it will increase the difficulty of your task. For, according to this opinion, Christ must make satisfaction to himself. And is not this a practice quite unprecedented? a notion perfectly absurd?

Asp. It is quite unprecedented, you say. On this point I shall not vehemently contend. Only let me mention one instance. Zaleucus, you know, the prince of the Locrians, made a decree, that whoever was convicted of adultery, should be punished with the loss of both his eyes. Soon after this establishment, the legislator's own son was apprehended in the very fact, and brought to a public trial. How could the father acquit himself in so tender and delicate a conjuncture? Should he execute the

law in all its rigour, this would be worse than death to the unhappy youth: Should he pardon so notorious a delinquent, this would defeat the design of his salutary institution. To avoid both these inconveniences, he ordered one of his own eyes to be pulled out, and one of his son's, by which means the rights of justice were preserved inviolate, yet the tenderness of a parent was remarkably indulged: And may we not venture to say, that in this case, Zaleucus both received and made the satisfaction? received it as a magistrate, even while he made it as a father?

Ther. I cannot see, how this suffering of the father was in any degree satisfactory to the law, since the father and the son could not be considered as one and the same person. It may pass for an extraordinary instance of parental indulgence; it may strike the benevolent and compassionate hearer: but, if tried at the bar of equity and reason, it will hardly be admitted as any legal satisfaction, it will probably be condemned, as a breach of nature's first and fundamental law, self-preservation.

Asp. What you observe, Theron, I must confess has weight. It will oblige me to give up my illustration. Nevertheless, what you urge against the propriety of the comparison, tends to establish the certainty of the doctrine. For Christ and his people are actually considered as one and the same person. They are one mystical body; he the head, they the members; so intimately united to him, that they are "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh," (Eph. v. 30; Col. i. 20.) by virtue of which union, their sins were punished in him, "and by his stripes they are healed," (Isa. liii. 5,) they obtain impunity and life.

Though there may be nothing in the procedure of men which bears any resemblance to this miracle of heavenly goodness, it receives a sufficient confirmation from the language of Scripture. He who wrote as an amanuensis to the unerring Spirit has declared, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world,"—unto whom? unto some third party? No; but reconciling it by the death and obedience of Christ, "unto himself," (2 Cor. v. 19.) And I can very readily grant that this divine exertion of benignity and wisdom should be without a precedent, and without a parallel.*

Difficulties, I own, may attend the explication of this article, or be interwoven with its consequences. At the same time I must affirm, that our apprehensions of heavenly things are so obscure, and our ideas of the divine benevolence so scanty, that we may very possibly mistake, and fancy that to be absurd, which is only great, wonderful, and incomprehensible.*—Nor shall I be thought presumptuous in adding, that it will be impossible for all the sagacity in the world to prove this doctrine an absurdity, though it should ever remain an inexplicable mystery. How many phenomena in the constitution of external nature, are confessedly mysterious and inexplicable! They challenge, they command our assent; yet baffle all our researches, and defy our utmost penetration. If, then, we find this truth fully and incontestibly revealed in the Bible, we must renounce the philosopher before we can consistently act the sceptic.

Ther. Let us see, then, whether it be so fully and incontestibly revealed in the Bible. You have given me, as yet, but one of your scriptural images.

Asp. I have another at your service. Christ is called an High Priest. What do you take to be the nature of the priestly office?

Ther. The business of the priest was, I apprehend, to offer sacrifices, and to make intercession for the people.

Asp. Very true; and Christ could not, with any propriety, receive this appellation, if he had been defective in performing either of the sacerdotal functions. Now, that he offered no such victim as slain beasts, is universally acknowledged. We might presume therefore, even though we had not the authority of an apostle to assure us, that "he offered himself through the eternal spirit to God," (Heb. ix. 14.)

The cross, shall I say?† rather his divine nature, was the altar; his soul and body, each immaculately pure, were the holocaust.

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* Fancy, in the person of Horace, said of Jupiter and his fabulous exploits,

"Cui nihil viget simile aut secundum."

Much more will reason, in the character of a believer, say the same of Jehovah and his marvellous grace.

* Its unparalleled, nay, its incomprehensible nature, is no objection to its truth and reality. This is rather a circumstance which perfectly agrees with the testimony of the inspired writers, and affords, in my opinion, an unanswerable argument for the divine origin of Christianity.

It agrees with the testimony of the inspired writers, who called, not only God's wisdom, by way of supereminent distinction, but his wisdom in a mystery, even his hidden wisdom; which could not possibly have been conceived by any finite mind, however enlarged or sagacious. It affords an unanswerable argument for the divine origin of Christianity, since it was infinitely too deep for the contrivance of men, and absolutely undiscoverable by the penetration of angels; how could it be known, but by manifestation from above? Whence could it take its rise, but from an especial revelation.

† The cross is, by some authors, styled the altar, but, I think, improperly. This notion seems to have sprung from, or given rise to, the Popish practice of idolizing the crucifix. At least it countenances such a kind of foppish or sacrilegious devotion, more than a Protestant writer could wish. It was the property of the altar to sanctify the gift. This, therefore, when referred to our Lord's sacrifice, is a far more exalted office than we dare ascribe to the instrument of his suffering. This must be the honour and prerogative of his divine nature, which did indeed sanctify the great oblation; gave it a dignity, a merit, an efficacy, unspeakable and everlasting.

These he resigned, the one to deadly wounds, the other to inexpressible anguish, and both to be instead of all whole burnt-offerings. On this invaluable oblation, his intercession at the right hand of his Father is founded; from this it derives that prevailing efficacy, which is the security of his standing, and the recovery of his fallen disciples.

Give me leave to ask farther, what is your idea of a sacrifice? When Iphigenia was slain at the altar, what was the import of that memorable action?

Ther. It was intended, if we may credit Virgil's account,* to appease the indignation of the superior powers, and to obtain a propitious gale for the windbound fleet and confederate forces of Greece. But I hope you would not make that solemn butchery of the royal virgin, a pattern for the supreme goodness; nor the practice of gross idolaters, a model for the religion of the holy Jesus.

Asp. By no means, Theron. Only I would observe, that the custom of offering sacrifices obtained among the most cultivated nations of the heathen world; that these sacrifices were frequently of the vicarious kind, in which the victim was substituted instead of the offerer, and the former being cut off, the latter was discharged from punishment; consequently that the classic authors would (in case there was any need of such auxiliaries) join with the sacred writers to declare the expediency, and explain the nature of sacrifices. This also you will permit me to add, that if the heathens talk sensibly on any part of religious worship, it is on the subject of sacrifices. Their sentiments concerning expiatory oblations seem to be the faint and distant echo of revelation; and I have usually considered them not as the institutions of mere reason, but as the remains of some broken tradition.

However, the truest and most authentic signification of a sacrifice, is to be learned from the Jewish ritual, explained by the gospel comment. Do you remember the Mosaic account of that ordinance.

Ther. You are much better acquainted, Aspasio, with those sacred antiquities, and can give the most satisfactory information with regard to this particular. Only let me remind you, that alms are styled offerings; and praises, both in the prophetical and evangelical writings, come under the denomination of sacrifices.

Asp. Though praises and alms are styled sacrifices, they are not of the propitiatory, but eucharistic kind. They are never said to expiate transgressions, only are represented as acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, that divinely precious victim, whose merits both cancel our guilt, and commend our services! According to——

Ther. Stay a moment, Aspasio. Let me recollect myself. This may be the meaning of sacrifices, as ordained by Moses, and solemnized among the Jews. "Sacrifices were a symbolical address to God; intended to express before him the devotion, affections, dispositions, and desires of the heart, by significative and emblematical actions." Or thus; "The priest made atonement for sin, by sacrificing a beast, only as that was a sign and testimony of the sacrificer's pure and upright heart."

Asp. Sacrifices, I acknowledge, were a symbolical address to God. But would you confine their efficacy only to the death of the animal, and the purity of the offerer? No, Theron: they always had a reference to the great sacrifice, ordained in the eternal counsels of Jehovah; prepared when the co-eternal Son was made flesh, offered when the blessed Jesus surrendered himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. They were so far from being independent of this divine oblation, that they acted in perpetual subserviency to it, and derived all their virtue from it. They were the shadow, but the body was Christ.

"They expressed," you say, "the devotion, affections, dispositions, and desires of the heart." But I rather think they expressed the guilt and the faith of the offerer. His guilt: for this seems to be intimated by the very names of the propitiatory sacrifices; the sin and the sacrifice, the offending action and the expiatory rite, being signified by one and the same word.* It is somewhat more than intimated, by the occasion of the offering, and the state of the offerer; since it was only on account of guilt contracted, that piacular oblations were made, and only from a guilty person that they were required. His faith, or firm belief that ceremonial guilt, which shut him out from the communion of the visible church, and subjected him to the infliction of temporal punishments, was removed by these; but that moral guilt, which defiles the soul, and excludes from heaven, should be purged by some better sacrifice than these.† In the exercise of this faith, Abel offered up a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; and without this faith exercised in some degree, it was impossible to please God.

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* Sanguine placasti ventos, et virgine caesa

* חטאת denotes a sin, and sin-offering, Lev. iv. 3, 24. אשם signifies the trespass, and the trespass-offering, Lev. v. 15, 19.

† They "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh," Heb. ix. 13. "but could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, Heb. ix. 9.

If sacrifices were intended to bespeak integrity of heart, methinks the state of innocence had been the properest period for their institution and oblation. But we never hear of this awful ceremony till man is fallen, and sin committed. If intended to denote purity of heart, why should they be particularly enjoined on that solemn day when confession was made of all the sins of the whole congregation? (Lev. xvi. 21.) An oddly concerted device this! in which the tongue must contradict what the ceremony would recognise. Or, how could it be proper, after the violation of some law, or the neglect of some ordinance, immediately to go and offer a sacrifice? What would be the language of such a practice? "I have done wickedly, but my heart is pure and upright." Is this consistent with the spirit of humility, of modesty, or of common ingenuity? Is this the way of giving glory to God, or of taking shame to ourselves? Whereas, let the sacrifice be a typical expiation, and this is the significancy of the action, "Lord, I confess myself guilty. Punishment and death are my due. Let them fall, I beseech thee, on my victim; that thy justice being glorified, and thy law satisfied, thy mercy may be honourably displayed in my forgiveness.

Besides, Theron, what likeness, what agreement is there between the profession of integrity and an animal mortally wounded, wallowing in its own blood, and struggling in the agonies of death? Whereas, between these dying pangs and the punishment due to sin, or the sorrows sustained by the crucified Saviour, there is an apparent, a striking, and in various respects an edifying resemblance.

Ther. They declared, perhaps, the sacrificer's readiness and resolution to slay the brute in himself, and to lay down his life in adherence to God.

Asp. I do not remember any assertion of this kind in the Bible, or any hint to countenance such an interpretation. It seems, in some cases, to be incompatible with the very nature of things, and contrary to the express declarations of Scripture. Doves, you know, lambs and sheep, were offered in sacrifice. But shall we slay the lamb, the dove, the sheep in ourselves? So far from it, that Christ's disciples are either described by these creatures, or commanded to imitate their properties. "Be ye harmless as doves," (Matth. x. 16.) "Peter, feed my lambs," (John xxi. 15.) "My sheep hear my voice." (John x. 27.)

Supposing, however, that this might be a subordinate design, or a valuable improvement of the sacrificial acts, yet their primary intention, and ultimate end, were widely different; were much more significant of the divine compassions, and much better adapted to the comfort of mankind. They were an awful indication, that death was the wages of sin; at the same time a cheering declaration, that God was pleased to accept the death of the animal instead of the sinner's; a figurative representation* also of that illustrious Person, who was to bear the sin of many, and pour out his soul for transgressors.

Ther. Since sacrifices were of a religious nature, they should not only be instructive and beneficial in their tendency, but have their due effects with regard to God, to sin, and to the person who brought them.

Asp. They had their effects with regard to God, that his justice might be magnified and his anger appeased—to sin, that its demerit might be displayed, yet its guilt be done away—to the person who brought them, that he might obtain pardon, be exempted from punishment, and exercise his faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ther. There are so many sorts of sacrifice appointed in the Jewish rubric, that I am at a loss for a distinct idea, unless some one be singled out and separately considered.

Asp. Among all the sacrifices instituted by Moses, none more circumstantially typified the blessed Jesus, or more appositely expressed the benefits of his oblation, than the paschal lamb, and the sin-offering, on the day of atonement.

An expositor, who cannot be mistaken, has given us this interpretation of the paschal lamb: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;"† declaring hereby, that Christ is a real sacrifice; that he was prefigured, in this capacity, by the paschal lamb; that the circumstances which distinguished it, met in him; and the advantages which resulted from it, were procured by him: those, in their truest import—these, in their largest extent. The words of the apostle speak

* What says Milton upon this subject of sacrifices, and with reference to their principal design? He calls them

> ———Religious rites
> Of sacrifice; informing men by types
> And shadows, of that destined seed to bruise
> The serpent, by what means he shall achieve
> Mankind's deliverance.—B. 12. l. 231.

† 1 Cor. v. 7. Would any one venture to say, Paul our passover is sacrificed for us? Yet this, I think, may be, or rather is in effect said, by the account which some persons give of Christ's satisfaction. The very thought of such a blasphemous absurdity is too painful and offensive for the serious Christian to dwell upon. I would therefore divert his attention to a more pleasing object. Let him observe the exquisite skill, which here and everywhere conducts the zeal of our inspired writer.—The odes of Pindar are celebrated for their fine transitions, which, though bold and surprising, are perfectly natural. We have in this place a very masterly stroke of the same beautiful kind. The apostle, speaking of the incestuous criminal, passes, by a most artful digression, to this darling topic, a crucified Saviour. Who would have expected it on such an occasion? Yet, when thus admitted, who does not see and admire both the propriety of the subject, and the delicacy of its induction?

this sense to the plainest, simplest reader. Whereas, to extort any other signification from them, what subtilty of wit, and what refinement, or rather violence of criticism, must be used!

The paschal lamb was without blemish. Such was the lamb of God; free from all taint of original sin, and from every spot of actual transgression.—A lamb of the first year, in all the sprightliness and floridity of youth. Christ also laid down his life, not when worn with age, or debilitated with sickness; but in the very prime of his days; amidst all the bloom of health, and all the vigour of manhood.—The lamb was to be slain in such a manner as might occasion the most copious effusion of its blood. And was not this very exactly fulfilled in our suffering Saviour? His blood flowed out in vast abundance, by the amazing sweat in the garden; by the rending lashes of the scourge; by the lacerating points of the thorns; by the dreadful nails which cleft his hands and his feet; by the deadly spear which ripped open his side, and cut its way to his heart.—Though the blood was to be so liberally spilt, a bone of the lamb was not to be broken. And you cannot but recollect, you cannot but admire, the wonderful interposition of Providence, to accomplish this emblematical prediction. When the soldiers had received a command to break the legs of the three crucified persons; when they had actually broke the legs of each malefactor, which hung on the right side of our Lord and on the left; their minds were over-ruled (by a divine influence, no doubt) to spare the blessed Jesus, and to leave all his bones unhurt, untouched.

The lamb was to be killed before the whole assembly; in the presence, either of the whole congregation of Israel, or else of that particular society which concurred in eating the flesh. And did not the whole multitude of the Jews conspire against our Redeemer to put him to death? Did they not all cry out, as with one voice, *Crucify him! Crucify him!* Was he not executed at one of their grand festivals, and in the sight of the whole assembled nation?—The blood was not to be poured heedlessly upon the ground, but received carefully into a bason, and sprinkled, with the utmost punctuality, upon the door-posts. In like manner, the blood of the heavenly Lamb is not to be trampled under foot by a contemptuous disregard. It is the treasure of the church, and the medicine of life; to be received, therefore, by an humble faith, and devoutly applied to our consciences.—The sprinkling of that blood secured every Israelitish family from the destroying angel's sword. So the merits of the slaughtered Saviour* screen every believing sinner from the stroke of offended justice, and from the pains of eternal death.—What must have become of the Israelite, who, trusting to the uprightness of his heart, should neglect to make use of this divinely-appointed safeguard? He must inevitably have been punished with the death of his first-born. Equally certain, but infinitely more dreadful, will be his condemnation, who, before the omniscient Judge, shall presume to plead his own integrity, or confide in his own repentance, and reject the atonement of the dying Jesus.

Ther. Now, if you please, for the sin offering,* which seems to have been the most eminent sacrifice of them all.

Asp. It was the most comprehensive, because it shadowed forth not only the death of Christ, but his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven. As the various actions of some illustrious personage, which cannot be exhibited by the painter in a single draught, are displayed in several compartments, yet all constitute one and the same grand historical picture; so, these glorious events, incapable of being represented by any single animal, were typified by two kids of the goats, which nevertheless were reputed but as one offering.†

These goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and there presented before the Lord. Christ also presented himself before God, when "he went up to Jerusa-

* Both St. Peter and St. Paul speak of the blood of sprinkling, 1 Pet. i. 2; Heb. xii. 24.; intimating, by this remarkable form of speech, that the death of Christ will be of no advantage to the sinner, unless it be applied to his heart; as the blood of the paschal lamb was no protection to an Israelite, till it had tinged the posts of his door. Isaiah, using the same phrase, and alluding to the same custom, says of our Lord Jesus Christ, "he shall sprinkle many nations," lii. 15. Not only initiate them into his church by baptism; but also, by the application of his blood shall cleanse them from their guilt, and deliver them from the wrath to come.

* For the circumstances relating to the sin-offering the reader will consult Lev. xvi. For those which concern the paschal lamb, he will have recourse to Exod. xii.

† How runs the divine command? "He (the high priest) shall take of the congregation two kids of the goats for a sin-offering," Lev. xvi. 5. Are not these two kids styled, in the singular number and collective sense, an offering? That we might not mistake, God is pleased to add, "and one ram for a burnt-offering." Here he names one, to prevent a misapprehension of his meaning, when he had before said two. To render his meaning still more apparent, and that we may regard this goat as joined in the same offering with the other, the Lord, contrary to his own rule in all other cases, orders the high priest to lay his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, not upon the head of the goat devoted to death. He divides the necessary circumstances of a sacrifice between them both, to intimate, in the clearest manner, that neither the one nor the other separate, but both taken together, were the one sacrificial oblation, appointed for this distinguished solemnity.

If this be true, I think the passage is a pretty considerable proof, that atonement was made by suffering vicarious punishment; notwithstanding what has been urged against it, from the tenth verse of the chapter. Should we require human authority for the support of this interpretation, one of the greatest human authorities may be seen in the celebrated Witsius; "Uterque hircus pertinebat ad unum sacrificium pro peccato, hostiæ unius loco. Uterque erat pecus piacularis, vicaria Israeli peccatori, ejusque peccatum ferens." *De Oecon.* lib. iv. cap. 6.

lem, that all things written by the prophets concerning him might be accomplished," (Luke xviii. 31.) The goat on which the Lord's lot fell, was devoted to death. "Christ also being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," (Acts ii. 23.) "was crucified and slain." The body was burnt without the camp, which pointed at the very place, and pictured out the very nature of our Lord's sufferings: "For he suffered without the gate," (Heb. xiii. 12.) was there exposed to the rage of men and the wrath of God, under the most exquisite pains of body, and the most insupportable agonies of soul; all significantly typified by the flame of a devouring fire, than which nothing is more fierce, more penetrating, or more severely tormenting.

As the animal which was slaughtered showed forth the Redeemer dying for our sins, that which escaped prefigured the same Saviour rising again for our justification. The high priest put his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, and with great solemnity confessed the sins of the whole congregation. The import of this ceremony is expressly declared in the sacred canon: "The goat shall bear upon him their iniquity."* It is charmingly explained by the prophet, "The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all," (Isa. liii. 6.) and most delightfully confirmed by the apostle, "He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree," (1 Pet. ii. 24.)

This done, the goat was dismissed into a land not inhabited, a place separated from all resort of men, where he was never likely to be found any more; to teach us, that our offences, having been expiated by the bleeding Jesus, are entirely done away, shall never rise up in judgment against us, but according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, "When the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found," (Jer. l. 20.) It is further enjoined, "that Aaron shall confess all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins." Iniquities, transgressions, sins are particularized; and to this cluster of expressions, the word *all* is added, to inform us, that the least sins need the atonement of Christ's death; to assure us, that the greatest sins are not beyond the compass of its efficacy; and that all sins, be they ever so heinous, or ever so numerous, are forgiven to the true believer.

The high-priest carried the blood of the victim into the second tabernacle, even within the veil. So Christ entered with his own blood, not into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself. The blood was sprinkled before the mercy-seat, and left in the holy of holies, that it might always remain before the Lord. And does not Christ always appear in the presence of God for us? does he not ever live to make intercession for us? to plead his all-sufficient propitiation in our behalf; that the benefits procured thereby may be communicated, ratified, and perpetuated to his people?

Ther. These benefits, Aspasio, are ascribed, in Scripture, to repentance and reformation of life, qualifications of our own; not to any such cause as a vicarious sacrifice, where the merit must necessarily subsist in another. What says the apostle Peter when he had just received his instructions from the Holy Ghost? "Repent and be converted;" not look unto an atonement, or depend upon a propitiation; "that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts iii. 19.)

Asp. It is true, the benefits of the new covenant are promised to penitents, as their happy portion; but never assigned to their repentance, as the procuring cause: never to their repentance, but to the blood of the great High Priest, called, therefore "the blood of the everlasting covenant," (Heb. xiii. 20.) being the condition stipulated in it, required by it, and in consequence of which all its unspeakable privileges are bestowed.

Besides, the qualifications you suppose are the gift of the Lord. We are not able to exercise them till Christ, who is exalted for this very purpose, gives repentance. (Acts v. 31.) A conversion to God, and a newness of life, are not the effect of human abilities, but the work of the divine Spirit, and the fruit of the Redeemer's death. Indeed, this death is the purchase of every heavenly blessing. This opens the heaven of heavens, and all its inexhaustible stores. By this we have the enjoyment of grace, and by this the hope of glory.

Ther. You begin to be in raptures, Aspasio!

Asp. Excuse me, Theron. It is not easy to repress the sallies of delight and devotion, when we muse upon such amazing loving-kindness, and are touched with a sense of such immensely rich benefits. A great High Priest! who is "higher than the heavens," (Heb. vii. 26,) yet humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross! who is "consecrated for evermore." (Heb. vii. 28,) and pleads all his merit, improves all his influence, for our consummate felicity!

† It is observable, that whereas the scape-goat is said to bear (נשא) the sins of Israel, Lev. xvi. 22; the very same phrase is applied to Christ, Isa. liii. 12.

"What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these?
Such contemplations mount us, and should mount

The mind still higher; nor ever glance on man
Unraptured uninflamed." *Night Thoughts*, No. iv.

But I check myself; and will either reply to your objections, or listen to your sentiments; listen as attentively as you yourself attend to the music of that shrill-tongued thrush.

Ther. Its sweetly-modulated lays, eminent even in the symphony of spring, have indeed attracted my ears. But my mind is disengaged and free for your conversation.

Asp. I can repeat a song, sweeter far than this, or all the melody of the woodland choirs.—A song, which has harmony enough to make the brow of melancholy wear a smile, or to sooth away the sorrows of death itself: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) According to my friend's principles, the strain of this triumphant exclamation was ill-judged, and should have run in the following manner: "Who shall lay any thing to our charge? We have endeavoured to preserve a rectitude of disposition, and to persist in a laudable course of action. Wherever we failed, we have been sorry for the fault, and have implored pardon from the divine majesty. What then shall dismay us, or who shall condemn us?" Your topics of consolation would be complete, without having recourse to the death of Christ as an atonement for sin; or, to the resurrection of Christ, as an evidence that the atonement is accepted; or to the intercession of Christ, as the cause of our interest in that transcendent blessing.

Ther. Since you so frequently mention, and so earnestly insist upon atonement, I should be glad to know the precise signification of the word. I am told, the original phrase has nothing to do with the idea of making satisfaction.

Asp. We may learn the precise signification of atonement, by considering the means, the effect, and the manner, whereby the means accomplish the effect. The effect of atonement is pardon. The means of obtaining it are the death of Christ. The way or manner whereby the death of Christ becomes efficacious for this blessed purpose, is the sovereign appointment of his Father, the infinite dignity of his person, and especially the vicarious nature of his sufferings, or their being undergone in the stead of sinners.

Ther. It has been supposed, and is affirmed too, that our Saviour's obedience and death were conducive to our redemption, only in virtue of his Father's will and appointment.

Asp. I am glad it is some other, and not my Theron, who espouses this opinion, which is highly injurious to the dignity of our Redeemer's person, and to the merit of his obedience. Neither is it very honourable to the wisdom of the Father, unless we suppose him therefore to have appointed the death of Christ, because he knew it was fully sufficient for the glorious purpose.

And why should we use that weak inadequate expression, conducive to our redemption? Would any one say, of Solomon's elegant and sumptuous temple, that it was conducive to the accomplishment of what Moses foretold? (Exod. xv. 17.) David's provision of stones, of timber, and of gold, was, if you please, conducive to it. But Solomon's act was perfective of it, was the very execution of the thing itself. Such are the obedience and death of Christ, with respect to our redemption.

Ther. But we forget the original word, and neglect to inquire into its genuine import.

Asp. The word, which we translate *atonement*, implies, in its primary acceptation, the notion of covering. Thus the ark was covered,* "was overlaid with pitch, within and without," that all its chinks might be secured against the insinuating attempts of the water, and all its timber defended from the injuries of the liquid element. When an object, in this or any other manner, is covered over for safety; the covering receives every shock, and sustains all damages, which would otherwise fall upon the thing covered. The image, therefore, is very pertinently used to express the true evangelical nature of atonement; and the word is used, with equal propriety, to describe the mercy-seat,† which was a costly covering for the ark, made of pure gold, and exactly commensurate to that sacred repository. In this were lodged the tables of the law; whose precepts we have violated, and to whose curse we were subject. Consequently the mercy-seat, both by its situation, its extent, and its office, prefigured the Redeemer; who interposes between the law and the offender; fulfils the commands, and sustains the curse of the former; merits pardon, and procures salvation for the latter.

As some fine flower, having entertained our eye with one beautiful colour, suddenly breaks, or gradually softens into another, and gives us a renewed pleasure; such, methinks, is the nature of this delightful

* כפרת Thou shalt "besmear, cover, or overlay," Gen. vi. 14. This is the first place in which our word occurs. It is supposed to give us the genuine and native sense of the phrase. Perhaps the English expression "cover," may be derived from the participle כפר "copher."

† כפרת Exod. xxv. 17.

word. It is expressive of the hoar-frost,* which, in a serene but sharp wintry morning, covers the houses, covers the trees, covers the whole face of nature. So the blood of Jesus, according to the Psalmist's representation, covers all our guilt, and hides every offence. (Psalm xxxii. 1.) Insomuch that, when this blood is applied by the divine Spirit, the Lord "sees no iniquity in Jacob." (Num. xxiii. 21.) He acts, as if he saw none; neither punishes the guilty, nor abhors the polluted sinner.

The same expression is used with reference to a covenant, and signifies the abolition of the contract;† which was done by cancelling the deed, or expunging the articles of stipulation. By the covenant of works, all mankind became obnoxious to condemnation, were bound over to death. By the grace of Christ our obligation to punishment is disannulled, and the handwriting of condemnation is blotted out. Should you ask, how this is effected? By paying a ransom, and offering a sacrifice. Should you farther inquire, of what this ransom and this sacrifice consisted? Of nothing less than the precious blood,‡ the inestimable life,§ the divinely-magnificent person of Christ.‖

Ther. These then are the capital ideas included in the original word—a covering by way of defence, and a covering by way of concealment.

Asp. They are, Theron.—As the brain, in the animal body, is the source of sensation, sends out various detachments of nerves to animate and actuate all the parts of the vital system; so these two capital ideas branch themselves into a variety of subordinate, yet similar significations, which run through the whole economy of the gospel, to enliven and quicken the spirit of a believer. Let me instance in a few particulars. This richly-significant word denotes—the exercise of divine mercy, (Deut. xxxii. 43,) the pardon of sin, (Deut. xxi. 8; 2 Chron. xxx. 18,) a cleansing from guilt, (Numb. xxxv. 33,) purging from transgression, (Psalm lxv. 3,) reconciliation for iniquity, (Dan. ix. 24,) the pacifying of wrath, (Ezek. xvi. 63.) Do not these passages (which are expressed by some branch of the verb that conveys to us the idea of atoning) plainly intimate, that the atonement of Christ is the meritorious cause of all these desirable effects? is the foundation of every act of divine goodness; and the origin of every blessing vouchsafed to sinners?

Ther. After all, this is the consideration which principally offends and perplexes me: God is a spirit, an absolutely perfect and infinitely pure being; remote, inconceivably remote, from whatever is gross or corporeal. How then can he take pleasure in the effusion of blood, or the burning of flesh? How can any such low carnal inducements make him merciful to sinners, or appease what you call his wrath.

Asp. Rather, what the Scriptures call his wrath. You mistake our doctrine, my dear Theron. We never maintain that any sacrifice whatever, not even the propitiation of Christ's death, was intended to make God merciful; only to make way for his eternal purposes of mercy, without any prejudice either to the demands of his law or the rights of his justice. Our sentiments on this head are exactly consonant to his own declaration, and his own procedure, in the case of Job's friends; (see Job xlii. 7, 8.) Though displeased with their conduct, he was merciful to their persons; nevertheless, he would not exercise that mercy till they had first offered a sacrifice, and acted faith in a dying Saviour.

Neither is it ever supposed, that the infinitely wise and pure God can take pleasure in the effusion of blood, or the burning of flesh, simply considered; only as they had a reference to that noble and inestimable sacrifice, which brings the highest honour to his name, which those slaughtered animals exhibit in a figure, and to which every true Israelite had a believing regard.

I say, had a believing regard. For it is affirmed by the author of the Hebrews, that the gospel was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, (Heb. iv. 2.) What does he mean by the gospel? The very essence of this benevolent scheme, according to the apostle's own definition, is, that "Christ died for our sins," (1 Cor. xv. 3.) How was this gospel preached to our fathers in the wilderness? By significant emblems; especially by slaughtered animals, and bleeding victims, by which Christ was almost continually, though not so evidently as in these latter times, "set forth crucified for sinners." (Gal. iii. 1.)

In this sense alone, those carnal usages were worthy the wisdom of God to appoint, and the majesty of God to accept. This

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* כְּפוֹר Psal. cxlvii. 16. The idea deduced from hoar-frost, is not so exact and striking, in our northern clime, as in the more southern regions. There, the exhalations and dews being more copious, the hoar-frost must fall thicker, lie deeper, and more fully correspond with the notion of covering.

† Isa. xxviii. 18. כֻּפַּר abolebitur. "Proprie sonat, oblinetur, obliterabiter, est enim. בָּפַר Hebræis proprie quid obducere, atque inde (cum obducta et oblita dispareant) delere, abolere." Thus, I apprehend, the words should be pointed.

‡ "Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood," Heb. ix. 12.

§ "The son of man came to give his life a ransom for many," Mark x. 45.

‖ "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God," Heb. ix. 14.

gave them a peculiar dignity and importance, and set them far above all the similar observances used in the heathen worship. They were also, when thus explained, thus improved, extremely profitable to believers; as they directed their contemplation to the future sufferings of a Saviour, and ratified to their faith the benefits of his ever-operating sacrifice; which, we were assured by an infallible voice, was effectual "for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant."*

Ther. So you apprehend, that in those usages practised by the ancient Jews, the gospel was emblematically preached, and Christ in a figure exhibited?

Asp. Most certainly, Theron. And for this cause, under the law, almost all things were purged with blood, (Heb. ix. 22.) The multiplicity, the variety, the constancy of their sacrifices, were all designed to impress upon their minds, and familiarize to their thoughts, this great evangelical truth. Was any one overtaken by a fault? He must present a victim, and the priest must slay it, by way of trespass-offering; to signify, that the guilt which was contracted could be done away only by the atoning death of Christ. Had any one received a signal blessing? A beast was slain by way of peace-offering; as a public expression of gratitude for the mercy, and also as an emphatical declaration, that all good vouchsafed to fallen man is owing to the Redeemer's ransom. Was any one to be invested with the priestly office, or admitted to minister in the sanctuary? A ram or a bullock must bleed, by way of atonement, and for the purpose of consecrating, (Lev. viii. 22. Numb. viii. 12.) in order to testify, that no man can officiate with acceptance in the worship of God; that no service, though of a religious kind, can be pleasing in his sight, till the former is interested in the merits, unless the latter is recommended by the death of the great High Priest.

And not only by their solemn sacrificial acts, but even by their ordinary meals, this grand lesson was inculcated. They were forbidden to eat the blood, in order to awaken and preserve in their consciences a reverential and fiducial regard to the precious blood of Christ. The Holy Ghost assigning a reason for this sacred prohibition, says expressly, "Because the blood maketh an atonement for your souls," (Lev. xvii. 11.) the blood of beasts typically, the blood of Christ effectually. O that Christians would, in this particular, learn of Jews; learn, at least, from Jewish ordinances, to have their attention incessantly fixed on that divine High Priest, who, by one offering, hath perfected for ever,—not barely conduced or contributed to the work, but hath fully accomplished it, and obtained complete remission for—them that are sanctified, (Heb. x. 14.)

Ther. Some offerings were made without any effusion of blood. What could those mean? Or how could they typify the sacrifice of Christ?

Asp. Perhaps the apostle might foresee such an objection when he used that guarded expression, *almost* all things were purged with blood. If, in these cases, there was no effusion of blood, yet there was a destruction of the substance. The meat-offerings were consumed by fire; which is much the same to inanimate things, as shedding of the blood is to living creatures. The same effect is ascribed to these oblations, as to those of the sanguinary kind. It is expressly declared of the poor man's trespass-offering, which consisted of fine flour, and was burnt upon the altar, "It shall make an atonement for him," (Lev. v. 11, 12, 13.) So that here also was what we may truly call a visible prediction of Christ. The offerings which flamed, as well as the victims which bled, showed forth our dying Lord: whose one "oblation of himself once offered," comprized all the qualities, and realized the whole efficacy represented by every other sacrifice.

Ther. Another odd circumstance has often given me disgust, and been apt to prejudice me against the institutions of the Old Testament. Many of them appear mean, contemptible, and perfectly puerile. "Can these," I have said within myself, "be ordained by a God of infinite wisdom, and transcendent glory? Can we reasonably imagine, that a mandate should be issued from the court of heaven, on purpose to forbid the boiling, and enjoin the roasting of some particular piece of meat? (Exod. xii. 9.)

* Heb. ix. 15. When I reflect on these words, I wonder how any one can assert, that all the Jews died under the curse of the law. Died under the curse of the law! even though the apostle has warranted it for a truth, that "all these" (meaning Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, &c.) "died in faith," Heb. xi. 13. Even though he has elswhere laid it down as a maxim, "so then they which are of faith," (in whatever period of time they live, or under whatever dispensation of religion they worship,) "are blessed with faithful Abraham." Gal. iii. 9. Even though the Psalmist in one place affirms "blessed are they whose unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose sin is covered;" and, in another place, declares concerning himself and his pious cotemporaries, "look how wide the east is from the west! So far hath he set our sins from us." Psalm xxxii. 1. Psalm ciii. 12.

From these and many other texts, I think it is evident, that the faithful Jews no more died under the curse of the law, than the faithful Christians. The death of Christ procured the pardon and acceptance of believers, even before he came in the flesh. From the beginning, he had covenanted with the Father, as their Mediator; and God, to whom all things are present, saw the certain accomplishment of his undertaking. He was therefore, by virtue of the divine decree, and in point of saving efficacy, "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Though he laid down his life in the reign of Tiberius, he was a real Redeemer in all ages.

Will the Great Ruler of the skies concern himself about the precise manner of killing one bird, and releasing another? (Lev. xiv. 4, 5, 6, 7.) Will he who claims the worship of the heart, have such an especial regard to a drop or two of despicable blood, put upon the tip of the right ear, or the thumb of the right hand? (Exod. xxix. 20.) Surely, such childish ceremonies are too minute and trivial for the notice, much more for the solemn appointment, of the supreme Majesty!"

Asp. You will please to remember, that when those ceremonies were ordained, it was the infancy,* at least the minority of the church. If we advert to this circumstance, we shall have reason to admire both the all-comprehending wisdom, and the no less condescending goodness, of Jehovah. His all-comprehending wisdom, in conforming so accurately and so minutely the type to the event, though the former was established long, long before the latter existed. Many ages before the Desire of Nations appeared, his picture was drawn, was presented to public view, and is now found to correspond in every feature with the illustrious original. What hand could be equal to such a task, but only the hand of an omniscient limner? His condescending goodness, in adapting the tenor of his revelation to the state of his people; "speaking unto them even as unto babes." (1 Cor. iii. 1.) not by naked precepts, or abstracted truths, but by earthly similitudes,† and (if I may so express myself) by embodied instructions, such as were level to their low capacities, and calculated to affect their dull apprehensions.

The institutions to which you hint were undoubtedly mean and trifling, if considered in themselves. Accordingly, their wise and majestic author cautions his people against such erroneous and unworthy notions. "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices," (Jer. vii. 22.) "It was not my design that they should acquiesce in the shadow, and neglect the substance. I never intended that they should rest in the porch, but pass through these ordinances to much sublimer things. Christ and spiritual blessings were principally in my view; to which all the Mosaical usages were relative, subservient, and one continual manuduction." Considered in this light, as bearing a reference to the ever-blessed Mediator, as emblems of his person and pledges of his grace, they acquire a real magnificence, and convey the most salutary lessons.

The blood put upon the tip of the ear, and thumb of the hand, denotes our personal application of the death of Christ; without which all its virtue, though boundless and inconceivable, will profit us nothing. Those particular parts of the body may signify the perceptive and executive faculties; in both which we offend, and for both which we need the great propitiation. Of the two birds you mention, one was to be killed, the other was to fly away, after it had been dipped in the blood of its fellow. Thus the Lord Jesus was crucified for our sins; and we being washed in his blood, being interested in the atonement of our holy victim and elder brother, are acquitted from guilt, and escape condemnation. Concerning the paschal lamb, it was particularly enjoined, That the flesh should not be eaten raw, nor sodden with water, but roasted with fire, and of every offering from the herd or from the flock, the fat and the inwards were, by an express command of God, delivered up to the devouring flame. All this was an emblem of that tremendous indignation, which "is poured out like fire," (Nah. i. 6.) which seized our immaculate Sacrifice, that it might spare polluted sinners; and which must have consumed utterly any mediator, who was less than infinite, or other than divine.

Had you beheld our renowned Newton blowing up with great assiduity and attention, his little watery visicles into the air, you would perhaps, have despised the venerable philosopher, and have thought him little better than a hoary idiot. But when you was told, that in every one of these volatile soapy bubbles he discovered the beauteous colours of the rainbow, and from this seemingly childish experiment he explained the nature of that wonderful arch; you would then entertain a different notion, both of the man and of his employ. So when you discern the blessed Jesus looking forth at these windows, and showing himself through these lattices of the Jewish economy, you will,

* St. Paul calls the church of those times "nepios." an infant, or babe. Gal. iv. 1, 3. And the ceremonial institutions have been styled, with as much truth as ingenuity, evangelium elementare et præliminare.

† This seems to be our Lord's meaning, when he says to Nicodemus, "if I have told you earthly things." He had been treating of that internal spiritual renovation, which is the root and spring of all holiness. He had been speaking of that Divine Spirit, whose gracious and almighty agency produces this desirable change. The nature of the former was represented, under the similitude of a birth, by which we enter upon a new state, form new ideas, and habituate ourselves to new practices, pleasures, pursuits. The operations of the latter were described, by the common and well known properties of the wind. This he mentions, as a plain and familiar method of teaching: this he opposes to telling him of heavenly things; or delivering refined and exalted truths, not accommodated to the capacity, not brought within the compass of an infantile understanding, by an assimilation to sensible objects. John iii. 12.

* Cant. ii. 9. The word, in the first edition, is "flourishing through." It was taken from the Hebrew, without consulting the English Bible, and is a literal translation of מציץ. Which signifies more than barely showing himself with lustre and beauty; like a delicate flower, in its blooming state and glossy

I hope, conceive a higher opinion of them, and derive richer advantage from them.

Ther. There are several persons, as well as ritual observances, of a very singular character, mentioned in the Mosaic law. The leper, for instance, the Nazarite, with others of the same antiquated and grotesque stamp; which seem, to me at least, so many unmeaning narratives, that convey no manner of edification to readers in the present age. I have frequently had an inclination, and now I have a proper opportunity, to ask your opinion upon these points.

Asp. I thank you, Theron, for giving me the hint. What you propose is by no means foreign to the topic of our discourse. Those persons were truly remarkable; neither are the peculiarities of their case recorded in vain. They picture out, in dismal and delightful colours, the sinner and the Saviour. To know ourselves, and to know Christ, is true wisdom; is indeed the consummation of all knowledge. Here we have a lecture of hieroglyphical instruction, on both those important subjects.

The leper was an emblem of a sinner; (see Levit. chap. xiii. xiv.) His disease extremely afflictive to himself, and intolerably loathsome to others. Sin likewise is the sorest of all miseries to the wretch who commits it; and most detestably odious to the God who forbids it. The leper was secluded from the benefits of society, and all communication with his fellow citizens. The sinner also, while impenitent and unpardoned, is an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, (Eph. ii. 12.) without any enjoyment of the comforts, or any interest in the privileges of the gospel. If he dies in this condition, he must be for ever shut out from the kingdom of heaven; for ever cut off from the presence of the Lord.

The contagion was sometimes so pestilent, that it not only tainted the clothes of the diseased, but spread itself over the walls of his house, and infected the timber of the beams. It was sometimes so inveterate, that it could be eradicated no other way but by burning the garment, and demolishing the building. Does not this give us a clear, but melancholy view, of original corruption? which has transfused its poison through all the faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body; nor will ever be entirely expelled, till death releases the former, and consigns the latter to the dust.

What could cure this terrible distemper, even in its mildest state? Not all the balm of Gilead; not all the drugs on a thousand hills; nothing but the consecrated oil, and sacrificial blood duly applied by the High-priest. And what can heal the disorders of our fallen souls? so far heal them as to purge away their guilt, and subdue the prevalence of their iniquities? No acts of mortification, no vigilance, nor any efforts of our own; nothing but the atoning death, and sanctifying spirit of the blessed Jesus. The malignity and virulence of this plague of the heart, are absolutely incorrigible by any other expedient. But, blessed be divine grace, this remedy, provided by our great High-priest, and administered by our great Physician, is sovereign, and never fails.

The case of the Nazarites, (see Numb. chap. vi.) was the very reverse of the state of the lepers. "Her Nazarites," Jeremiah says, "were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphires; (Lam. iv. 7.) A faint representation of the only begotten Son, who is the fairest among ten thousand; the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person? both God and man in one sacred, wonderful, adorable Saviour. They, during the time of their separation, abstained from wine, withdrew from secular business, avoided every kind of pollution; and dedicated themselves in an especial manner, to the service of God. A type of that glorious Nazarite, who was separated for a season from the fruitions of heaven; who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, both in his nature and all his conversation, who sanctified himself, and devoted his life and labours, his soul and body, to the glory of his Father, and the redemption of his people. The Nazarites, even when they had discharged their vow, and were ceremonially clean, yet were obliged to offer a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, and a peace-offering. So the great Redeemer, though he had perfectly obeyed all the preceptive parts of the divine law, yet was required to offer up a sacrifice—even the incomparably precious sacrifice of himself—in order to consummate the work of our salvation.

Ther. Have you a sufficient warrant for this strain of interpretation? Is it sound, is it rational, or conformable to any authentic standard of scriptural exposition? Methinks it looks more like the child of fancy, than the offspring of judgment; more like the sally of a sportive imagination, than the result of a sober disquisition.

You cannot be ignorant, Aspasio, how the ruling passion tinctures the whole conduct. Hence it is, I apprehend, that your religious inamoratos find heavenly beauties, where Scripture intended no more than natural truths. Hence it is that they turn plain facts into profound figures, and allegorize common sense into pious absurdity.

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colours: yet flourishing through lattices; manifesting himself not completely, but in part; concealing some, while he reveals much, of his mediatorial glory.

Have you never seen the mystic interpretations of some ancient, and, I may add, some modern divines? The honesty of their design is transparent, and the piety of their lives is unquestionable; otherwise we should be tempted to suspect, that they meant to burlesque the Scriptures, and disgrace their Author.

Who can ever persuade himself, that the supremely wise God would send us to search for a body of divinity in a bundle of rods? or set us to spin all the mysteries of Christianity from a few fleeces of wool, ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted? (Gen. xxxi.) Thus to expound the Scriptures, is not to open them clearly, and apply them judiciously, but rather to whip them into froth.*

Asp. We have the authority of our Lord himself, who has informed us, that the brazen serpent lifted up in the wilderness (John iii. 14.) was figurative of his own suspension and death on the cross: that the temple built on mount Sion was typical of his immaculate body, in which dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, (John ii. 19. 21; Col. ii. 9:) that the prophet Jonah, lodged in the belly of the whale, and discharged from that strange confinement on the third day, (Matth. xii. 39, 40.) was an emblem of his own descending into the grave, and rising again before his flesh saw corruption.

We have also the testimony and the practice of the chiefest of the apostles, for our warrant. He assures us, that the rock smitten by Moses had a reference to Christ, (1 Cor. x. 4;) who was wounded for our sins, and is the foundation of our hopes: that the waters issuing at the stroke, were significative of those spiritual blessings which flow from a crucified Saviour: that as the former followed the sons of Jacob through all the circumvolutions of their tedious journey, the latter accompany the disciples of Jesus in every stage of their earthly pilgrimage. Let the great teacher of the Gentiles be our expositor, and we shall see the veil of the temple dignified with a significancy, richer far than its costly materials and curious workmanship. Its silk and embroidery exhibit to the eye of faith the pure and spotless flesh of Christ, (Heb. x. 20.) As, by rending the material veil, the holy of holies became visible and accessible; so, by piercing the body, and spilling the blood of Christ, the God of heaven was manifested, and the way to heaven opened.

Every reader must admire those divided waves, which instead of overwhelming the Israelites with a resistless deluge, stood like a wall of defence on their right hand and on their left, as they marched through the depths of the sea. Every reader must admire that suspended cloud, which spread itself like a spacious canopy over the hosts of Israel, and screened them from the annoying sunbeams as they passed through the sultry desert. Our admiration must be heightened when we find that which was a cloud by day becoming a pillar of fire by night, and illuminating their camp with the most amazing as well as the most cheering splendour. But St. Paul discerned a greater glory, and a deeper design, in those unparalleled events. The people, he says, "were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea," (1 Cor. x. 2.) These symbolically represented the baptism of water and of fire; or the application of Christ's blood to our souls, and the efficacy of his spirit on our hearts:—in the former of which consists our justification; from the latter of which proceeds our sanctification.

I fear you will think my discourse somewhat like the journey just now mentioned; but I must not wholly omit the epistle to the Hebrews, which is the most unexceptionable vindication, as well as the faultless model, of allegorical exposition. It is delightful to observe what propriety of address the inspired writer uses. He speaks to the Jews in their own way; alludes to their own usages, ordinances, and ceremonies; proves them to be types of, and guides to, a more clear, a more benign, and in all respects a more excellent economy.* More particularly he displays the transcendent superiority of Christ and his gifts, even to those persons and privileges which they held in the highest esteem. These, like the morning star, were introductory to, yet totally eclipsed by, the rising sun.

They had exalted apprehensions of the angelic excellencies. The apostle therefore celebrates the Redeemer as the Lord whom angels obey, as the God whom angels adore. They always reckoned Moses to be the first favourite of heaven, and chief among the children of men. He lets them know, that Moses, with all his extraordinary endowments, was but a servant in the house of Jesus. It was his greatest honour, to

* Luther used to call such far-fetched and unnatural allegories "spumam scripturæ."

* He styles the legal oblations, and the whole service of the Jewish sanctuary, "the example and shadow of heavenly things;" or of Christ Jesus; and evangelical worship, and spiritual blessings, Heb. viii. 5.—The original signifies "the pattern;" somewhat like the strokes pencilled out upon a peace of fine linen: which presents you with the figure of sprigs of leaves, and of flowers; but have not yet received their splendid colours, their curious shades, and beautiful enrichments, from the labours of the needle.—The original signifies likewise "a shadowy representation; which gives you some dim and imperfect idea of the body; but not the fine features, not the distinguishing air, none of those living graces which adorn the real person. Yet both the pattern and the shadow lead our minds to something nobler than themselves. The pattern, to that which completes it; the shadow to that which occasions it.

minister unto this Prince of Peace. As the priesthood and sacrifices were some of their distinguishing privileges, he shows the pre-eminence of Christ's office to all the Aaronic orders. He demonstrates the extensive and everlasting efficacy of his one atonement, in preference to every form, and the whole series of Levitical oblations.

Ther. Thus interpretated, I must acknowledge, the book of Levitical ceremonies is significant and edifying; whereas, abstracted from this evangelical improvement, nothing can be more empty and jejune. I once thought, that to peruse those obsolete canons, was like sitting down to an entertainment of dry bones. But, if such be their import, they may yield marrow and fatness to the attentive mind.

Due care, however, should be taken, not to suppose a type where there is no apparent foundation of analogy in the thing itself, or no hint of this nature given us by the unerring Spirit; lest, instead of being guided by truth, we are bewildered by fancy. And, when either or both these handles present themselves, I think we should beware of straining the subject beyond the bounds of a just and reasonable comparison; lest, instead of following the clue, we stretch it till it breaks. If the first caution is not observed, the sense of Scripture will lie so deep, or be removed to such a distance, that none but persons of the most acute discernment can find it, or none but persons of the most excursive imagination can reach it. If the second is not regarded, the meaning of those divine volumes will become so vague and volatile, that there will hardly remain any possibility of ascertaining or fixing it.

Asp. As to the expedience and necessity of these cautionary limitations, I have the pleasure of agreeing entirely with my friend. Let our fancy submit to the reins of judgment, otherwise her excursions will be wild and lawless. Let our zeal borrow the eyes of discretion, otherwise her efforts will be blind and extravagant. And let all, thus tempered, thus regulated, be under the influence of enlightening grace. Then to spiritualize the ancient Scriptures, will be to convert the stones of the sanctuary into the jewels of a crown; and to fetch, not water only, but milk and honey, from the flinty rock.

Then, how pleasing must it be, as well as instructive, to discover the blessed Jesus, in all the institutions of the Mosaic law! To see his incarnation prefigured by the feast of tabernacles, when the Israelites were to relinquish their houses, and lodge in booths. (Lev. xxiii. 34. 40. 42.) Even as the son of God left the bosom of his Father, and the seats of bliss, to inhabit a cottage of clay, and sojourn in a vale of tears. To see our spotless and divine victim, typically slain at the joyful solemnity of the passover, and the anniversary fast of expiation. To see his death, that inestimable ransom for our souls, presented to our faith, in every morning and evening sacrifice, (Exod. xxix. 38, 39.) his intercession, that prevailing recommendation of our prayers, most sweetly expressed by the rich incense which attended the sacred rite. To see the various methods of purification; some pointing at the fountain for sin and for uncleanness, opened in our Redeemer's bleeding heart, (Exod. xxix. 4; Psal. li. 7.) others referring to those sanctifying operations of the Spirit, which act as a refiner's fire, or as a fuller's soap, (Numb. xxxi. 23; Isa. iv. 4.) To see, in the city of refuge, that perfect security which Christ's meritorious sufferings in our stead, afford to every penitent and believing sinner, (Numb. xxxv. 11, 12.)

Was it so very affecting and so very encouraging to Æneas, when he beheld the story of the Trojan heroes pictured upon the walls of the Carthaginian temple?* How much greater encouragement and joy must arise in the Christian's breast, when he perceives the amiable lineaments of his everlasting friend pourtrayed in all the peculiarities of the Jewish worship, and in the most distinguishing events of the Jewish history! This must highly ennoble the Bible, and inexpressibly endear it to our affections. This spreads lustre, life, and glory, through every page of that blessed book. And though I would forbear indulging what might be called a pious wantonness of imagination; yet I should much rather choose, in expounding the Scriptures, to ramble with Augustine, than err with Grotius, see, or think I see, my Saviour, even where it may not perhaps be easy to make out the traces of his dignity to the satisfaction of a rigorous inquirer; rather than shut my eyes upon the display of his perfections when they beam forth with the most inviting beauty.

Ther. How soon is this walk finished! How imperceptibly has the time stole away! These garden-gates I always used to approach with a particular complacency. They seemed to afford me a welcome retreat from the impertinence and vanity of the world. Now, methinks, I enter them with reluctance, because they are likely to put a period to this agreeable conversation. However, as my Aspasio enters with me, I am reconciled, I am satisfied. It will be in his power to restore the pleasure which must now be interrupted. And this is what I shall ere long request; because I have not spoke my whole mind upon the present subject.

Asp. Whenever you think proper, Theron. This is to me a favourite subject; and not to me only, but to incomparably

* Virg. Æn. 1.

better judges. The man who had been caught up into the third heavens, and seen the visions of God, "determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified," (1 Cor. ii. 2.) At the grandest assembly that ever was convened on earth, this furnished the principal, if not the only topic of conversation. And in that world where the voice of joy and thanksgiving is perpetually heard, this constitutes the burden of the song, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," (Rev. v. 9.)

DIALOGUE IV.

Ther. I MUST now desire my Aspasio to inform me, what that grand assembly was, (which he mentioned in the close of our last discourse), and where convened?

Asp. Can you not guess, Theron?—Was it in the plains of Thessaly, when Xerxes drew together the forces of more than half the known world, and appeared at the head of all the potentates of the east? Was it in the Roman forum, when the Senators were assembled in their robes, and the barbarians took them for a synod of gods? No: it was on the mount of transfiguration, where the Son of the true God, the Lord of eternal glory, shone forth in some of his celestial and native splendour; with garments white as the snow,* and a countenance bright as the sun: where he conversed with two of his most distinguished saints, just come down from the regions of bliss and immortality; with Moses the great deliverer of the law, and with Elijah the resolute restorer of its honours: where he was attended by three of his principal ambassadors, who were to be the reformers of mankind, and the lights of the world.

This, I think, is the most venerable and august assembly that the annals of history have recorded. And what was the topic of conversation among these illustrious personages? Not the affairs of state, nor the revolutions of empires; not the curious refinements of literature, nor the wonderful discoveries of philosophy; but the ignominious and bloody exit† which the divine Jesus was soon to make at Jerusalem. This circumstance, methinks, should strongly recommend the subject to our frequent discourse, even though it was less eminent for intrinsic dignity, and comfortable import.

Talking in this manner, they arrive at the park; which the moment you enter, fills the view with its bold, enlarged, and magnificent sweep. It was diversified with level and rising ground. Here scooped into mimic amphitheatres, with the deer pendent on the little summit, or shooting down the easy precipice; there raised into gentle hillocks, some of which were canopied with a large spreading, solitary oak, others were tufted with a cluster of tapering and verdant elms. Two or three cascades, gleaming from afar, as they poured along the slanting rock or the grassy slope, gave a pleasing variation to the prospect; while they startled the timorous inexperienced fawns with their foaming current and watery roar. Grandeur and simplicity seemed to be the genius of the place. Every thing breathed an air of noble negligence, and artless majesty.

In the centre of all rose a curious romantic mount. Its form was exactly round, somewhat like a sugar-loaf, lopt off a little below the point. Not coeval with nature, but the work of human industry. Thrown up, it is supposed, in those perilous times, when Britain was alarmed by foreign invasions, or bled with intestine wounds. It was covered, all around, with alder shrubs; whose ranks, gradually arising, and spreading, shade above shade, composed a kind of woody theatre, through which were struck two or three spiral walks, leading, by a gentle ascent, and under embowering verdure to the summit. At proper intervals, and on every side of the hill, were formed little arborets with apertures cut through boughs to admit a prospect of the country. In one or other of these leafy boxes you command, at every hour of the day, either the enlivening sun, or the refreshing shade. All along the circling avenues, and all around the beauteous rests, sprung daffodils, primroses, and violets; which, mingling with hyacinths and cowslips, composed many a charming piece of natural mosaic.

How agreeable, as they climb and wind themselves round the hill, to reflect on the happy change which has now taken place! Where steely helmets gleamed, or brazen shields clashed, the goldfinches twitter their loves, and display their painted plumes. The dens of rapine, or the horrid haunts of bloodshed, are become the retreats of calm contemplation, and friendly converse. In yonder lower spaces, where the armed troops were wont to patrole, from whence they made excursions to ravage the villages

* Mark ix. 3. The evangelist's description is, like the scene, remarkably bright, and the gradation of his images is almost as worthy of observation as the memorable fact. The garments were white—exceeding white—white as the snow—whiter than any fuller on earth could make them: surpassing all the works of art, equalling the first and finest productions of nature. Nay, so great was the lustre, that it glistered like the lightning, and even dazzled the sight.

† Does not this very delicately, yet very strongly intimate, that the sufferings and death of Christ were the principal end of the Mosaic institutions, and the principal subject of the prophetic teachings? For is it not natural to suppose, that Moses and Elijah intended, when ministering on earth, that very thing, which their conversation dwelt upon, when they descended from heaven?

or terrify the swains, the fallow-deer trip lightly or the full-headed stags stand at bay.

From a small eminence, but at a considerable distance, gushed a couple of springs, which, rambling through a grove, lost one another in the shady labyrinth. Emerging at length from the gloom, they approached nearer and nearer, and fell into embraces at the foot of this hill. They rolled, in amicable conjunction along the pebbly channel which encircles its basis, and added their sober melody to the sprightly warbling of the birds. Flowing off in one common stream, they formed the fine pieces of water which beautified the park. From thence they stole into the meadow, and widened into a river. There, enamoured, as it were with each other, they glide by wealthy towns, and sweep through flowery vales; regardless of the blooming toys which deck the one, and of the noisy crowds which throng the other.

So, said Aspasio, may Theron and his Selina, pleasing and pleased with each other, pass through the busy and the amusing scenes of life; neither captivated by the one, nor anxious for the other. With such harmonious agreement, and indissoluble union, may they pursue the course marked out by Providence, their happiness increasing, and their usefulness enlarging, as they draw nearer the Ocean of all good! Then, parted by a gentle stroke of fate, like the waters of some ample stream severed by the piers of an intervening bridge, may they speedily reunite! reunite in consummate bliss, and never be separated more!

Ther. I thank you, Aspasio, for your affectionate compliment. Nor can I wish you, by way of return, a greater recompence, than the continual exercise of such a benovolent temper. For to exercise benevolence, is to enjoy the most refined and exalted pleasure; such as makes the nearest approaches to the felicity of the Eternal Mind, who, as the Scripture most beautifully speaks, "has pleasure in the prosperity of his servants."

But while we are seated on this mount, our situation reminds us of (what you just now mentioned) the grand conference relating to the death of Christ—a business for which you have indeed accounted, but in a manner that may be thought not the most honourable to the divine attributes.

Asp. I have represented it as a ransom for our souls, and a sacrifice for our sins. If you disapprove my account, be pleased to favour me with your own. For what purpose, according to your opinion, did that ever-blessed person die?

Ther. To confirm the truth of his doctrine, and leave us a pattern of the most perfect resignation.

Asp. And is this all? Shall we thus impoverish the riches of grace? Was this notion defensible, it could never be desirable. But it has as little to support it as it has to recommend it. For, upon such a supposition, where is the difference between the death of Christ and the death of the martyrs? They confirmed the truth of the gospel: In their sufferings was obedience and resignation, the same in quality, though not in degree. Upon such a supposition, what benefit could the ancient patriarchs receive from the Redeemer; since none could be improved by the example of his patience, or the pattern of his obedience, till they were actually exhibited, or how could Christ be styled "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world?" (Rev. xiii. 8.) the advantages of whose death commenced from the very beginning, as they will be prolonged even to the end of time.

Not to depend on consequential arguments, let us hear the express declaration of our divine Master himself: "This is my blood, which is shed,"—for what? To give credibility to my gospel, or yield an example of entire resignation! Rather—"for the remission of sins," (Matth. xxvi. 28.) Will any one attempt to make the remission of sins, and the proposal of a pattern, or the ratification of a doctrine, synonymous terms? They who can torture and transmute the genuine sense of words at this extraordinary rate, may metamorphose any expression into any meaning.

If, then, we would consider our Lord's death in its due amplitude, we must consider it both as a pattern of piety and as a ransom for sinners: we must neither separate nor confound these very distinct, yet very consistent effects.

Ther. Is it not inconsistent with the acknowledged principles of justice, that the innocent should be punished instead of the offender?

Asp. If the innocent person has an absolute power over his own life, willingly substitutes himself in the place of the guilty, and by his vicarious sufferings fully answers all the purposes of a righteous government;—in this case, which was the case with our Lord, I see not the least repugnancy to the rules of justice.

The Bible, that authentic transcript of the counsels of heaven, avows, and by avowing, vindicates the practice, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* When all we like sheep had gone astray, and were exposed to the stroke of vengeance, as those wandering creatures to

* Isa liii. 6. תפגיע בן made to meet, or fall upon, in a hostile vindictive manner; with a design to take vengeance, or inflict death; as an armed man falls upon his enemy, or a fierce lion on the helpless lamb.

the ravenous beasts; the good shepherd interposed, and the just God made that vengeance to fall upon him, which must otherwise have been executed upon us. "He suffered," says another inspired writer, "the just for the unjust," (1 Pet. iii. 18.) that, by expiating our guilt, "he might bring us to God;" now to his gracious favour, hereafter to his blissful presence.

You will permit me to add a passage from our common favourite, Milton. Because it is no less beautiful in itself, than it is pertinent to the occasion; must please the critic, and may expound the apostle. Messiah, pleading in behalf of fallen man, thus addresses his Almighty Father:

> ——"Man dead in sins and lost,
> Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
> (Indebted and undone!) hath none to bring.
> Behold me then! me for him! life for life
> I offer. On me let thine anger fall.
> Account me man: I for his sake will leave
> Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
> Freely put off; and for him lastly die
> Well-pleased: on me let death wreak all his rage."
> *Milton*, b. iii. l. 233.

Ther. The fine imagination of a poet will hardly pass for a decisive argument. When we are searching after truth, we must attend to the dictates of reason, not follow the vagaries of fancy. And reason, Aspasio, remonstrates against your notion of a vicarious sacrifice; Reason, that primary guide, and final test, both in discovering and determining the sense of Scripture.

Asp. Suppose you, then, my dear Theron, that none are in possession of reason but the pupils of Socinus, and the zealots for Deism? or that none make use of reason in their religious inquiries, but men of this mould?

> Wrong not the Christian, think not reason your's;
> 'Tis reason our great Master holds so dear:
> 'Tis reason's injured rights his wrath resents;
> 'Tis reason's voice obeyed his glorious crown,
> 'Through reason's wounds alone thy faith can die.
> *Night Thoughts*, No. IV.

Poets, you see, are far from disclaiming reason. Equally far is Christianity from discarding the sober, the sanctified use of this noble faculty. When reason is under the influence and direction of the divine Spirit, we have the same high opinion of her excellence as yourself. And, when thus regulated, we have, I am persuaded, the sanction of her authority for all our sentiments.

Reason, as she operated in the sagest of the heathen world, instead of rejecting, approved and adopted this very scheme; approved it even under the disadvantage of a mutilated and defective, or rather of a perverted and dead form. The current language of the classic authors, and almost every historian of Greece and Rome, are vouchers for the truth of this observation. As the Gentiles were unanimous in the custom of offering sacrifices, and equally unanimous in supposing their vicarious nature, so also are the Jewish writers.

Ther. What man of sense pays any regard to the Jewish writers? Legendary they are, and extravagant to the last degree. Dotards I might call them, rather than writers.

Asp. They are, I believe, extravagant enough in their comments upon Scripture; but they relate, with sufficient exactness and fidelity, the prevailing belief of their nation. In this case, their testimony is as unexceptionable, as, in the other, their notions are chimerical. Now, had it been a mistaken belief, surely our blessed Lord, that infallible judge, and impartial reprover, would have testified his disapprobation of it. Surely his disciples, who were actuated by the unerring and undaunted spirit of their Master, would have entered their protest against it. Surely St. Paul, in his epistle to that very people, and in his treatise on that very subject, would have set himself to rectify such an error, and have weeded out the tares before he sowed the good seed. But there is not the least hint of this kind in all the discourses of our Saviour, or in all the writings of his apostles.

They speak to a people who were accustomed to look upon their sacrifices as piacular oblations,* and a typical expiation of guilt. They speak of our Redeemer's crucifixion, and the benefits of his death, in the sacrificial terms, that were of current use and established signification. If, therefore, the popular opinion was improper, their manner of expression and address must be calculated rather to authenticate error, than to propagate truth. So that, I think, even the silence of the inspired penmen on this occasion, is but little inferior to a loud attestation. Did they only say nothing against the doctrine of satisfaction by sacrifice, it would in effect, and circumstances considered, be saying abundance for it. But they are very copious and explicit upon the point.

Ther. Where are they so copious? If you have such a heap of their allegations, it will be easy to pick out a few, and give us a specimen.

Asp. It is as easy, Theron, as it is delightful. "Messiah shall be cut off," says the Prophet Daniel, "but not for himself." (Dan. ix. 26.) For whom then, and for what? Isaiah informs us concerning both. "For the transgression of my people was he stricken," (Isaiah liii. 8.) Because this is an article of the last importance, it is repeated, it is confirmed, it is explained, with the most remarkable particularity: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was

* This, I think, is incontestably proved by Outram in his treatise De Sacrificiis.

bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah liii. 5.) Our Lord himself asserts the same truth in the very same style: "I am the good shepherd, and lay down my life for the sheep," (John x. 15.) St. Paul, in a multitude of passages, sets his seal to this momentous doctrine. St. Peter maintains it in very forcible words: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."*

The sacred writers not only assert this capital article, but use every diversity of speech, in order to give it the fullest evidence, and the strongest establishment. "He made reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Heb. ii. 17.) "Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 2.) "He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Rev. i. 5.) "He was made sin for us, though he knew no sin." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

Ther. Nobody makes any objection to these texts; but the sense, the true sense of such phrases, is the thing in question.

Asp. What you call the question, to me appears so plain, as not to want a decision, or admit of a doubt. However, since you seem to demand a critical scrutiny, it will not be thought pedantic if I make an observation or two upon the original languages; or rather, as you are not acquainted with the Hebrew, on that language of which you yourself are a judge and a master.

If one died for all, then were all dead. The preposition ὑπερ in this connexion, must necessarily signify more than "on our account, or for our advantage." Because, if it be taken in this unsettled rambling sense, the apostle's argument is vague and inconclusive. In case our Lord had suffered, only "to free us from some evil, and procure us some benefit," this would by no means imply that *all were dead,* under the sentence of condemnation, obnoxious, and doomed to death. (2 Cor. v. 14.) The utmost you can infer from such premises is, that all stood in need of a deliverance from some evil, or wanted the procurement of some good. Whereas, suppose the sacred writer to intend that our Lord's death was truly vicarious, and undergone in our stead; that he suffered what was our due and our doom; then the reasoning is just, and the inference undeniable.

He gave himself αντιλυτρον ὑπερ, *a ransom for all.* (1 Tim. ii. 6.) If this does not imply the notion of vicarious, I very much question whether language itself can express it. Λυτρον is a ransom, which conveys a vicarious sense, in its most common and authorized acceptation. Αντι, which is equivalent to instead,* still more fully ascertains and strengthens the idea. Υπερ, which is translated *for,* and denotes a substitution of one in the place of another;† this added to all, renders the expression as determinate and emphatical for the purpose, as words can possibly be.

Shall I argue from a more obvious topic, which has no such dependence on the precise significancy of the original? "Surely," says the prophet; he speaks with vehemence, as of an affair which is very weighty; he speaks with confidence, as of a fact which is very certain: "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, (Isa. liii. 4.) What can this mean, but he hath taken upon himself that affliction and those miseries which properly belong to us? Let us read on, and this meaning will present itself in the clearest view. "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" we took him for a real malefactor, and thought that he was punished for his own misconduct. In opposition to which injurious and false surmise it is added, "but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." May I not here borrow the prophet's language, and say, with an air of certainty, Surely this is the plainest proof in the world, that our sins were the meritorious cause of Christ's sufferings; and if our sins were the meritorious cause of his sufferings, our guilt must be charged upon him, and punished in him.

St. Paul affirms that "Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law," (Gal. iii. 13.) How? By taking our place, and enduring what we deserved; or, as the apostle himself speaks, to the same effect, but in a much more emphatical manner, "by being made a curse for us." Does not this evidently denote both a commutation of persons, and a translation of punishment? He suffered, who was innocent; not we, who were guilty. He also suffered that very sentence which the law denounced on us, for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things," (Deut. xxvii. 26.) to this we were obnoxious. It is written again, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. 13.) to this Christ submitted. And if Christ en-

* 1 Pet. ii. 24. Very forcible words indeed. He bare—himself bare—our sins—in his own body; intended, one would imagine, to make the article of our Lord's vicarious sufferings clear beyond all misapprehension, and sure beyond all doubt.

* Αντι, Matt. ii. 22. By this word, the septuagint translate the Hebrew, תחת. And that תחת denotes the substitution of one instead of another, no student of the sacred language will venture to deny. See Gen. xxii. 13; 2 Sam. xviii. 33; 2 Kings x. 24.

† Δεομεθα υπερ Χριστου "We beseech you in Christ's stead," 2 Cor. v. 20. Ινα υπερ σου διακονη μοι, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me. Philem ver. 13.

dured that very curse which we deserved—if, by this means, he delivered us from all malediction—either this must be suffering in our stead, or else nothing can be called by that name.

Shall I descend lower still, and refer our point to the determination of illiterate men? Ask any of your serious tenants, what ideas arise in their minds, upon the perusal of the aforementioned texts? I dare venture to foretel, that artless and unimproved as their understandings are, they will not hesitate for an answer. They will neither complain of obscurity, nor ask the assistance of learning; but will immediately discern, in all these passages, a gracious Redeemer suffering in their stead, and by his bitter, but expiatory passion, procuring the pardon of their sins. Nay farther, as they are not accustomed to the finesses of criticism, I apprehend they will be at a loss to conceive how it is possible to understand such passages in any other sense.

Say not this is an improper appeal, or these are incompetent judges. The Scriptures were written for their edification; not to exercise the ingenuity of subtle disputants, but to instruct the meanest of mankind in the way of salvation. Therefore, on fundamental articles, we may assuredly conclude the expression will be easy, and the doctrine perspicuous; so that "he who runs may read, and the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."* And though I am far from undervaluing the aids of literature, yet, upon those momentous subjects which are inseparably connected with our eternal felicity, I cannot but regard the common sense of plain, honest, humble Christians, as the very best of critics.

Ther. It has been said by a learned critic, "That a vicarious punishment or suffering gives us too low ideas of the Son of God, as it sinks them to the pain and suffering of a malefactor, the very meanest idea we can have of them.

Asp. The idea is plainly suggested by the word of prophecy, and supported by the attestation of sacred history. In that it was foretold, and in this it is recorded "that he was numbered with transgressors," (Isa. liii. 12; Luke xxii. 37.) To this purpose speaks St. Paul, though somewhat more cautiously than your critic. He was made, not indeed sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh; and though perfectly innocent, was left to endure the vengeance due to the vilest miscreants.

Yes, my dear Theron, that glorious person, whom the highest angel adores, "suffered, as if he had been the criminal, the pain and punishment which we, or equivalent to that which we, the real criminals, should have suffered." If to consider this, gives us a low idea—if to suffer this was a deep abasement—how exceedingly high, and how immensely grand is the goodness and the grace manifested therein! the lower you draw the arrow on the string, the loftier flight it makes in the sky, and the greater our Lord's humiliation for us, the more wonderful and adorable his love to us.

Ther. As there cannot be a vicarious guilt, or as no one can be guilty in the stead of another, so there cannot be a vicarious punishment, or no one can be punished instead of another; because punishment, in its very nature, connotes guilt in the person who bears it.

Asp. If you mean by guilt the consciousness of having committed a sin, and the internal defilement consequent upon it, we never suppose such a vicarious guilt. It is not so much as intimated, that Christ was stung with the remorse, or stained with the pollution of the adulterous David, the perfidious Peter, and the persecuting Saul; but that he was treated by the righteous God as if he had perpetrated these, and all the crimes of all believers, either in the past or succeeding ages.

If by guilt you mean the charge of a criminal action, and the obligation to suffer the penalty, your assertion is nothing more than begging the question. It nakedly affirms the very thing in debate: and bare affirmations, unsupported by evidence, are seldom admitted as decisive proofs. We, on the other hand, are inclined to believe, that all our criminal actions were charged upon Christ, and that he suffered the punishment which they deserved. The former of these is not so properly called vicarious guilt, as real guilt—contracted by one, imputed to another. The latter we readily allow to be vicarious punishment, sustained in their stead whose guilt was imputed. For both these points we have the authority of truth itself, speaking in the Scriptures, "The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all:" here is the imputation, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" here is the vicarious punishment. And you know to what casuists we submit the interpretation of these texts—common sense, and an honest heart.

Ther. Is not this shocking to suppose? horrid to affirm? If guilt was really imputed to Christ, then punishment was his due. Justice might insist upon it, and he could not escape it.

Asp. To suppose this, is so far from shocking my apprehension, that it appears, even on your own principles, right and necessary. Right, because punishment, as you yourself have declared, always connotes

* Isa. xxxv. 8. The word *fools* seems to denote persons of slow understanding and dull apprehensions, as Luke xxiv. 25; or else it signifies those who, for want of a cultivated education and the improvements of literature, are accounted fools by the sons of science, as 1 Cor. i. 27.

guilt; I would add either contracted, or at least imputed. And indeed the sufferings of Christ could not be of a penal nature, unless he endured them as under a charge of guilt. It is necessary to suppose this, otherwise how will you vindicate the justice of God? He bid his sword awake, and smite the blessed Jesus, (Zech. xiii. 7.) But shall the Judge of all the earth do wrong? Shall he smite, where there is nothing but innocence? no guilt, either personal or imputed? That be far from him! The thought be far from us!

Whereas, upon this supposition, it becomes a just and righteous thing, that God should inflict, and that Christ should sustain, the most rigorous punishment. And I do not know but this might be the cause of our Lord's silence, when he was accused at Pilate's bar and at Herod's judgment-seat. It is probable he considered himself as standing before a higher tribunal, and responsible to eternal justice for the criminal actions of all his people. In this situation, and in this capacity, clear himself of personal demerit he could, clear himself of imputed guilt he could not. Therefore he was dumb, he opened not his mouth. For though, as the Son of the most high God, glory and immortality were his undoubted right; yet, as the Surety for sinful men, tribulation and death were his condign portion.

And why should this be thought shocking? It is not the least derogation to the transcendent excellency of Christ. It casts not the least stain on the unspotted sanctity either of his nature or his life. To bear sin as a voluntary surety, is infinitely different from committing it as an actual transgressor. To say that Christ was punished for any irregularity of his own, would be false, impious, and horrid. To say that he was charged with our guilt, and endured the punishment due—in the plain and full sense of the word—due to our sins, is so far from being injurious to his dignity, that it pays the proper honour to his mediatorial undertaking. It pays him the honour of the highest obedience to his Father's will, the deepest humiliation of his own illustrious person, and the most boundless benevolence to mankind.

Ther. God is love, Aspasio, all love. Whereas you would——

Asp. Not often interrupt a friend's discourse. But I cannot forbear interposing a query, on this occasion. Is there, then, no just displeasure in the Deity? What meaneth that solemn denunciation of the supreme Lawgiver? "The anger of the Lord shall smoke against that man?" (Deut. xxix. 20.) What meaneth that awful declaration of the Apostle; "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men?" (Rom. i. 18.) Or in what sense are we to explain that alarming interrogatory of the prophet, "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? (Nah. i. 6.) Whence could those avenging visitations proceed, which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with a tempest of fire? (Gen. xix. 24.) which swept away so many thousands of the polluted Israelites with a raging pestilence? (Numb. xxv. 9.) and consigned over so many legions* of rebellious angels to chains of darkness?

Surely, Theron, if there be any determinate signification in language, if any lesson to be learned from the most tremendous judgments, it is, that the Lord, though free from all the discomposure of passion, is nevertheless angry with the wicked, (Psal. vii. 11. Deut. ix. 8.) and will make impenitent offenders feel the effects of his wise and holy indignation.

Ther. Does not your doctrine represent the all-merciful God as a rigorous being, who, when once displeased, will hardly be pacified? Whereas, the Lord himself declares by his prophet, "Fury is not in me." Men of satirical wit would be apt to insinuate, that you had mistaken Jehovah for Moloch, and was erecting a Christian church in the valley of the Son of Hinnom.

Asp. We take our representations of God, not from the vain conjectures of men, but from the records of infallible truth. There he is described as a righteous God, a jealous God, (Exod. xx. 5.) and, to incorrigible sinners, a consuming fire, (Heb. xii. 29.) though wonderfully condescending, yet transcendently majestic, insomuch that none of the fallen race are permitted to approach his throne, but only through the intervention of a great Mediator, (John. xiv. 6.) and without shedding of blood, even the blood of a person higher than the heavens, there is no remission of any offences, (Heb. ix. 22; vii. 26.)

When the Lord says, "Fury is not in me," (Isa. xxvii. 4.) the words have a peculiar reference to his church, which, in a preceding verse, he had styled, "a vineyard of red wine." The connexion seems to denote, that his fierce anger was turned away from his people, on account of the satisfaction made by their Saviour. Though his own people are the objects, not of his

* Millions.—The name of the fallen angels is nowhere specified, and the veil sits deep upon the spiritual world; so that we can see no farther than revelation has discovered. Yet, I think, there is sufficient room to ground a conjecture upon the reply which one of those execrable apostates made to our Lord. "My name is legion," (a word signifying a great multitude, five or six thousand;) "for we are many." If so many were employed in tempting and tormenting a single person, what armies, what myriads of those invisible enemies, must exist through universal nature? It is an alarming thought! should make us fly to our divine Protector, and almighty Deliverer. See Mark v. 9, and 2 Pet. ii. 4.

indignation, but of his love, let no ungodly wretches audaciously presume: It is not so with them. They are "the briars and thorns"* mentioned in the next clause; cumberers of the ground, unprofitable and noxious. Them he warns, them he challenges: "Who will set them in battle against me?" Let them come on; they shall find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Nay, he will not stay for their approach: "I will march against them," in his threatening: "I will pass through them; I will burn them together." This will certainly be the case, if not in the present yet in a future world. When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door, mercy is gone for ever. Then nothing must be expected, nothing will then be experienced, but "vengeance and fiery indignation, to devour the adversaries of the gospel." God will then "execute judgments in anger, and in fury, and in furious rebukes," (Ezek. v. 15.) with such awful severity and immense glory, as will cause heaven to adore, and hell to tremble.

Yet in all this there is not the least tincture of that outrageous temper, which in man we properly call fury. In man, fury implies an immoderate degree of resentment, which will hearken to no reasoning, and accede to no terms. The gospel account proves, even to a demonstration, that this has no place in the divine nature. So far from it, that God, though highly provoked, has provided an atonement, has made overtures of reconciliation to his disobedient creatures, has even besought† a guilty world, to accept of forgiveness, (2 Cor. v. 20.) This is the purport of that gracious invitation which follows in the prophet: "Let him," let the wicked man forsake his way, "and take hold of my strength;" let him fly to my crucified Son, who is the power of God for the salvation of sinners; cleaving to his merits by faith, as some poor delinquent to the horns of the altar.‡ Thus he shall make peace; all his iniquities shall be forgiven, and all my displeasure shall be pacified. So that the insinuations of our satirical gentlemen are as egregiously mistaken, as they are shockingly worded.

You are a man of sense, Theron, and esteem that character far above the idle reputation of a wit. As such, let me ask you seriously, is it not for the honour of the divine majesty to exercise justice as well as mercy? Always to pardon, and never to punish, would be tameness, rather than benignity; a renunciation of holiness, rather than a display of goodness. Or can it be right in us so extravagantly to magnify the amiable, as depreciate, nay even annihilate, the awful attributes of Deity: This, says a poet, is the theology, not of Christians, but of infidels;

> Who set at odds heaven's jarring attributes,
> And with one excellence another wound;
> Maim heaven's perfection, break its equal beams,
> Bid mercy triumph over—God himself,
> Undeified by their opprobrious praise:
> A God all mercy is a God unjust.
>
> *Night Thoughts, No.* IV.

Ther. But we have lately been told, that the pardoning grace of the Lawgiver is not obstructed by any demands of law and justice; for he can set them aside.

Asp. What! Set aside a law, which is holy, righteous and good! set aside a justice, which is eternal, inflexible, and infinite!—St. Paul gives a very different solution of this difficulty. He tells us, not that God set aside his law and his justice; "but that he set forth the blessed Jesus for a propitiation, through faith in his blood," with this express design, "that he might declare his righteousness," (Rom. iii. 25,) might demonstrate, not only his clemency, but his justice, even that vindictive justice whose essential character and principal office is to punish sin.

This seems to be the import of the word *righteousness* in the present connexion, and, I think, more than seems, if we consult the following verse, "to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just,"* evidence himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous, in the administration of his government; even while he is the all-forgiving, gracious justifier of the sinner that believeth in Jesus. According to this plan, mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other," (Psalm lxxxv. 10,) all the attributes harmonize; every attribute is glorified; and not one superseded; no, nor so much as clouded.

Ther. If some are verging to one ex-

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* There is a fine contrast between the vineyard and the thorns, at the same time a regular continuation of the metaphor. As nothing is more common than to see the latter shooting up amidst the former; so nothing is more common than to have hypocrites intermingle themselves with believers.

† 2 Cor. v. 20. It was an instance of singular compassion in the blessed God, that though offended with Job's friends, he admitted of a sacrifice, and directed them to an intercessor; both typical of Christ Jesus. But what unparalleled condescension, and divinely tender mercies, are displayed in this verse! "As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Did the judge ever beseech a condemned criminal to accept of pardon? Does the creditor beseech a ruined debtor to receive an acquittance in full; yet our almighty Lord, and our eternal Judge, not only vouchsafes to offer these blessings, but invites us—entreats us—with the most tender and repeated importunity solicits us—not to reject them?

‡ This is the precise idea included in the original יחזק and the idea is as charming, as the image is expressive. Isa. xxvii. 5. 1 Kings i. 50.

* Rom. iii. 26. The attribute of justice must be preserved inviolate; and inviolate it is preserved, if there was a real infliction of punishment on our Saviour. Nothing else can thoroughly clear up this great evangelical paradox—"Just, yet Justifier of the ungodly."

treme, are not you inclining to the other? Our ears tingle, and our blood runs chill, at the very thoughts of so severe a vengeance, executed on an object so worthy and illustrious. Besides, how can we suppose that the beneficent Creator and preserver of men should take pleasure in the sufferings of the most unblamable person that ever existed? Especially since he himself has made this tender declaration, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." (Matt. ix. 13.)

Asp. A tender declaration indeed it is; signifying, that God is better pleased with the duties of humanity and charity, than with the most costly and pompous train of sacrifices; nay, that he will even dispense with the observance of his own ceremonial institutions, when they interfere with our exercise of beneficence one to another: thus resigning (so admirable is his goodness!) the services due to himself, for the benefit and comfort of his creatures. But all this has no sort of relation to the sacrifice of Christ, which was the most noble, and the most acceptable oblation ever made to the King of heaven.

We are assured by a prophet, that "it pleased the Lord to bruise his holy child Jesus." God not only gave up his Son to sufferings, but gave him up with a divine complacency.* In like manner, the blessed Jesus addressed himself to the dreadful task, not only without reluctance, but with the utmost alacrity.† "I delight to do thy will," was the language of his soul. Should you ask, how could the Son take pleasure in undergoing, or the Father in inflicting, such amazing sorrows? No otherwise, than upon account of those grand and everlasting advantages which were to result from them.

"A severe vengeance," you say, "such as makes our ears to tingle." This is the very thing intended, to awaken and alarm presumptuous offenders; that they "may hear and fear and do no more wickedly." It is such a method of dispensing grace, as is calculated to strike the deepest terror, even while it cherishes the brightest hope; strike the deepest terror on every persevering sinner—while it cherishes the brightest hope on every penitent transgressor.

Ther. If one of my servants had affronted or injured me, I should upon his submissive acknowledgment, forgive his fault, and not insist upon satisfaction for the wrong. Will you make the father of compassions more inexorable in his nature, more rigid in his demands than a human master?

Asp. When you have a servant that owes his being to your power, that has received innumerable benefits from your bounty, yet has offered you innumerable affronts, all attended with the most aggravating circumstances, and all in defiance of the most righteous threatenings; when you are possessed of infinite majesty, and unblemished sanctity; when truth inviolable, and justice inflexible, are essential to your character; then, Theron, the parallel will hold good, and your conduct shall be a pattern for the procedure of Jehovah.

Till then, you and I must be willing to forgive, because God has made it our own bounden duty; and because we have incomparably more to be forgiven by the Judge of the world, than we can possibly remit to our fellow-creatures. In the mean time, you will allow the great God, who is glorious in holiness, to communicate his heavenly favours in a manner becoming himself; on such august and honourable terms, as shall maintain the rights of his universal government, and manifest the glory of his adorable attributes.

Ther. Might not God have cancelled our transgressions, and received fallen men into his favour, without any propitiation? To deny this, would be to limit the Holy One of Israel, and impose conditions on that uncontrollable Sovereign, "who giveth no account of any of his matters."

Asp. We need not embarrass ourselves by entering upon inquiries, which may seem to lie beyond the limits of human understanding;—enough for us to know, that this propitiation was absolutely necessary with regard to the first covenant. For as God had solemnly declared, "In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die," his truth and justice stood engaged to execute the threatening. And no second Adam could restore the first, but by taking this curse upon himself.

> "Die man, or justice must; unless for him,
> Some other able, and as willing, pay
> The rigid satisfaction, death for death."
> *Milton*, b. 3. l. 210.

Therefore the divine Jesus, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and knew the counsels of heaven, says, "The Son of man must be lifted up,"* on the cross. There

* This is the idea included in the original word הפע. Isa. liii. 10. Which is but poorly and faintly represented by the Βȣλεται of the Septuagint.

† Utmost alacrity—There is no inconsistency between this assertion and our Lord's supplication; "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." Such a deprecatory request, put up with so much earnestness, yet with so much submission, only shows the extreme severity of our Redeemer's anguish, and the prodigious weight of his woes. And this indeed it shows beyond the power of description. His ardent love to mankind, and his fervent zeal for his Father's glory, prompted him to desire these sufferings. His invincible resolution, and unequalled magnanimity, emboldened him not to decline, but to meet them. Yet they were so great, so terrible, that his nature being human, could not but recoil a little, and he started at their approach, and had it not been divine also, must inevitably have sunk under the load.

* John. iii. 14. Δει τον, &c. The same expression is used, Luke xxiv. 26.

was a necessity for his crucifixion; because this was stipulated in the covenant of peace made between the Father and the Son: because it was expressly foretold by the ancient prophets, (and the scripture cannot be broken), that the Messiah should be cut off out of the land of the living; because a variety of types, and a multitude of sacrifices, prefigured his death: one of the types pointed out the very manner of his suffering; and all the sacrifices, detached from their dependency on this great oblation, would have been beggarly elements—mere unavailing empty ceremonies.

I apprehend, it is no limitation of the great God to suppose him incapable of acting otherwise than in perfect and perpetual consistency with himself. Neither is it any infringement on his absolute sovereignty, that he cannot but order all affairs for the honour of his justice, his fidelity, and each of his exalted perfections. This is the very thing which the sacred writers express in their plain but strong language, "God who cannot lie," (Tit. i. 2.) "He cannot deny himself," (2 Tim. ii. 13.)

Ther. God is often said to forgive our sins; particularly in that sublime passage, where he proclaims his name to Moses: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Now, pardon is a free thing. Freeness is implied in the very nature of forgiveness. Take away the former, and you destroy the latter. If an equivalent be given, pardon is no longer pardon, but a purchase. Forgiveness ceases to be an act of grace, and becomes the payment of a debt.

Asp. The text you quote is truly sublime and equally comfortable. But you forget to mention one article of very great moment, which closes and completes the glorious character; which seems added on purpose to prevent any wrong apprehensions of the Deity, and to guard against all abuse of the doctrine: "He will in no wise clear the guilty."*—God will not, on any consideration whatever, absolve the obstinate, persevering, irreclaimable offender; neither will he acquit any of the guilty race, absolutely, unconditionally, or without such a satisfaction as may repair the honour of his injured law.

"We have redemption through his blood," says the apostle, "even the forgiveness of our sins," (Eph. i. 7.) It is forgiveness, you see, though bought with a price. It is remission, though procured by blood. It is free with regard to that Sovereign Being who pardons; for he was under no obligation to admit of a propitiatory sacrifice, but might, without any diminution of his dignity, have left all mankind to perish in their sins. It is free with regard to the obnoxious creatures who are pardoned; for it is vouchsafed without any satisfaction demanded at their hands, or any penalty inflicted on their persons. It is in this respect also free, that an interest in the great atonement is granted to us, without the least merit, or any deserving qualifications of our own.

In all this God is not only merciful but most tenderly and immensely merciful. And will any one calumniate this adorable method of exercising mercy, because provision is also made for the glory of God's truth, God's holiness, and supreme authority?

Ther. Does not your notion of a propitiatory sacrifice derogate from the goodness of the Almighty Father, and transfer all our obligations to the incarnate Son?

Asp. Is there not goodness in allowing a substitute to suffer in our stead? Is there not still greater goodness in providing a substitute for us, without any solicitation on our part? Is there not the very highest exertion of goodness, in appointing a dear, an only, an incomparably excellent Son for the purpose? This marvellous scheme, far, very far from obscuring, most illustriously displays the superabundant loving-kindness of the Father.

"God so loved the world," apostate and polluted as it was—How did he love it? To a degree unutterable by any tongue, inconceivable by any imagination, and only to be expressed by the infinitely-precious effects: Loved it so, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" (John iii. 16.) And does this derogate from the goodness of the Almighty Father, to give not barely pardon and life, but give them through the hands, nay, through the wounds, the agonies, the death, of his divinest, dearest Son?

Such privileges, vouchsafed on any terms, must challenge the devoutest acknowledgments. But when attended with this additional demonstration of favour, they are enough to inflame us with gratitude, and transport us with admiration. They not only manifest, but commend* the divine

* Exod. xxxiv. 7. This text is not without its difficulty, especially in the original. Steuchus interprets the words, *Et innocens non erit sine piaculo*, "He shall not be acquitted without a piacular sacrifice." I think they may be translated, with a little more propriety and exactness, thus: "Pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin," ונקה לא ינקה though not with impunity; or rather, "though he will by no means let it go unpunished," meaning sin; which is the immediate antecedent, is expressed in the three preceding words, and may very properly be referred to in this clause.

* Rom. v. 8. Συνιστησι. It seems to be an image taken from the practice of tradesmen; who, in showing their goods, point out their excellencies, and set in the clearest light whatever may bespeak their worth, or recommend them to the purchaser.

love; show it to the greatest advantage, in the highest perfection, with every circumstance of recommendation and endearment. By this means, blessed God! thou hast unspeakably enhanced thy benefits! thou hast rendered them, though invaluable in themselves, exceedingly more so by the manner of conferring them!

Ther. Again in your elevations, Aspasio? The world, you know, is grown very rational and inquisitive; will admit nothing but upon clear evidence and full conviction. We expect, in all religious inquiries, not the flights of fancy, or the sallies of zeal, but a sobriety of reason and solidity of argument.

Asp. The world, rational as it is, seems, by the taste of the present age, no enemy to works of fancy. The world therefore may not be displeased with an affecting story. And a story, suitable to the occasion, just occurs to my mind; such as may serve to shadow forth, though very faintly, the surpassing benignity and grace of our crucified Lord.

An Asiatic queen, departing this life, left behind her three accomplished sons, all arrived to years of maturity. The young princes were at strife who should pay the highest respect to their royal mother's memory. To give scope for their generous contention, they agreed to meet at the place of her interment, and there present the most honourable gift they knew how to devise, or were able to procure.—The eldest came and exhibited a sumptuous monument, consisting of the richest materials, and ornamented with the most exquisite workmanship. The second ransacked all the beauties of the blooming creation; and offered a garland of such admirable colours, and delightful odours, as had never been seen before. The youngest appeared, without any pompous preparation, having only a crystal bason in one hand, and a silver bodkin in the other. As soon as he approached the tomb, he threw open his breast; pierced a vein, that lay opposite to his heart; received the blood in the transparent vase; and, with an air of affectionate reverence, placed it on the beloved parent's monument. The spectators, struck with the sight, burst into a shout of general applause, and immediately gave the preference to this last oblation.

If it was reckoned such a singular expression of love, to expend a few of those precious drops, for the honour of a parent; O how matchless, how ineffable, was the love of Jesus, in pouring out all his vital blood, for the salvation of enemies!

Ther. My greatest objection is still to come. If Christ suffered in our stead, he must suffer that very punishment which was due to our iniquities. This your orthodox divines affirm to be incomparably worse than bodily death; to be nothing else than the everlasting displeasure of God.

Asp. The punishment due to our iniquities, was shame, death, and the divine wrath.

As for shame—Was ever shame like that shame which our despised Redeemer bore? Though prince of the kings of the earth, yet born in a stable, and laid in a manger. When an infant, exiled from his own country, and a vagabond in a foreign land. When engaged in the discharge of his ministry, accused of the most flagitious crimes, and branded with the blackest names. When brought to his exit, apprehended as a thief; condemned as a malefactor, nay, the vilest of malefactors, a robber and a murderer is preferred before him. His executioners poured contempt upon all his venerable offices. As a king, they ridiculed him, by putting a mock sceptre into his hand, and crowning him with ragged thorns* instead of a royal diadem. They vilified his prophetic character by hoodwinking his eyes, striking his blessed head, and then asking, in cruel derision, "who it was that smote him?"† They cast reproach on his priestly undertaking, when they sharpened their tongues with malicious irony, and shot out those bitter words, "He saved others, himself he cannot save," (Matth. xxvii. 42.) To render his infamy as public as it was shocking, they hung him on a tree; and exposed him, defiled as he was with spitting, and disfigured with wounds, to the gazing eyes and contumelious scoffs of numberless spectators.

If you doubt whether Christ sustained the wrath of God, let us follow him to the garden of Gethsemene—a scene, which I would always recollect when I walk along the fertile vale, or expatiate amidst the flowery garden, or enjoy the delights of any rural retirement.—He had no remorse to alarm his spotless conscience; yet fearfulness and trembling came upon him. No violence was offered to his sacred person; yet a horrible dread overwhelmed him. It was night, cold night; and though our divine Master lay prostrate upon the earth, amidst the fall of chilling dews, he sweat—sweat blood—sweat great drops of blood, running down in reeking streams to the ground!—"He was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows," (Psal. xlv. 7.) yet so insupportable was his affliction, that he could not forbear crying out, "My soul is sorrowful—exceeding sorrowful—

* To have crowned the blessed Jesus with straw, would have been a vile insult, and treating him like an ambitious madman. But to crown him with keen, pungent, lacerating thorns, was adding cruelty to their insults; unheard-of barbarity to the most contemptuous mockery, Matt. xxvii. 29.

† Scornfully insinuating, that his sacred prophetic office was fit for nothing, but to serve such despicable purposes, Matt. xxvi. 68.

sorrowful even unto death!" (Mat. xxvi. 38.) What cause, what adequate cause, can be assigned for this amazing anguish? None but the wrath of his Almighty Father, who was now become an inexorable Judge; and treated him no longer as the Son of his love, but as the Surety for unnumbered millions of guilty creatures.

Ther. Was it possible that the innocent and holy Jesus, the dearly beloved Son of God, should be an object of his Father's wrath?

Asp. It was not only possible, but unavoidable and necessary: unavoidable, with respect to the divine holiness; necessary, for the procurement of our redemption. Sin was charged upon Christ; all the sins of all believers, in all ages and places of the world. And could the infinitely-righteous God behold such a deluge of iniquities, (those abominable things, which he hateth) without expressing his displeasure? Or could the blessed Jesus be punished, truly punished for them, without any painful sensation of their horrid evil, and of that tremendous indignation which they deserved?

If this was not the case, who can maintain the dignity of his conduct during the agony in the garden? Was there no pouring out of the divine displeasure? Then his behaviour in that hour of trial did not equal the intrepidity of the three Hebrew youths, who continued calm, and without the least perturbation, while the furnace was heated into seven-fold rage, (Dan. iii. 16, 17, 18.) But if this was the time in which, no created arm being strong enough to give the blow, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him," (Isa. liii. 10.) if the most high God "bent his bow like an enemy, and stood with his right hand as an adversary," (Lam. ii. 4.) it is easy to account for the prodigious consternation of our Redeemer. It is not to be wondered, that his heart, though endued with otherwise invincible fortitude, should become like melting wax. For who knoweth the power of that wrath, at which "the pillars of heaven tremble?" (Job. xxvi. 11.)

Ah! Theron, the vinegar and the gall which they gave him to drink, were not half so bitter as the cup of his Father's wrath; yet, for our sake, he drank it off to the very dregs. The nails that pierced his hands, and the spear that cleft his heart, were not half so sharp as the frowns of his eternal Father's countenance; which, for our consolation, he patiently submitted to bear.—He was rent with wounds, and racked with pain; his bones were dislocated, and his nerves convulsed: a thousand thorny daggers were planted in his temples, and life flowed out at ten thousand gushing veins. Yet this, all this was gentle, was lenient, in comparison of those inexpressible agonies, which penetrated his very soul. The former fetched not a single complaint from his mouth; the latter wrung from his breaking heart that passionate exclamation; "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"—Astonishing words! Surely, a distress, beyond all imagination grievous,* uttered them. Surely, the vengeance, not of men, but of heaven itself, extorted them. Every syllable of which speaks what the mourning prophet describes, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?" (Lam. i. 12.)

Here now is our whole punishment endured; the shame of the cross, and the sorrows of death; the suspension of the Almighty's favour, and the terrible sensations of his wrath.

Ther. Be it so. Yet all this amounts to no more than part of payment. For these sufferings were transient, temporary only, not eternal. Therefore the main circumstance, the most bitter ingredient, was wanting.

Asp. In the estimate of divine justice, and in point of penal satisfaction, they were equivalent to our endless punishment; especially if we consider the severity of the sufferings and the dignity of the Sufferer.

The severity of the sufferings. At the last day, all those fierce eruptive flames, which have raged in Ætna, in Vesuvius, and in every other burning mountain throughout the world; all those confined subterranean fires, which have so terribly shaken the foundations of Jamaica, Sicily, and Constantinople—in a word, the whole element of fire, however employed through all the revolutions of time, wherever diffused through all the regions of the globe, will then be collected from all quarters, and burst forth into one vast, resistless, general conflagration. In some such manner, all that wrath, which was due to the innumer-

* To heighten our idea of this distress, the evangelists make use of the most forcible words—ηρξατο εκθαμβεισθαι, he was seized with the most alarming astonishment—αδημονειν, he was overwhelmed with insupportable dejection—περιλυπος, he was besieged on all sides, as it were, with an army of invading sorrows—He wrestled amidst strong cries and tears, not only with the malice of men and rage of devils, but with the infinitely more dreaded indignation of God; he wrestled even unto an agony of spirit, εν αγωνια. All these circumstances of horror and anguish, constitute what a celebrated poet very justly styles,

"A weight of woe more than ten worlds could bear!"

The critic, probably, will admire the propriety and beauty of this line, which, composed of nothing but monosyllables, and clogged with the frequent repetition of a cumbrous consonant, makes the sound remarkably apposite to the sense. May we all be sacred critics! have not only a refined taste to relish such elegancies of composition, but an awakened heart, to feel the energy of such important truths.

able multitude of sinners, redeemed from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, which, if executed on the offending creatures, had been prolonged to eternal ages—all that wrath was contracted into one inconceivably dreadful blaze, and at once poured out upon the interposing Surety; at once flamed forth on our heavenly victim. This will appear more than probable, if, among other particulars, we contemplate the unequalled magnanimity of our Lord, who is styled "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," (Rev. vi. 5.) and compare it with his bloody sweat in the garden, and his exceeding bitter cry on the cross.*

The dignity of the Sufferer.—Had our Saviour's sufferings been the sufferings of a mere man, or of the most exalted angel, I acknowledge they could have bore no proportion to our demerit. It were impossible for a finite being to sustain the wrath, or discharge the debt. But they were the sufferings of the Prince of Heaven, and the Lord of Glory; before whom all men are as dust, and all angels as worms. Was an infinite Majesty offended? An infinite Mediator atoned. Weigh the dignity, the immense dignity of the Redeemer's person, against the everlasting duration of our punishment, and it will not only counterbalance, but preponderate. Finite creatures can never make an infinite satisfaction; no, not through the most unlimited revolution of ages. Whereas, when our divine Lord undertook the work, being truly and properly infinite, he finished it at once. So that his sufferings, though temporary, have an all-sufficiency of merit and efficacy. They are, in this respect, parallel; nay, on account of the infinitude of his nature, they are more than parallel to an eternity of our punishment.

It was Emmanuel, it was the incarnate God, who purchased the church, and redeemed sinners, with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.) The essential grandeur of our Saviour communicated its ennobling influence to every tear he shed, to every sigh he heaved, and every pang he felt.

This renders his sufferings a perfect, as their vicarious nature renders them a proper, satisfaction. And though "the wood of Lebanon was not sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering," (Isa. xl. 16,) this sacrifice fully answers the exigence of the case. This sacrifice sends up an ever-acceptable odour to the skies, and diffuses its sweet perfume through all generations; such as appeases heaven, and revives the world.

Yes, Theron, you must give me leave to repeat the delightful truth: It was "the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us." (Tit. ii. 13, 14.) His sacrifice, therefore, must be inconceivably meritorious. O that sinners, the vilest of sinners, knew its all-sufficient efficacy! they would no longer be holden in the bonds of iniquity, by that destructive suggestion of the devil, "There is no hope." (Jer. ii. 25.)

Ther. What valuable end could such vicarious sufferings accomplish? Suppose God absolutely inexorable, and they cannot avail. Suppose him divinely merciful, and they are needless.

Asp. The difficulty you propose, I think, has been obviated already; so that I have no occasion to solve your dilemma, but only to answer your query. These sufferings, as a punishment, gave ample satisfaction to the divine violated law; as a sacrifice, they perfectly reconciled us to our offended God; as a price, they redeemed us from every evil, and purchased for us a title to all good.

This is a subject of the most distinguished importance. Let not my Theron imagine, I would abuse his patience, if I dwell a moment longer on the favourite topic. I might enumerate many ends, all magnificent and gracious, accomplished by this wonderful expedient. I content myself with specifying a few; but those, such as bring the highest glory to God, administer the most solid comfort to man, and most effectually promote the interests of piety.

In this we have a manifestation of the most awful justice, and at the same time a display of unbounded goodness. Awful justice, in that the great and terrible God, though determined to exercise mercy, would exercise it only in such a manner as might vindicate the authority of his law, might testify the purity of his nature, and declare the inviolable faithfulness of his word. Unbounded goodness; in that he withheld not his Son, his only Son, but freely gave him up for us all; gave up "the brightness of his glory," to be covered with infamy; gave up "the beloved of his soul," to expire in agonies; on purpose to obtain honour and immortality for apostate men. The torments inflicted on all the damned in hell, are not so fearful a monument of God's justice, as those dying agonies of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor could a thousand worlds conferred on mankind, have been such an act of superabundant munificence, as that gift of his ever-blessed Son.

Look we for power and wisdom? To uphold the humanity of Christ, under all the studied cruelties of men, under the insatiate rage of devils, and the far more tremendous curse of the divine law;* to conquer sin,

* I think the language of the Greek liturgy is the language of strict propriety, as well as of fervent devotion, Δι' αγνωστων σε παθηματων. The sufferings of our Lord are, in their measure and weight, to us unknown; absolutely beyond the reach of human imagination.

* Isaiah xliii. 6. "I the Lord, will hold thine hand, and will keep thee." This is spoken of the

and death, and hell, by a person bound with fetters, nailed to a tree, and crucified in weakness; to expiate, by one offering, the innumerable millions of crimes committed by all his people from the beginning to the end of time: was not this power? matchless power! astonishing power! And as for wisdom, how admirable was the contrivance, which could harmonize the seemingly opposite claims of mercy and of justice! and not only satisfy each, but magnify both! Had punishment been executed in all its rigour on the sinner's person, mercy had lost her amiable honours. Had the sinner been restored to favour, without any penalties sustained either by himself or his Surety, justice had been set aside as an insignificant attribute. Whereas, by our Lord's vicarious and expiatory sufferings, both are manifested, and both are exalted. Therefore the Scripture affirms, that God hath not only exercised, but abounded in wisdom and prudence; nay, hath abounded in all wisdom and prudence, (Eph. i. 8,) by this combination of righteous vengeance and triumphant grace, which is at once so honourable to himself and so advantageous to his people.

Ther. "Advantageous to his people."—I am glad you are come to this point. This is what I want to have cleared up. I am for those doctrines, which glorify God by doing good to man. Give me the religion whose aspect is benign, and whose agency is beneficial: not like a meteor, to dazzle us with a vain glitter; or like a comet, to terrify us with a formidable glare; but like yonder sun, whose beams shed light, and life, and joy all around.

Asp. If this be what you seek, and what you prize, the Christian religion, this doctrine in particular, will answer your warmest expectations, and challenge your highest esteem; for it is rich with benefits of the most needful, the most desirable, and most exalted kind.—The first and grand blessing is pardon of sins; pardon, not of small sins only, but of the most aggravated, the most horrid, the most enormous. Be they flaming as scarlet, be they foul as the dunghill, be they black as hell itself—yet they shall be as the spotless wool, or as the virgin snows. Isaiah i 18. They shall "be, as though they had never been." Pardon, not of a few, but of all sins. Be they numerous as the hairs of our head, numerous as the stars of heaven, numerous as the sand upon the sea-shore, the blood of Jesus cleanseth from them all. (1 John i. 7.)

Hereby we have victory over death, and admittance into everlasting life. For thus saith the holy apostle, concerning the poor sojourners in clay: "Seeing therefore the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also partook of the same: that, by undergoing death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil: and deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) And thus saith the venerable elder, concerning the glorified saints in light: "These are they who came out of great tribulation; and they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne." (Rev. vii. 14.)

The Philistines rejoiced when Samson, the destroyer of their country, was delivered into their hands. How much greater reason have we to rejoice, since the blessed Jesus has vanquished our last enemy! has made death the minister of endless life, and the grave a gate to eternal glory! Joseph had cause to be glad, when he put off his prison-garments, and was clothed with change of raiment; when he was brought from the dungeon to the palace, and honoured with a seat at the right hand of the king. But is it not an incomparably richer blessing, to have our robes washed in redeeming blood, and our souls cleansed from all guilt? Is it not an incomparably higher advancement, to be admitted into the blissful presence, and to possess the everlasting kingdom of God?

To comprehend all in a word.—Hereby are procured, even for the most unworthy creatures, all the benefits of the new covenant. Therefore the blood of Christ is styled by a prophet, "the blood of thy covenant," (Zech. ix. 11.) by an apostle, "the blood of the everlasting covenant," (Heb. xiii. 20.) and our Lord himself says, "this is the new covenant in my blood," (Luke xxii. 20.) Is it a privilege to know God, the infinitely amiable centre and source of all perfection? Is it a most valuable endowment to have his laws put into our minds, and written on our hearts? Is it a branch of real felicity to have our numberless sins forgiven, and not one of our iniquities remembered any more? Is it the compendium of all happiness to have God for our portion and our exceeding great reward? to be his peculiar treasure, his loving and beloved people? (Heb. viii. 10—12. Of all these we may say, They are the purchase of Immanuel's blood; and whoever is truly interested in the one, is unquestionably entitled to the other.

Who, then, would refuse so comfortable—

Ther. Too comfortable, we might imagine, to be either true in itself, or safe in

Messiah. It gives him assurance of effectual support, when the vengeance of heaven, the fury of hell, and the sins of the world, should fall upon him with united violence. To support the Mediator under these circumstances, is mentioned as a very distinguished act of that omnipotent arm, which created the heavens, and spread forth the earth, and giveth spirit to them that walk therein, ver. 5.

its consequences. Must it not tend to imbolden the sinner in the prosecution of his vices? Who need scruple to transgress, or be very solicitous to repent, if an all-atoning sacrifice has been offered for every kind and every degree of wickedness?

Asp. Would you have sinners intimidated? Nothing speaks such terror to the children of disobedience, as the bitter passion and accursed death of Christ. All the rhetorical aggravations of sin, with regard to its loathsome nature, and execrable vileness; all the severity of vengeance, executed upon rebellious angels or wicked men; all, all are weak and inexpressive, compared with the dreadful emphasis of this great transaction. For if the Lord Almighty spared not his own Son, when guilt was not found in him, but only imputed to him; how much less shall he spare incorrigible offenders, who both habitually commit, and obstinately persist in their daring impieties?

If, by repentance, you mean an ingenuous sorrow for our transgressions, nothing is so likely to break the stony, or melt the icy heart, as these doleful effects of sin. Let us imagine ourselves present at Calvary, and standing by the cross. See! the innocent, the amiable, the illustrious Saviour, hangs on a tree—a tree, torturous as the rack, and ignominious as the gibbet! See! his face is foul with spitting, and his sides are torn with the scourge. His veins stream with blood, and his heart is wounded with anguish. There he hangs, abandoned by his friends, reviled by his enemies, and forsaken even by his God. Can we reflect, that we, even we, were the cause of this inconsolable misery, and not feel remorse in our consciences, or sorrow in our minds? Can we reflect, that for us, for us he bore this amazing torment, and not smite our breasts, or be pained at our very souls?

If, by repentance, you mean a thorough renunciation of all iniquity, no motive is so effectual to divorce the heart from every abominable idol, and divert the feet from every evil way, as an attentive consideration of our Redeemer's death. Whose indignation does not rise against the infamous wretch that betrayed the blessed Jesus? who is not ready to detest those envenomed tongues which accused him, and those barbarous hands which crucified him? How then can we cherish those horrid lusts, which were the principal actors in this deepest of tragedies? How can we caress, how can we entertain, how can we endure those execrable iniquities, which were the betrayers and murderers of the Prince of Life? "He bore our sins in his own bleeding, agonizing body on the tree;" not that we should be imboldened to forsake them, but incited to abhor them, and induced to forsake them; that, in our practice and our affections we should not only be averse, but even "dead to sin," (1 Pet. ii. 24.)

If you would have benevolence, your favourite principle, take place and operate, it is impossible to urge so endearing a persuasive to universal good-will as this "kindness and love of God our Saviour," (Tit. iii. 4.) How can we indulge the sallies of resentment, or harbour the seeds of animosity, when the meek, the merciful, the infinitely gracious Redeemer, laid down his life for his bitterest enemies? How can we treat with contempt or indifference, even the meanest of mankind, since our divine Master gave his all-glorious person for vile wretches, and miserable sinners? Never was there so winning a call to disinterested charity, as the amiable example of Christ; never so binding a cement of brotherly love, as the blood of the crucified Jesus.

In short, would you have people possessed of every heavenly virtue, and animated to the practice of every good work? Nothing administers so powerful an incitement to them all, as a lively and appropriating sense of this wondrous grace. Set home by the Holy Ghost,* it produces such a warm gratitude, and such a heart-felt joy, as are far more operative than the most awful threatenings, or the most cogent reasonings. So that, quite contrary to your suspicions, the native tendency of this excellent doctrine is, to suppress ungodliness, and promote piety.

Observe how the present calm evening, yonder mild declining sun, and these soft balmy breezes, have unlocked the flowery prisons, and detached a profusion of odours through the air; have inspirited the little songsters of the grove, and fetched lavish harmony from their throats. So sweetly will a true belief in Jesus Christ, and him crucified, draw forth all the powers of the soul, in acts of ready and cheerful obedience. He is therefore said, not only to justify, but also to "sanctify the people with his blood," (Heb. xiii. 12.)

Let us consider the death of Christ, in this its full grandeur and extensive efficacy, and we shall discern the admirable propriety of the apostle's remark, "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," (Heb. ii. 10.) It

* The reader will give me leave, on this occasion, to subjoin the noble doxology of our church; which, when thus applied, may be an excellent means, both of expressing our gratitude, and of quickening our devotion. "Glory be to the Father," for providing this all-sufficient atonement, and giving his Son to save a ruined world. "Glory be to the Son," for humbling himself to the death of the cross, and obtaining eternal redemption for sinners. "Glory be to the Holy Ghost," for testifying of Christ in our hearts, and appropriating this great salvation to our souls.

became, as an act of sovereignty in God, it comported with the dignity, and emblazoned (if I may so speak) the incomprehensible majesty of his perfections. As an execution of impartial vengeance on our Surety, it asserted the rights of divine government, and secured the utmost veneration to the divine law. As an emanation of rich indulgence to us, it redressed all our misery, and retrieves our whole happiness. In each, in every respect, it is worthy of the most grateful and adoring acceptance from sinful man, and such as will be had in everlasting honour by the choirs of saints, and the host of angels.

Ther. I thank you, Aspasio. Your arguments have not indeed converted me, but they have strengthened my faith. I never was so unhappily mistaken, as to disbelieve the satisfaction made by our Lord Jesus Christ; made to divine justice; made for the sins of the world. But I now see more clearly its reasonableness and importance; its cheering aspect on the guilty conscience, and its benign influence on the moral conduct.

Asp. I congratulate you, dear Theron, from my inmost soul, on your thorough conviction of this important truth. May you have still more extensive and generous views of the glorious article! and may every renewed view be more and more influential on your heart!

Reviving, ravishing thought! to have him for our bleeding victim! him for our great propitiation! at whose feet the armies of heaven bow, and the saints in light adore! reviving, ravishing thought! to have all our punishment sustained, and the whole curse of the law exhausted; so that justice itself can demand no more! Nay, to have so perfect a ransom paid for our redemption, that it is not barely an act of favourable indulgence, but of the highest righteousness* also, to pardon, accept, and glorify the believer. In such a method of reconciliation, how fully does the judgment acquiesce, and how securely the conscience rest!

Excuse me, Theron. My affections are again upon the soar. But I clip their wings.—Only let me ask, is not this doctrine the grand peculiarity of the gospel, by which it stands distinguished from every other religion professed in the world? Is it not the central point, in which all the lines of duty unite, and from which all the rays of consolation proceed? Strike this article from the creed, and you reduce the mystery of godliness to a system of ethics; you degrade the Christian church into a school of philosophy. To deny the expiation made by our Redeemer's sacrifice, is to obscure the brightest manifestation of divine benignity, and to undermine the principal pillar of practical religion; is to make a desperate shipwreck of our everlasting interests, and to dash (such, I fear, it will be found in the final issue of things) ourselves to death on the very rock of salvation.

Ther. Now, I believe it is time to repair homewards. And I hope it will be no disagreeable exchange, if we resign our seat on the mount for a place in the dining-room.

Asp. Pray, let me inquire, as we walk along, (for I was unwilling to interrupt our discourse, merely to gratify my curiosity,) what may be the design of yonder edifice, which rises on a small eminence, near the public road? It is neither a tower, nor a dwelling-house; but looks like a stately column, erected on purpose to beautify the prospect.

Ther. It is a sort of monumental pile: erected, as the story goes, on a very memorable occasion. Queen Eleanor accompanied King Edward the First to (what was called) the holy war; in which he gained signal advantages over the infidels, and acquired a large share of renown to himself. After many gallant exploits performed in the field, a treacherous and desperate Saracen, demanding admittance into his chamber, under pretence of private business, wounded him with an impoisoned dagger. The consequence of which, his physicians declared, must be inevitable and speedy death, unless the poison was sucked out by some human mouth. This might possibly preserve the royal patient, but would be extremely dangerous to the operator.

Dangerous as it was, his Queen claimed the office; insisted upon it, as the consort's right; and executed it so faithfully, that she saved the king's life—so happily, that she lost not her own. After this, she returned to England, lived many years, and bore several children. But, sooner or later, royalty itself must pay the debt to nature. Dying on a journey to Scotland, she was brought back to the last and long home of our English monarchs.* Wherever her corpse rested, in the way to its interment, a structure,† (such as you now behold) was raised,

* Therefore the apostle says, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." 1 John i. 9. Faithful; because he had promised this blessing, by the unanimous voice of all his prophets. Just; surely then he will punish! No; for this very reason he will pardon. This may seem strange; but, upon the evangelical principles of atonement and redemption, it is apparently true: because, when the debt is paid, or the purchase made, it is the part of equity to cancel the bond, and consign over the purchased possession.

* Westminster Abbey.

† One of these structures stands on the high road, near Northampton. It is surrounded with a large flight of steps, at the bottom; and ornamented towards the top, with four female statues, in full pro-

in order to perpetuate the memory of her conjugal affection.

Asp. And should not our hearts be a monument of gratitude to the blessed Jesus? who drew the deadly venom, not from our veins, but from the immortal part of our nature; and not at the hazard, but at the loss, the certain and unavoidable loss of his precious life? He opened his breast, opened his very soul, to the keenest arrows of vindictive justice; that, transfixing him, they might drop short of us; "the poison whereof drank up his spirits," (Job vi. 4,) that the balm of peace might refresh ours.

O, my Theron! let our memories be the tablet, to record this unexampled instance of compassion and goodness. Let our affections dwell upon the tragical, the delightful history; till they melt into contrition, and are inflamed with love. If we want an inscription, let us make use of those noble lines, which, in the finest climax imaginable, describe the magnificence and grace of this astonishing transaction:

——"Survey the wondrous cure,
And at each step let higher wonder rise.
Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
Through means that speak its value infinite!
A pardon bought with blood! with blood divine!
With blood divine of him I made my foe!
Persisted to provoke! Though woo'd and aw'd,
Bless'd and chastised, a flagrant rebel still;
Nor I alone! A rebel universe!
My species up in arms! Not one exempt!
Yet for the foulest of the foul, he dies!"
Night Thoughts, No. iv.

DIALOGUE V.

Aspasio having some letters of importance to answer, as soon as the cloth was taken away, retired from table. His epistolary engagements being dispatched, he inquired for Theron. The servants informed him that their master walked into the garden. A very little search found him seated on an airy mount, and sheltered by an elegant arbour.

Strong and substantial plants of laburnum formed the shell, while the slender and flexile shoots of syringia filled up the interstices. Was it to compliment, as well as to accommodate their worthy guests, that they interwove the luxuriant foliage? Was it to represent those tender but close attachments, which had united their affections, and blended their interests? I will not too positively ascribe such a design to the disposition of the branches. They composed, however, by their twining embraces, no inexpressive emblem of the endearments and the advantages of friendship. They composed a canopy of the freshest verdure, and of the thickest texture; so thick, that it entirely excluded the sultry ray, and shed both a cool refreshment, and an amusive gloom; while every unsheltered tract glared with light or fainted with heat.

You enter by an easy ascent of steps, lined with turf, and fenced with a balustrade of sloping bay-trees. The roof was a fine concave, peculiarly elevated and stately. Not embossed with sculpture, not mantled over with fret-work, not incrusted with splendid fresco; but far more delicately adorned with the syringa's silver tufts, and the laburnum's flowering gold; whose large and lovely clusters, gracefully pendent from the leafy dome, disclosing their sweets to the delighted bee, and gently waving to the balmy breath of spring, gave the utmost enrichment to the charming bower.

Facing the entrance, lay a spacious grassy walk, terminated by an octangular basin with a curious *jet d'eau* playing in the centre. The waters, spinning from the lower orifices, were attenuated into innumerable little threads, which dispersed themselves in a horizontal direction, and returned to the reservoir in a drizzling shower. Those which issued from the higher tubes, and larger apertures, either sprung perpendicularly, or spouted obliquely, and formed as they fell, several lofty arches of liquid crystal, all glittering to the eye and cooling to the air.

Parallel to the walk ran a parterre, planted with an assemblage of flowers, which advanced one above another, in regular gradations of height, of dignity, and of beauty. First, a row of daisies, gay as the smile of youth, and fair as the virgin snows. Next, a range of crocuses, like a long stripe of yellow satin, quilted with threads, or diversified with sprigs of green. A superior order of ranunculuses, each resembling the cap of an earl's coronet, replenished the third story with full blown tufts of glossy scarlet. Beyond this, a more elevated line of tulips* raised their flourished heads, and

portion. A latin inscription informs the traveller, concerning its occasion and design:

"In perpetuam Reginæ Eleanoræ
Conjugalis amoris memoriam."

* Here is, it must be confessed, some little deviation from the general laws of the season; some anachorism in the annals of the parterre. The flowers united in this representation do not, according to the usual process of nature, make their appearance together. However, as, by the economy of a skilful gardener, they may be thus associated, I hope the possibility of the thing will screen my flowery productions from the blasts of censure. Or, may I not shelter my blooming assembly under the remark of a masterly critic, which is as pertinent to the case, as if it had been written on purpose for our vindication; and in all respects so elegant, that it must adorn every work which quotes it, and charm every person who reads it?

"A painter of nature is not obliged to attend her in her slow advances, which she makes from one season to another; or to observe her conduct in the successive productions of plants and flowers. He may draw into his description all the beauties of the Spring and Autumn, and make the whole year contribute something to render it more agreeable. His rose trees, wood

opened their enamelled cups; not bedecked with a single tint only, but glowing with an intermingled variety of almost every radiant hue. Above all arose that noble ornament of a royal escutcheon, the *fleur-de-luce*, bright with etherial blue, and grand with imperial purple; which formed, by its graceful projections, a cornice or a capital of more than Corinthian richness, and imparted the most consummate beauty to the blooming colonnade.

The whole, viewed from the arbour, looked like a rainbow painted upon the ground, and wanted nothing to rival that resplendent arch, only the boldness of its sweep, and the advantage of its ornamental curve.

To this agreeable recess Theron had withdrawn himself. Here he sat musing and thoughtful, with his eye fixed upon a picture representing some magnificent ruins. Wholly intent upon his speculation, he never perceived the approach of Aspasio, till he had reached the summit of the mount, and was ready to take a seat by his side.

Asp. Lost, Theron! quite lost in thought! and unaffected with all these amiable objects; insensible amidst this profusion of beauties, which, from every quarter, make their court to your senses! Methinks, the snarling cynic in his tub, could hardly put on a greater severity of aspect than my polite philosopher in his blooming Eden.

Ther. Ah! my dear friend, these flowery toys, which embellish the garden, are familiar to my eye, and therefore cheap in my esteem. I behold them frequently, and for that reason, feel but little of the pleasing surprise which they may possibly awaken in a stranger. Something like this we all experience with regard to events infinitely more worthy our admiring notice. Else, why are we not struck with a mixture of amazement, veneration, and delight, at the grand machinery and magnificent productions of nature?

That the hand of the Almighty should wheel round the vast terrestrial globe, with such prodigious rapidity and exact punctuality, on purpose to produce the regular vicissitudes of day and night, on purpose to bring on the orderly succession of seed-time and harvest! We wonder when we read of the Israelites sojourning forty years in the desert, marching backward and forward over its burning sands, and find neither their clothes waxing old, (Deut. viii. 4,) by so long a use, nor their feet swelling with so painful journies. (Neh. ix. 21.) Yet we are neither impressed with wonder, nor affected with gratitude, when we enjoy the benefits of the air, which clothes the earth, as it were, with a garment; which has neither contracted any noxious taint through the extensive revolution of almost six thousand years, nor suffered any diminution of its natural force, though exercised in a series of unremitted activity, ever since the elementary operations began.

This draught in my hand, shows us the instability of the grandest, most laboured monuments of human art. They are soon swept away among the other feeble attempts of mortality; or remain only, as you see here, in shattered ruins, memorials of the vain and powerless ambition of the builders. How strange then, that a structure, incomparably more tender and delicate, should be preserved to old age and hoary hairs! That the bodily machine, which is so exquisite in its frame, so complicated in its parts, and performs so many thousands* of motions every moment, should continue unimpaired, yet act without intermission, so many days and weeks, and months and years! How strange all this; yet, because common, how seldom does it excite our praise, or so much as engage our notice!

Asp. Your remarks are as just, as the neglect of them is customary.—Unaccountable supineness! Though "God doth great things," worthy of all observation, "yea, and wonders without number," we yawn with indolence, instead of being animated with devotion, or transported with delight. "Lo! he goeth before us," in evident manifestations of wisdom and power, yet we see him not; "he passeth on also," and scatters unnumbered blessings from his providential hand, "but we perceive him not." (Job ix. 10, 11.)

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bines and jessamines may flourish together, and his beds be covered at the same time with lilies, violets, and amaranthuses. His soil is not restrained to any particular set of plants, but is proper either for oaks or myrtles, and adapts itself to the product of every climate.—Oranges may grow wild in it; myrrh may be met with in every hedge; and if he thinks it proper to have a grove of spices, he can quickly command sun enough to raise it. His concerts of birds may be as full and harmonious, and his woods as thick and gloomy as he pleases. He is at no more expense in a long vista than a short one, and can as easily throw his cascades from a precipice of half a mile high, as from one of twenty yards. He has the choice of the winds, and can turn the course of his rivers in all the variety of meanders, that are most delightful to the reader's imagination. In a word, he has the modelling of nature in his own hands, and may give her what charms he pleases, provided he does not reform her too much, and run into absurdities by endeavouring to excel."—Spect. Vol. vi. No. 418.

* Thousands—Not to mention the spontaneous, if we consider only the mechanical motions, which are continually performed in the animal system; the digestive action of the stomach—the vermicular agitation of the bowels—the progress of the chyle through the lacteal vessels—the many, many operations of the secreting glands—the compression of the lungs, and all their little cellular lodgments by every act of respiration: above all, that grand impetus, the systole of the heart, which, by every constriction, darts the crimson current through an innumerable multitude of arteries: and drives, at the same instant of time, the refluent blood through an innumerable multitude of corresponding veins. Such a view will oblige us to acknowledge that Theron's account is far from being extravagant, that it rather diminishes than exaggerates the real fact.

This, though greatly culpable, is to be reckoned among the smallest instances of our ungrateful insensibility. Are we not inattentive even to the work of redemption? That work, which according to the emphatical declaration of scripture, "exceeds in glory," (2 Cor. iii. 9,) is by far the greatest, the most marvellous of all sublunary, perhaps of all divine transactions. Are we not shamefully unaffected, even with the appearance of God in human flesh? Though the King of kings vouchsafes to exchange his throne for the humiliation of a servant, and the death of a malefactor; though he is pleased by the imputation of his active as well as passive obedience, to become "the Lord our righteousness;" yet——

Ther. You are taking an effectual way, Aspasio, to rouse me from my reverie, and make me indeed like the snarling philosopher. "Imputed righteousness is a scheme grossly frivolous and absurd, utterly insufficient to answer the end proposed; and, one would think, could never be depended on, where there is the least degree of understanding, and capacity for reasoning."*

Asp. Who is warm now, Theron? May I not remind my friend, that the resentful is no more fitted to work conviction than the rapturous? Perhaps you have not duly considered this subject, nor seen it in the proper point of view. I have sometimes beheld a ship of war several leagues off at sea. It seemed to be a dim cloudy something, hovering on the skirts of the horizon, contemptibly mean, and not worthy of a moment's regard. But, as the floating citadel approached, the masts arose; the sails swelled out; its stately form and curious proportions struck the sight. It was no longer a shapeless mass, or a blot in the prospect, but the master-piece of human contrivance, and the noblest spectacle in the world of art. The eye is never weary of viewing its structure, nor the mind in contemplating its uses.

Who knows, Theron, but this sacred scheme likewise, which you now look upon as a confused heap of errors, may very much improve when more closely examined; may at length appear a wise and benign plan, admirably fitted to the condition of our fallen nature, and perfectly worthy of all acceptation.

Ther. I know not what may happen, Aspasio; but there seems to be very little probability of such a change. For, though my last opposition was a mock-fight, in my present objections I am very sincere, and to this doctrine I am a determined enemy. The notion of a substituted and vicarious righteousness, is absurd even to common sense, and to the most natural and easy reflections of men.

Asp. It may not, my dear friend, agree with our natural apprehensions, nor fall in with the method which we might have devised for the salvation of mankind. But this is the voice of scripture, and a maxim never to be forgotten: "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways," (Isa. lv. 8.) "His righteousness is like the strong mountains, and his judgments are like the great deep," (Psal. xxxvi. 6.) the former immoveable, the latter unsearchable.

Ther. The mention of mountains put me in mind of what I was reading yesterday; the keen irony with which Abimelech's principal officer chastised the blustering Gaal: "Thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as if they were men," (Judg. ix. 36.) He, it is sarcastically intimated, was afraid, and my Aspasio seems to be fond, of shadows.

Asp. Happy for your Aspasio, that irony is no argument. If a jury was impannelled to try me and my doctrine, I should certainly except against irony. Generally speaking, he is neither a good man, nor a true; and, if I remember right, you yourself consented to set him aside in this debate. I shall therefore adapt my reply rather to what is solid than what is smart. "This notion," you say, "is absurd even to common sense." A saying, on which I must beg leave to put a query. It was, I own, absolutely beyond the power of common sense, unassisted by divine revelation, to discover this truth. I will grant, farther, that this blessing infinitely transcends whatever common sense has observed in all her converse with finite things. But if I have any the least acquaintance with common sense, I am very sure she will not, she cannot pronounce it an absurdity. To this judge I refer the cause.

And to open the cause a little, let me just observe that God imputed our sins to his Son. How else could the immaculate Jesus be punished as the most inexcusable transgressor? "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts," (Zech. xiii. 7.) Is not this the voice of a judge, pronouncing the sentence, and authorizing the execution? Or rather, does it not describe the action of justice, turning the sword from us, and sheathing it in Christ? Who, if he was our substitute, with regard to penal suffering, why

* The reader will probably be disgusted at this heat of temper, this asperity of diction, and both so abruptly introduced. I have no apology to make for my Theron. The reader has reason to be disgusted, has reason to be chagrined. Only let me desire him to remember that this is the very spirit, nay, these are the very words of a celebrated opposer of our doctrine; not added when he has fully proved the absurdity of the scheme, but assumed even upon the entrance to his discourse.

may he not stand in the same relation with regard to justifying obedience? There is the same reason for the one as for the other, every argument, in favour of the former, is equally conclusive in behalf of the latter.

Ther. I very freely grant, that Christ Jesus was punished in our stead; that his death is the expiation of our sin, and the cause of our security from penal suffering. But this—

Asp. Will undeniably prove, that sin was imputed to him; otherwise he could not truly suffer in our stead, nor be justly punished at all. "And imputation is as reasonable and justifiable in one case as in the other, for they both stand upon one and the same foot; and, for that reason, he who throws down one, throws down both." I should not have interrupted my Theron, only to introduce this answer from an eminent divine, who adds what should be very seriously considered: "And therefore, whoever rejects the doctrine of the imputation of our Saviour's righteousness to man, does, by so doing, reject the imputation of man's sin to our Saviour, and all the consequences of it. Or, in other words, he who rejects the doctrine of the imputation, does, by so doing, reject the doctrine of the expiation likewise."*

Ther. I know nothing of this divine; and, eminent as he is, can hardly take his *ipse dixit* for a decision.

Asp. I was in hopes you would pay the greater regard to his opinion, because he is not in the number of the whimsical fanatics.

Give me leave to observe farther, that the imputation of Christ's righteousness bears an evident analogy to another great truth of Christianity. We did not personally commit Adam's sin, yet are we chargeable with guilt, and liable to condemnation, on that—

Ther. How! we chargeable with guilt and liable to condemnation on account of Adam's transgression! This position I must deny, I had almost said, I must abhor. None other could, in the eye of justice and equity, be blamable for any offence of our first parents, but they only.

Asp. So says Theron; but what says St. Paul? This may be the voice of natural reason, but what is the language of divine revelation? "In whom," that is, in Adam, "all have sinned."

Ther. The words, if I remember right, are, "For that all have sinned."

Asp. In the margin, they are translated as I have repeated them. For this interpretation I might contend, as not in the least incompatible with the original phrase,* and as the most precisely suitable to the sacred argument. But I wave this advantage. Let the words run into your mould, and the translation take your form. They are equally decisive of the point in debate. They assign the reason why death came upon all men, infants themselves not excepted: "For that," or inasmuch as, "all have sinned." How? not in their own person; this was utterly impossible. But in that first grand transgression of their federal head, which, as it could not be actually committed by them, must, according to the tenor of the apostle's arguing, be imputed to them.

Ther. Pray, what do you mean by that stiff, and to me unintelligible phrase, *federal head?*

Asp. I mean what Milton celebrates, when he represents the Almighty Father thus addressing his eternal Son:

> ——"Be thou in Adam's room
> The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
> As in him perish all men, so in thee,
> As from a second root, shall be restored
> As many as are restored; without thee none."
> Book 3. l. 285.

I mean what the apostle teaches, when he calls Christ "the second man," (1 Cor. xv. 47.) and "the last Adam," (1 Cor. xv. 45.) The second! the last! How? Not in a numerical sense, not in order of time, but in this respect: That as Adam was a public person, and acted in the stead of all mankind, so Christ was a public person, and acted in behalf of all his people. That, as Adam was the first general representative of this kind, Christ was the second and the last; there never was, and there never will be any other. That what they severally did, in this capacity, was not intended to terminate in themselves, but to affect as many as they respectively represented. This is St. Paul's meaning, and this is the foundation of the doctrine of imputation.

Ther. If you build it on no other foundation than your own particular sense of the apostle's words, perhaps your ground may prove sandy, and treacherous to its trust.

Asp. I build it upon mine, and I deduce it from yours, Theron. But I am far from resting the whole weight of the cause upon a single text. It is established, again and again, in this same chapter. Neither do I wonder at the prejudices which you and others may entertain against the doctrine. It lies quite out of the road of reason's researches; it is among the wonderful things of God's law. This the inspired penman foresaw, and modelled his discourse accordingly. Like some skilful engineer, who,

* Staynoe upon "Salvation by Jesus Christ alone." Vol. i. p. 334. Where the reader may find several weighty considerations, clearly proposed, and strongly urged, for the explanation and establishment of this capital doctrine.

* Εφ' ω παντες ημαρτον. Rom. v. 12.

though he makes the whole compass of his fortification strong, yet bestows peculiar and additional strength on those parts which he apprehends will be exposed to the fiercest attack; so the wise, the divinely wise apostle, has inculcated, and re-inculcated this momentous point, has enforced it with all the assiduity of zeal, and confirmed it by all the energy of expression. "If, through the offence of one, many be dead—The judgment was by one to condemnation—By one man's offence, death reigned by one—By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," (Rom. v. 15, 16, 17, 18.) That there may remain no possibility of mistaking his meaning, or of eluding his argument, he adds, "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners," (Rom. v. 19.)

Ther. Sin, I am told by a celebrated expositor, sometimes signifies punishment. He farther informs me, that we may be said to sin in Adam, not by the imputation of his disobedience to us, but by becoming obnoxious to those sufferings which were due to his sin.

Asp. Then the apostle's reasoning will stand in this form; "death came upon all men, for that all have sinned;" that is, "death came upon all men, because all have been punished, or, an obnoxiousness to punishment came upon men, because all are become obnoxious to punishment." A goodly strain of argumentation for an unerring writer to use! But surely Gamaliel's pupil would disclaim, much more would Christ's ambassador scorn, such weak and unmeaning chicanery. He mentions sin and its punishment; but never hints, that they are intended to signify one and the same thing. He all along maintains a distinction between them; represents the former as the cause of the latter. Judgment, condemnation, death, are owing to sin, offence, disobedience. It is by the imputation of these that we become obnoxious to those.

This account is clear, is natural, and wants no strained criticisms to support it. This account demonstrates the equity of that providential government, which executes the sentence of death even on those descendants of Adam who have not sinned in their own persons. It also illustrates the procedure of that sovereign grace, which treats as righteous, and entitles to life, even those believers in Jesus, who have not obeyed in their own persons.—What says our church? You have a great veneration for the church of England, Theron.

Ther. I have. But, I fear, my Aspasio has neither so honourable an opinion of her worship, nor so steady an adherence to her constitution; otherwise he would not so highly extol those ambitious and canting hypocrites the Puritans; who were the most inveterate enemies of our excellent establishment, and would have rejoiced in its utter subversion.

Asp. As to the Puritans, you will do me the justice to acknowledge, that I speak only of their evangelical tenets, abstracted from all political principles. As to myself, your fears are friendly, but I trust they are groundless. I would only ask, who are to be deemed the most affectionate and faithful sons of their sacred mother? Those, I presume, who most cordially embrace her doctrines, and most dutifully submit to her precepts. By this touchstone let my fidelity be tried; and, for an immediate trial, be pleased to repeat her ninth article.

Ther. I cannot say, that I remember the particular words of any, though I have often read, and very much approve them all.

Asp. I wish you would commit to your memory four or five of the most distinguished.* They are a valuable treasure, and contain the quintessence of the gospel.

These are the words of the ninth article. "Original sin is the fault and corruption of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." It is the fault, says the pious Bishop Beveridge, and therefore we are guilty of it; it is the corruption also, and therefore we are defiled with it. Our homilies have recourse to no such palliatives, and qualifying interpretations, as my Theron's expositor uses. One of them affirms point blank, that "in Adam all men sinned universally." This seems to be a paraphrase on the text, whose translation you lately controverted. In what sense our great poetical divine understood the sacred writer is apparent from the following words, which are supposed to have been spoken by Jehovah himself:

> ——— "Adam's crime
> Makes guilty all his sons."
> *Milton*, book iii. l. 290.

And from another passage, where our rebellious progenitor, bewailing his aggravated misery, and the extensive malignity of his sin, declares,

> ——— "In me all
> Posterity stands cursed."—Book x. l. 817.

For my own part, I must confess, that if the transmission of original depravity be granted, I know not how the imputation of Adam's destructive apostacy can be denied.

If we had no concern in the one, how could we be justly punished with the other? I say punished. For to lose the primitive integrity of our nature, and inherit a depraved disposition, is at once a most deplorable calamity, and a most terrible punishment. Corruption transmitted, and guilt imputed, seem to be doctrines indissolubly

* Especially Articles 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

connected. To allow the former, and reject the latter, is in my apprehension to acknowledge the effect without admitting the cause.

Ther. To make us parties in a covenant, which we did not agree to, can this be equitable? To ruin us for a crime which we never committed, can this be merciful? Surely this is a flagrant injustice, never to be ascribed to the all-gracious God; a diabolical barbarity, add some, never to be mentioned without the utmost detestation.

Asp. I see no cause for such a tragical outcry of barbarity, nor indeed for any complaint of injustice. Not to insist upon the sovereignty of an all-creating God, and his unquestionable right, to "do what he will with his own," (Matt. xx. 15.) I would only ask, did he not condescend to transact with man, not on the foot of absolute uncontrollable authority, but in the honourable and delightful way of a covenant? Were not the terms of this covenant perfectly easy, and wonderfully gracious? Wonderfully gracious; for they proposed a state of inconceivable and everlasting felicity to creatures who were entitled to no happiness; (Luke x. 28.) had not the least claim to any good; no, not so much as to the privilege of existence. Perfectly easy; for what was the condition on man's part? Not any rigorous act of duty, nor severe course of self-denial, but the free enjoyment of millions of blessings and pleasures, with only the prohibition of one pernicious indulgence. Here, then, is made on one hand, a promise of the most glorious reward that God himself could give; and nothing required on the other, but the smallest expression of allegiance that man himself could wish. And is this injustice? is this barbarity?

Ther. All this was equitable enough with regard to Adam; but why should we be condemned for his violation of the covenant? Or how was such a constitution of things gracious with respect to us?

Asp. "Why condemned?" Because we should have been partakers of the benefit and the glory, if he had persevered in his duty. To this, I presume, none would object. And if they would not to the one, they ought not to the other.

You ask farther, "How was such a constitution of things gracious with respect to us?" I answer, because it was the most likely means to secure the happiness of us and all mankind. Was not Adam, of all persons, by far the best qualified to act as a general head? He had a perfection of knowledge, to discern his true interest; a perfection of holiness, to capacitate him for obedience; and a perfection of happiness, disposing him to perseverance. As none could have more eminent qualifications, none could have so many obligations. His own welfare, both bodily and spiritual, was at stake; the eternal interests of his rising family, and of his remotest posterity, were depending; the lives, the souls, the everlasting all of the whole human race, were embarked on the single bottom of his fidelity. Therefore the felicity of every individual that should spring from his loins, was a fresh motive to vigilance, an additional engagement to duty.* As his love to his offspring was more refined, more exalted, more god-like than ours, all these considerations, and inducements must operate upon him in their fullest scope, and with the strongest energy. What an intrenchment was here to keep out disobedience, and ward off ruin! An intrenchment deep as hell, high as heaven, wide as the whole extent of the human species.—Here then I may venture to throw the gauntlet, and challenge the whole world. Let the most penetrating mind devise a scheme, so wisely and graciously calculated to ascertain the success of a probationary state. If this be impracticable, then must every mouth be stopped; no tongue can have the least reason to complain: I, for my part, shall think myself obliged to admire the benignity of my Creator's conduct; and God may justly demand of all intelligent creatures, "What could have been done more" for the preservation and felicity of mankind, "that I have not done?" (Isaiah v. 4.)

Especially, when to all this we add, that the same Almighty Being, who appointed Adam to be our representative in the first covenant, without asking our actual consent, appointed also Christ to be our representative in the second covenant, without staying for our actual solicitation. When we take this into the account, there remains not the least shadow of injustice; but goodness, transcendent goodness, shines forth with the brightest lustre.

Ther. Goodness, Aspasio! This is surprising indeed! Why, if Adam's transgression be laid to our charge, we are damnable creatures the very moment we exist; and are liable to the torments of hell, even on account of his disobedience. To term this goodness, is the greatest of paradoxes! to affirm it of the Deity, is little less than blasphemy!

Asp. Let us be calm, my dear friend, and

* Should any person imagine himself more capable of standing than Adam, who was endowed with all the perfections of an innocent, holy, god-like nature; I think, by this very imagination he begins to fall; fall into pride. Should any person suppose, that, from a view to his own particular salvation, he would continue faithful; when Adam was not engaged to fidelity, from a regard to his own and the final happiness of all his posterity; he seems to be just as wise as the mariner, who persuades himself, that though a thousand anchors could not secure the ship in a storm, yet one might have done it effectually.

consider the case impartially. If it is not a real truth, I shall be as willing to relinquish it as yourself.

Is not death, eternal death, the wages of every sin? And if of every sin, then doubtless of original, which is the fountain from whence all the streams of actual iniquity flow; or rather the abyss from whence all the torrents pour. That which could not be pardoned, but by the humiliation and agonies of God's adorable Son, may reasonably be supposed to deserve the most dreadful vengeance. And it is affirmed, by an authority which you will not dispute, that, "for original as well as actual sin, the offering of Christ is a propitiation and satisfaction."*

Does not St. Paul deliver it as a maxim in divinity, That, "by the offence of one," Adam he undoubtedly means, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation?" (Rom. v. 18.) The import of the words, together with the connexion of the passage, lead us to understand this of a condemnation to eternal misery. The import of the words; for they are doubled,† to make them peculiary strong in their signification; and each word, within the compass of this very epistle, is used in that awful latitude of meaning, (Rom. ii. 3; iii. 8; viii. 1.) The connexion of the passage; because it stands opposed to that justification which is unto life. This, we are sure, includes the idea of an everlasting duration. And why should its tremendous counterpart be less extensive?

This sense is evidently patronized, and this doctrine most peremptorily asserted by our established church. What says the book of Homilies, when treating of the miseries consequent upon the fall? "This so great and miserable a plague, if it had only rested on Adam, who first offended, it had been much easier, and might the better have been borne. But it fell not only on him, but also on his posterity and children for ever; so that the whole brood of Adam's race should sustain the self-same fall and punishment, which their forefather by his offence most justly had deserved."‡ Lest any should misapprehend the design of our reformers, and suppose the punishment to consist only of some bodily suffering, or the loss of immortality, it is added in the same alarming discourse, "Neither Adam, nor any of his, had any right or interest at all in the kingdom of heaven; but were become plain reprobates and castaways, being perpetually damned to the everlasting pains of hell."

Lest you should imagine this might be written under a sally of hasty zeal, or that it is to be reckoned among the doting opinions of a credulous antiquity, let me remind my friend, that it is ingrafted into the Articles: those articles, which were approved by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, were ratified by the general consent of the clergy, and are to this day the national standard of our belief. The ninth article, beginning with a description of our depraved nature, subjoins an account of its proper desert: "In every person born into the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."*

Ther. How miserable then is man!

Asp. In himself he is miserable beyond expression. But a conviction of this misery is the beginning of all happiness. The valley of Achor is a door of hope.†

Ther. Explain yourself, Aspasio. You seem to deal very much in the incomprehensible.

Asp. Such a conviction would demonstrate the absolute insufficiency of all human attainments, and all human endeavours to procure life and salvation. For in case we could perform every jot and tittle of the divine law, offend in no instance, fall short in no degree, persevere to the very end; yet this would be no more than our present bounden duty. Not the least pittance of merit could arise from all this. Much less could this be sufficient to expiate original guilt, or remove the dreadful entail of the primitive all-destroying sin.

This, therefore, would most effectually preclude every false confidence, and sweep away at one stroke "every refuge of lies," (Isa. xxviii. 17.) It would lay us under an immediate, indispensable, and happy necessity of betaking ourselves to Christ. I say happy necessity; because then we should know by experience what each part of our Lord's awful yet tender declaration meaneth; "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help," (Hos. xiii. 9.) We should then find, that as sin and misery hath abounded through the first Adam, mercy and grace have much more abounded through the second. For, if we were ruined by a crime which we committed not, we are recovered by a righteousness which we performed not; a righteousness infinitely

* Article XXXI.

† Κριμα εις το παντας ανθρωπους.

‡ Homily on the nativity of Christ.

* I am surprised to see a learned author attempting to sheath the sting of this awful denunciation; attempting to prove that the words "do not signify God's eternal wrath, and the damnation of hell." I shall take no pains to confute what he is pleased to advance. I leave the question in the reader's own breast. Let him discover, if he can, a different meaning in the sentence. Unless he has a pretty shrewd nack at sophistry, I am persuaded he will find it a difficult matter to give any other tolerable turn to the passage. Surely it must be a reproach to our venerable mother, if she delivers her doctrine in language so fallacious, as must necessarily mislead the generality of her sons; or in terms so abstruse, as even a good understanding cannot develope, without some proficiency in critical legerdemain.

† Hos. ii. 15. Achor signifies trouble.

surpassing whatever we could have acquired, even though our nature had been transmitted to us free from any depravity, and exempt from all guilt.

Ther. In your opinion, then, and according to your scheme, *salve* and *regimen* are better than a sound constitution.

Asp. No, Theron. My opinion is, that none can think himself aggrieved, or have any reason to complain, at that grand and beneficent regulation, which suffers the glimmering taper to be obscured or extinguished, but sheds abroad the boundless and majestic beams of day. And if any comparison be made between the most perfect human obedience, and the everlasting divine righteousness of Christ, it should be taken from the glimmering taper and the meridian sun.

Ther. I cannot persuade myself to admire such mysterious and unaccountable notions. They must puzzle some, will offend others, but cannot edify any.

Asp. This point, that "we all died in Adam," were undone by his apostacy, cannot puzzle the simplest, if unprejudiced, mind. Nor will it offend any but the proud philosopher, or the self-righteous moralist. And I assure you I should not mention it, much less insist upon it, did it not subserve, and in a very singular manner, the purposes of edification. The doctrine of a Redeemer obeying and dying in our stead, is the very hinge and centre of all evangelical revelations—is the very life and soul of all evangelical blessings. This doctrine is not a little illustrated, and comes greatly recommended, by the imputation of Adam's sin.

Contraries, you know, cast light upon and set off each other. Winter and its severe cold make spring and its cheering warmth more sensibly perceived, and more highly pleasing. Such an influence has the present subject with respect to the vicarious obedience of our Mediator. The more clearly we see the reality of the first, the more thoroughly we shall discern the expediency, the excellency, the glory of the last. The more we are humbled under a conviction of the former, the more we shall covet, or the more we shall triumph in, the enjoyment of the latter. The apostle draws a long parallel, or rather forms a strong contrast between them, in the fifth chapter to the Romans. He speaks copiously of Adam's guilt, imputed to all mankind for condemnation and death; that he may speak the more acceptably, the more charmingly of Christ's righteousness, imputed to all believers for justification and life. In that dark ground, he well knew, this fairest, loveliest flower of Christianity appears with peculiar beauty; indeed with all the beauty of consummate wisdom, and adorable benignity.

Ther. It really seems to me a thing impossible, that one man's righteousness should be made another's. Can one man live by the soul of another? or be learned by the learning of another?—Good Aspasio, never attempt to maintain such palpable absurdities. They will expose Christianity to the scorn of infidels.

Asp. If infidels scoff at this comfortable truth, their scoffing will be, like all their other cavils, not the voice of reason, but the clamour of prejudice.

My friend's objection insinuates, what we never assert, that the essence of this righteousness is transfused into believers; which would doubtless be in fact impossible, as it is in theory absurd. But this we disavow as strenuously as you can oppose. The Redeemer's righteousness is made ours, not by infusion, but by imputation. The very terms we use may acquit us from such a ridiculous charge; as imputation signifies a placing to the account of one what is done by another. Accordingly, we believe, that the essence of this righteousness abides in Christ, but is placed to our account; that Christ, and Christ alone, actually performed it; that Christ, and Christ alone, personally possesses it; but that, performing it in our stead, and possessing it as our covenant-head, God imputes it to us, God accepts us for it, accepts us as much as if we had, on our own behalf and in our own persons, severally fulfilled it.

Though one man cannot live, be actuated with a principle of life, by the soul of another; yet you must allow, that one man, nay, that many men may live, be continued in the possession of life, for the righteousness of another. Or else you must do, what I am sure you abhor, you must charge with absurdity and impossibility even the declaration of the Deity: "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then will I spare all the place for their sakes." (Gen. xviii. 26.)

Ther. Not all your refinements can reconcile me to this uncouth notion. The practice is unexampled, and absolutely inconsistent with the rules of distributive justice.

Asp. Ah! my Theron, if we seek an example of God's unbounded goodness amongst the puny proceedings of men, we shall be led into the most egregious misapprehensions. To measure one of the sparks on your ring, and fancy we have taken the dimensions of the Alps or the Andes, would be, in comparison of this error, a small mistake: Since between a brilliant speck, and a range of mountains there is some proportion, but between human beneficence, and heavenly bounty there cannot possibly be any. However, the all-condescending Creator has been pleased so to dis-

pense his infinitely rich grace, that we may find, though nothing parallel, nothing correspondent, yet some faint shadow of its manner among the affairs of mankind; something that may perhaps give us such an idea of the stupendous subject, as a glow-worm would give of the sun's splendour, in case a person had never beheld that magnificent luminary. This remark I must entreat you to recollect, whenever I attempt to elucidate the mysteries of the gospel by the occurrences of common life.

When your worthy minister was disabled, by a rheumatic disorder, from attending on the business of his function, several of the neighbouring clergy gave him their assistance. Was he not, by this vicarious performance of his office, entitled to all the profits of his living? It seems, therefore, not so unexampled a thing for one person to act in another's stead. And when a service is thus discharged by the proxy, the benefit may, according to the received maxims of mankind, accrue to the principal. Did not Jehu's descendants, even to the fourth generation, reap the advantage of their great-grandfather's zeal? (2 Kings x. 30.) Does not the Duke of **** enjoy the honours and rewards won by the sword of a victorious ancestor? And may not the whole world of believers, with equal, with far greater justice, receive life and salvation on account of their all-deserving Saviour, especially since he and they are one mystical body, represented as such in scripture, and considered as such by God.

No, say you, this is contrary to the rules of distributive justice. What is your idea of a Surety? How was the affair stated, and how were matters negotiated, with relation to your generous acquaintance Philander? He, you know, was bound for an unfortunate brother, who lately stepped aside.

Ther. The debt by his brother's absconding, devolved upon Philander. He was responsible for all, and obliged to pay the whole sum.

Asp. Was not his payment as satisfactory to the creditor, as if it had been paid in the debtor's own person, by the debtor's own hand?

Ther. Certainly.

Asp. Was not the debtor, by this vicarious payment, released from all fear of prosecution, and acquitted from any future demand on this score?

Ther. He was.

Asp. Apply this instance to the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ, who is in the sacred writings expressly styled a Surety. (Heb. vii. 22.) If Philander's act was deemed, in the estimation of law, the act of his brother; if the deed of the former was imputed, in point of advantage, entirely to the latter; why should not the same effects take place, with regard to the divine bondsman and poor insolvent sinners? Why should that be exploded in our systems of divinity, which is universally admitted in our courts of justice?

Ther. Obedience and righteousness are, in the nature of the things themselves, personal qualities, and only so. Every man is that only (and can be nothing else) which he is in himself.

Asp. Righteousness, as dwelling in us, is undoubtedly a personal quality; and obedience, as performed by us, comes under the same denomination. But does this supersede the necessity, or destroy the existence of imputed righteousness? Your first proposition is ambiguous. Let it speak distinctly; add inherent to your righteousness, and the sense becomes determinate, but the argument falls to the ground.

"Every man is that only (and can be nothing else) which he is in himself." If I had never seen the Bible, I should have yielded my ready assent to this proposition. But, when I open the Old Testament, and find it written by the prophet, "in the Lord shall all the house of Israel be justified," (Isa. xlv. 25,) when I turn to the New Testament, and hear the apostle saying, "Ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principalities and powers." (Col. ii. 10.) I cannot concur with Theron, without contradicting revelation. Israel, or the true believer, is said to be justified; and the foundation of this blessing is declared to be, not in himself but in the Lord. The Colossians are said to be complete, which we are very certain they were not in themselves, and are expressly assured they were so in Christ. Hence it appears quite contrary to my friend's assertion, that sinners both have and are that in Christ, which they neither have nor are in themselves. They have by imputation a righteousness in Christ; they are, by this imputed righteousness, complete before God.

I believe your mistake proceeds from neglecting to distinguish between inherent and imputed. We never suppose that a profane person is devout, or an intemperate person sober. This is inherent righteousness. But we maintain that the profane and intemperate, being convinced of their iniquity, and betaking themselves to the all-sufficient Saviour for redemption, are interested in the merit both of his life and of his death. This is imputed righteousness. We farther affirm, that though really abominable in themselves, they are fully accepted by God for his beloved Son's sake. This is justification through imputed righteousness.

However strange this may seem, it is no precarious or unwarrantable opinion, but

the clear and positive declaration of scripture. He justifieth, he absolves from guilt, he treats as righteous—Whom? Upright, obedient, sinless creatures? This were nothing extraordinary.—No, but "he justifieth the ungodly, that believe in the Lord Jesus," (Rom. iv. 5,) imputing as the ground of this justification, their trespasses to him, and his righteousness to them.

Ther. I see no occasion for such nice distinctions and metaphysical subtilties, in plain popular divinity. Hard terms and abstruse notions may perplex the head, but seldom improve the heart.

Asp. Why then do you oblige us to make use of them? If some people twist and entangle the reins, it behoves others to clear them of the embarrassment, and replace them in their due order. Many writers, either from an artful design, or through a strange inadvertence, have jumbled and confounded these two very different ideas. Hence they have started objections to our doctrine, which, the moment you introduce this obvious distinction, vanish into air. They fall into a mistake of their own, and then charge the absurdity upon others.

I am no more fond of hard terms and abstruse notions than my Theron. Neither can I think the instance before us so abstruse a notion. I am very certain, you are capable of comprehending much higher and nicer refinements. Therefore I must once again intreat you to remember the very material difference between inherent and imputed righteousness. The former is the essence of sanctification, the latter is the ground of justification. By this, we are restored to the favour of God; by that, we are made meet for his heavenly kingdom. Let this distinction, which is easy, which is scriptural, which is important, take place, and we may for the future dismiss what you call the metaphysical subtilties. Our disagreement will cease, and our opinions tally.

Ther. I question that, Aspasio. There are other difficulties to be got over before I can digest so crude an opinion. If we are justified by the righteousness of Christ, then the righteousness which justifies mankind is already wrought out.

Asp. And this you take to be a most enormous falsehood, whereas I look upon it as a most delightful truth. The righteousness which justifies sinful man was set on foot, when God sent forth his Son from the habitation of his holiness and glory, to be born of a woman, and made subject to the law. It was carried on through the whole course of our Saviour's life, in which he always did such things as were pleasing to his heavenly Father. It was completed at that ever memorable, that grand period of time, when the blessed Emmanuel bowed his dying head, and cried with a strong triumphant voice, "it is finished!"

If the justifying righteousness was to be wrought by ourselves, we could never be truly and fully justified till death, till our warfare is accomplished, and our last act of obedience exerted. But how uncomfortable is such a notion! How miserable would it render our lives! And how directly does it run counter to the determination of the apostle, "Ye are justified," (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

Ther. Soothed, then, with this pleasing surmise, may not the libertine say to his soul, "Soul, take thine ease in the most indolent security. All my carnal appetites, indulge yourselves without restraint. Conscience, be under no solicitude to live soberly, righteously, and godly, for the work is done, all done to my hands. I am like some fortunate heir, whose parents have been successfully industrious, and have left nothing to exercise the diligence of their surviving son, but only to possess the inheritance, and live on labours not his own."

Asp. The libertine, who only speculates or disputes, may indeed abuse the doctrine of grace. But the believer, who feels the power of grace, will improve it to better purposes. Where the former only fluctuates in the understanding, such detestable consequences may ensue. Where the latter operates on the heart, it will always produce very different effects. Such a person, from such a faith, will be no more inclined to inactivity or licentiousness, than our busy humming companions are inclined, by this bright sunshine, and all those expanded blossoms, to sleep away their hours in the hive. And you may as soon expect to see these colonies of the spring swarm in December, clinging to an icicle, or dispersing themselves to gather honey on the snow, as to see a truly gracious man "who is dead to sin, living any longer therein," (Rom. vi. 2.) Whoever, therefore, so shamefully perverts so sweet and glorious a doctrine, is a witness against himself, that he has neither lot nor portion in the inestimable privilege. If an animal suck poison from the most wholesome herbs, we are sure, from that infallible indication, it is the vile spider, or some envenomed insect, not the valuable and industrious bee.

Ther. Truly, Aspasio, I know not how to call that doctrine sweet, much less can I recommend it as wholesome, which renders repentance, personal reformation, and inherent rectitude, needless. And if your tenet is once received, all these duties may fairly be dismissed. So that if the thing was possible, yet it would be pernicious.

Asp. The prophet was of another mind: "They shall look on him whom they have

pierced, and mourn," (Zech. xi. 10.) Sinners shall look by faith to their crucified Lord; shall see him fastened with nails to the cursed tree; see him stabbed to the heart by the bloody spear. And remembering that this was the punishment due to their provocations, believing that by this punishment they are freed from all penal sufferings, and entitled to all spiritual blessings,—they shall not be tempted to transgress, but incited to mourn; not play the profligate, but act the penitent. The apostle exactly agrees with the prophet; and both are diametrically opposite to my friend: "The goodness," the transcendent and amazing goodness of God our Saviour, instead of diverting from, "leadeth to repentance," (Rom. ii. 4.)

Far from obstructing, it powerfully promotes personal reformation. For thus saith that all-wise Being, who intimately knows our frame, and discerns what is most effectual to work upon our minds: "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared; teaching us, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present evil world," (Tit. ii. 11, 12.) Grace, you observe, even that gloriously free grace, which bringeth salvation to unworthy creatures, is a disuasive of all vice, and an encouragement to every virtue.

As to inherent rectitude, how can that be rendered needless by imputed righteousness? Is health rendered insignificant by the abundance of our riches? Does ease become superfluous, through the beauty of our apparel? Holiness is the health of our souls and the ease of our minds; whereas, ungovernable passions create keener anguish than a brood of vipers gnawing our bosoms. Inordinate desires are a more intolerable nuisance than swarms of locusts infesting our abodes. To regulate those, and to restrain these, can never be needless, till comfort and sorrow change their properties—till the diabolical nature becomes equally desirable with the divine.

Ther. The believer, indeed, out of mere generosity, may, if he please, add works of righteousness of his own. But his main interest is secure without them.

Asp. Rather, Theron, he must out of duty, he will out of gratitude; and, from the new disposition of his nature, he cannot but add to his faith works of righteousness.

How runs the heavenly edict in this case made and provided? "I will, that they who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works.*—How beats the pulse of a believing soul? You may feel it in that truly generous demand made by the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me," (Psalm cxvi. 12.) A grateful heart wants not the goad, but is a spur to itself. How leans the bias of his nature? He is new born; "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," (Eph. ii. 10.) "his delight is in the law of the Lord," (Psalm i. 2.) And whatever is our supreme delight, we are sure to prosecute, and prosecute with ardour. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,* was the profession of the apostles; and, if applied to practical godliness, is the experience of the Christian.

Nor can his main interest be secure without a holy obedience. Because the Judge of the world, at the day of eternal retribution, will declare to the workers of iniquity, "I never knew you; depart from me," (Matt. vii. 23.: Because holiness, though not the cause of our admittance to the beatific vision, is so necessary a qualification, that "without it no man shall see the Lord," (Heb. xii. 14.) Without it, there is no access to heaven, neither could there be any enjoyment in heaven.

Ther. Pray recollect yourself, Aspasio, According to the tenor of your own illustration, the necessity of personal obedience is evidently vacated. For how can the law demand a debt of the principal, which has been fully discharged by the surety?

Asp. The debt of penal suffering, and the debt of perfect obedience, are fully discharged by our divine Surety, so that we are no longer under a necessity of obeying, in order to obtain an exemption from punishment, or to lay the foundation for our final acceptance. We are nevertheless engaged, by many other obligations, to walk in all dutiful and conscientious regard to the law; because this is the most authentic proof of our love to the gracious Redeemer: "If ye love me, keep my commandments," (John xiv. 15.) This is a comfortable evidence of our union with that exalted head: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." (John xv. 5.) This is also the most effectual method of adorning our profession, of magnifying its Author, and of winning our neighbours to embrace the gospel: "Let

* Tit. iii. 8. The original word προϊστασθαι has a beauty and an energy, which, I believe, it is impossible for our language to preserve, by any literal translation. It implies, that a believer should not only be exercised in, but eminent for, all good works; should show others the way, and outstrip them in the honourable race; be both a pattern, and a patron of universal godliness.

* "Cannot but"—This is an expression used by the apostles, Acts iv. 20. It describes the genuine and habitual propensity of their new nature. As the compassionate bowels cannot but yearn at spectacles of misery: as the benevolent heart cannot but dilate with pleasure at the sight of a brother's happiness; so the new creature in Christ cannot but desire to glorify, and delight to obey the ever-blessed God.

your light," the light of your exemplary conversation, not only appear, but "shine before men, that they, seeing your good works," may think honourably of your religion, (Matt. v. 16,) "may glorify your Father which is in heaven;" and say, with those proselytes mentioned by the prophet, "We will go with you."

"Do we then make void the law," through the imputed righteousness of our Lord? No, verily; but if gratitude to our dying Saviour have any constraining influence; if a concern for our own comfort have any persuasive energy; if there be any thing inviting, any thing desirable in the prospect of honouring God, and edifying man—"we establish the law." By all these generous, manly, endearing motives, we enforce its precepts, and provide for its observance.

Ther. Should we admit this doctrine, mankind could no longer be considered as in themselves, and solely in themselves, accountable creatures. Nor would the future judgment be an equitable distribution of rewards and punishments, but only God's awful and uncontrollable execution of his own arbitrary and irreversible decrees.

Asp. I have never been accustomed to consider mankind, under the gospel dispensation, as accountable solely in themselves; because in this comfortable and benign scheme a Mediator intervenes, undertakes to answer for his people, and bears the chastisement of their peace. Were we accountable solely in ourselves, Christ as our great High-Priest would be set aside, and his sacrifice as a propitiation for sin be of none effect.

Why may not the future judgment be an equitable distribution of rewards and punishments? If those who reject the atonement of the dying Jesus, and refuse to depend on his consummate righteousness, are left to stand or fall according to the issue of their own obedience; if believers, on the other hand, are accepted through their most meritorious Redeemer, but rewarded with higher or inferior degrees of felicity, in proportion to the sanctity of their nature and usefulness of their lives:—I see nothing arbitrary in this procedure, but an admirable mixture of just severity, and free goodness: on those who reject the atonement, just severity; to those who rely on their Saviour, free goodness.

Ther. The obedience of Christ was wholly due for himself, and therefore could not merit for another.

Asp. A bold assertion this! Whoever can make it good, will infallibly overthrow my opinion, and at the same time destroy all my hopes. But surely, Theron, it is not your real sentiment.

Could it then be matter of duty in the eternal Son to be born of a woman; and in the Lord of lords to become the servant of all? Could it be matter of duty in the King of Glory, to embrace the infamy of the cross; and in the Prince of life, to pour out his soul unto death? If all this was matter of duty, the ever-blessed Jesus (how shall I speak it! who can believe it?) was no better than an unprofitable servant. For such is the acknowledged character of every one who does no more than is his duty to do. (Luke xvii. 10.)

Ther. Not so fast, nor quite so vehement, my friend. Remember what the scripture affirms. Christ is said to receive a commandment, and be subject to the law; both which expressions evidently imply duty.

Asp. In order to accomplish our redemption, the Son of God submitted himself to the authority of the law, and became obedient to its precepts. But this was his own spontaneous act, the matter of his free choice; to which he lay under no manner of obligation, till he engaged to be our Surety.

"Being in the form of God," he was Lord of the law; and no more subject to its commands than obnoxious to its curse. Nevertheless, "he took upon him the form of a servant, and was made under the law." Wherefore? That he might obtain everlasting life and glory for himself? No; but that he might "redeem those who were under the law." (Gal. iv. 5.) From which it appears, that both his engagement and his obedience were, not for himself, but for his people. Therefore the prophet cries out, with holy exultation, "To us a Child is born; to us a Son is given!"* His incarnate state and human nature, together with all that he did and suffered in both, were for us; those assumed on our account, these referred to our advantage.

Let us consider this, and be amazed, and be charmed. The great universal Lord vouchsafes to pay universal obedience: What condescension was here! He vouchsafes to pay it, for us men, and for our redemption: What goodness was this!

Ther. Before we indulge the devotional strain, we should take care that our devotion is founded on rational principles; otherwise it may prove, like the flash of a sky-rocket, transient and momentary.

Asp. For this, I think there is a solid foundation in reason, as well as scripture. As soon as the man Christ Jesus was united to the second person of the Trinity, he must have, by virtue of that union, an unquestionable right to everlasting life and glory; therefore he could be under no ne-

* Isa. ix. 6. "Est præterea emphasis singularis in voce nobis. Significat id, quod omnes sentiunt, nostro bono et commodo natum esse hunc Puerum Imperatorem."—Vitring. in loc.

cessity of obeying, in order to procure either honour or happiness for himself. But all that he performed in conformity to the preceptive part of the law, he performed under the character of a public person, in the place and for the benefit of his spiritual seed, that they might be interested in it, and justified by it.

Ther. Be it so: the believer is interested in Christ's righteousness. Pray, is he interested in all, or only in part? If in all, then every believer is equally righteous, and equally to be rewarded; which is contrary to an allowed maxim, that there will be different allotments of happiness in the heavenly world. If in part only, how will you ascertain the degree—what proportion belongs to this person, and what to the other? Either way, your scheme is inextricably embarrassed.

Asp. The reply to my Theron's inquiry is easy; and the embarrassment he mentions is but imaginary. Every true believer is interested in all Christ's righteousness—in the whole merit of his spotless nature, of his perfect obedience, and expiatory death. Less than the whole would be unavailable. Whereas the whole renders us completely justified.

You are a great admirer of anatomy, Theron, and must undoubtedly remember the very peculiar structure of the ear. Other parts of the body are progressive in their growth: their bulk is proportioned to the infantile or manly age. But the organs of hearing, I have been informed, are precisely of the same size, in the feeble infant and the confirmed adult. Justification likewise, being absolutely necessary to a state of acceptance with God, is in every stage of the Christian course, and even in the first dawn of sincere faith, complete. With regard to the existence of the privilege, there is no difference in the babes, the young men, the fathers in Christ.* The perception, the assurance, the comfortable enjoyment of the mercy, may increase; but the mercy itself is incapable of augmentation.

The various advances in sanctification account for the various degrees of future glory; and not account for them only, but render them entirely reasonable, and, according to our apprehension of things, unavoidable. As to settling the proportion, we may safely leave that to the supreme Arbitrator. He, "who meteth out the heavens with a span, and setteth a compass upon the face of the deep," cannot be at a loss to adjust this particular.

Ther. The organs of hearing, though not precisely, are very nearly, of the same bulk in the babe and the man. They acquire, from advancing years, scarce any thing more than an increase of solidity. So that I make no objection to your illustration, but to your doctrine.

If Christ has done all, and we are entitled to his whole merits only by believing—to be saved must be the easiest thing in the world: whereas the Bible represents Christianity as a race and a warfare, a state of conflict and a course of striving. In good truth, Aspasio, you prophesy pleasing things. Divinity is not your profession, or else I should number you among "the smooth emollient downy doctors." For, according to the articles of your creed, there is no more difficulty in securing heaven, than in rising from our seat.

Asp. A speculative assent to all the principles of religion, is, I acknowledge, a very easy matter. It may, it must exist, wherever there is a tolerable capacity for reasoning, and a due attention to evidence. This notional faith forced its way into the breast of Simon the sorcerer, (Acts viii. 13,) and extorted a confession from the dying lips of Julian* the apostate. Irresistible as the stroke of lightning, terrible also as its fiery glare, it flashes conviction into the very devils. Even those execrable spirits, "believe and tremble." (James ii. 19.)

But the faith which, far from resting in speculation, exalts the desires, regulates the passions, and refines the whole conversation; the faith which, according to the expressive language of Scripture, "purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and sets the affections on things above;"—this truly noble and triumphant faith is no such easy acquisition. This is the gift of an infinite Benefactor, the work of a divine Agent; called therefore by way of super-eminent distinction, "faith of the operation of God," (Col. ii. 12,) because God himself, by the effectual working of his mighty power, produces it in the human soul.

The exercise of this faith I would not compare to an active gentleman rising from his seat, but rather to a shipwrecked mariner, labouring to gain some place of safety. He espies a large rock which rears its head above the boisterous flood. To this he bears away, and to this he approaches; but whirling winds and dashing waves drive him back

* To the same purpose speaks one of our most celebrated divines; as great an adept in sacred literature as ages have produced.—"All are justified alike; the truth of faith justifying, not the measure. Justification therefore is the same in all that believe; though their belief be in different degrees. So, once in the wilderness, all gathered not manna in the same measure, yet when all came to measure, they had all alike; none above an omer, none under."

Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 1052.

* It is related in ecclesiastical history, that the Emperor Julian, that royal but wretched apostate, in an engagement with the Parthians, was mortally wounded; and that he cried, with his expiring breath, "Vicisti, O Galilæe!"—I am vanquished, O Galilean; thy right hand hath the pre-eminence!

to an unhappy distance. Exerting all his strength, he advances nearer still, and attempts to climb the desirable eminence, when a sweeping surge interposes, and drenches him again in the rolling deep. By determined efforts, he recovers the space he had lost. Now he fastens on the cliff, and has almost escaped the danger. But there is such a numbness in his limbs that he cannot maintain his hold, and such an impetuous swell in the ocean that he is once more dislodged, and plunged afresh into the raging billows. What can he do? His life, his precious life is at stake. He must renew, still renew, and never intermit his endeavours. Neither let him abandon himself to despair. The Master sees him amidst all his fruitless toil. Let him cry earnestly, "Lord save me, I perish!" and he who commandeth the winds and the waves will be sure to put forth his beneficent hand, and rescue him from the devouring sea.

Such, my friend, so painful, so assiduous are the struggles of faith, before it can rest in peaceful security on the "Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus." Of this you may, some time or other, be assured, not only from my lips, but from your own experience.

Ther. What may happen in some future period of time, is beyond my power to foresee. At present, I am apt to think, we must put a stop to the theological lecture. Do you not remember our engagement with Altinous? and you will own, that punctuality in performing our promises is at least a moral virtue, if it be not a Christian grace.

DIALOGUE VI.

Aspasio's affairs called him to London. He staid in town a few days; but as soon as business was finished, he quitted the city, and hastened to his friend's country-seat. Upon his arrival, he found some agreeable company, that came to spend the evening with the family. This incident prevented the immediate prosecution of their subject. As the next morning proved misty, and unfit for walking abroad, Theron invited Aspasio to pass an hour in his study.

It was situated at the extremity of a large gallery, which, while it conducted the feet to a repository of learning, interposed between the ear, and all the disturbance of domestic affairs; so that you are accommodated with every thing that may regale a studious mind; and incommoded with nothing that may interrupt a sedate attention. Aspasio readily consented to the proposal; but desired first to take a turn in this beautiful oblong, and divert himself with the decorations of the place.

Asp. A very short survey, Theron, is sufficient to discover the correctness of your judgment, and the true delicacy of your taste. Here are no impertinent and frivolous exhibitions of romantic tales or poetic stories. Here are no indecent pieces of imagery, that tend to corrupt a chaste, or inflame a wanton fancy. On the contrary, I am presented with a collection of maps, accurately drawn by the most able hands; and with several remarkable transactions of antiquity, most eloquently told in the language of the pencil. You have happily hit that grand point, which the gentleman of refinement, as well as the author of genius, should ever keep in view—the union of the beneficial with the delightful.

Ther. Indeed, my Aspasio, I have often been disappointed, sometimes even shocked, in the gardens, the porticos, and the walks of some modern virtuosi.—Their portraits and statues are little else but an assemblage of elaborate trifles. Ixion stretched upon the wheel, or Phaeton precipitated from the chariot. Apollo stringing his lyre, or Jupiter (I beg his supreme highness' pardon, for not giving him the precedence in my catalogue) bestriding his eagle and balancing his bolts. Pray, where is the advantage of being introduced to this fabulous tribe of gentry? What noble idea can they awaken, or what valuable impression leave upon the mind? The best we can say of such performances is, that they are limning and sculpture expensively thrown away.

This celebrated trumpery one can bear with however. But when the painting and sculpture, instead of cultivating virtue, and improving our morals, are calculated to be the very bane of both—will you call this an elegant entertainment? No: it is a nuisance; it is a pest. In the statues, I grant, every dimple sinks, and every muscle swells, with the exactest propriety. The countenance is animated with life, and the limbs are ready to start into motion. The picture, I am sensible, is as highly finished as the effigy: the distributions of light and shade most artfully adjusted; the diminutions of the perspective true to a nicety; nor can any thing exceed the easy flow of the robe, unless it be the graceful attitude, and almost speaking aspect, of the principal figure. But is this masterly execution an equivalent for the most malignant effects? for sullying the purity of my fancy, and poisoning the powers of my imagination?

Is it an indication of the owner's judicious taste, to prefer regularity of features in the hammered block, before orderly and harmonious affections in his own breast? Does it bespeak a refined disposition, or a benevolent temper, to be so extravagantly

enamoured with the touches of a lascivious pencil, as to expose them in the most frequented passages, and obtrude them on every unwary guest? Surely, this can create no very advantageous opinion of a gentleman's intellectual discernment; much less can it raise an amiable idea of his moral character.* On such occasions I am strongly tempted to suspect that real honour is a stranger where common decency† is wanting.

As for the artist, one can hardly forbear execrating his hateful folly, who could prostitute such fine talents to such infamous purposes. Detested be the chisel that teaches, though with inimitable dexterity, the cold obdurate marble, to enkindle dissolute affections. Abhorred be the pencil that makes no other use of the most lovely colours, than to pollute the canvass, and insnare the spectator.

It is argued, I know, that many of those pieces are the completest models extant. An everlasting reproach this to the art; but no apology for the performances; since the more nicely they are executed, the more mischievous‡ is their influence. It strikes the surer, and sinks the deeper. It dresses destruction gay, and paves with beauty the way to ruin.

It is my chief ambition, Aspasio, to have all my decorations so circumstanced, that the beholder may learn some valuable lesson in morality, or be reminded of some important event in history,—may find, even in the scenes of his amusement, something to establish his virtue, or enlarge his knowledge.

I frequently entertain my eldest son, who is reading the Greek and Latin historians, with an explanation of my principal drawings, that he may behold in colouring, what he has perused in narrative.—At this instant, the youth happened to make his appearance, paying his respects to Aspasio, and dutifully saluting his father. It just recurs to my memory, said Theron, that some necessary affairs of the family require my attendance for a few minutes. Will you excuse my absence, good Aspasio; and permit my son to supply my place.

You will very much oblige me by leaving me such a companion—And come, my dear Sir, addressing himself to Eugenio, as I know you are a lover of learning, what think you of diverting ourselves with these agreeable books? which give us their instructive lessons, not in puzzling languages, but in pleasing colours. Eugenio spoke his consent, and expressed his modesty, by a becoming blush, while Aspasio proceeded——

Asp. This is a striking picture indeed: Hills piled on hills form a most astonishing prospect. What horrible magnificence reigns amidst those wild and shaggy rocks! Nature seems to have designed them for the boundaries of the world. Yet those daring troops are attempting to pass the prodigious barrier: Who are they, Eugenio; and whom shall we call their leader?

Eug. This, Sir, is the famous Hannibal, heading and encouraging his army in the passage of the Alps. The sons of Africa seem to shiver with cold, as they traverse those frozen regions, and march among the clouds.

Asp. It is the very same. Some, you observe, climb with excessive toil, the steep and craggy cliffs. Others, with far greater difficulty, descend through dreadful declivities of ice, exposed all the while to the arrows of the mountaineers. Some, endeavouring to avoid the showers of steel, slip with their feet, and tumble headlong down the vast projecting promontories. See from what a height they are falling! carriages and their drivers, the horse and his rider, and at what a distance still from the stony abyss below! Some lie with closed eyelids and ghastly features, dashed to death at the very bottom. Others, writhing with the torture of mangled limbs and broken bones, lift up an agonizing look to their comrades. Their comrades, insensible of a brother's misery, and wholly

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* It is a pity, but the advice of Cicero, that great master of elegant taste and polite manners, was received as a standard of regulation by all our connoisseurs in the fine arts: "In primis provideat, ne ornamenta ædium atque hortorum vitium aliquod indicent inesse moribus."—De Offic.

† A gentleman observing some gross indelicacies of this kind at the seat of a person of distinction, very acutely (and, I believe, too justly) said, "His paintings are the gibbet of his name."

‡ I hope it will not be thought improper, I wish it was entirely needless, to animadvert upon a practice, which is not only a reproach to our Christian profession, but an insult upon national decorum—the practice of exposing to public view, and offering to public sale, such shameful prints, as are fitted only to create licentious desires and cherish the most profligate dispositions.

Such spectacles are a species of the rankest poison. And can the poison be less pernicious, because it is received at the eye, instead of passing through the lips? Because it tends more immediately to debauch the morals, and but remotely to destroy the constitution? No wonder so many of our youths are corrupted, and so many robberies committed, while such scenes of pictured lewdness are suffered to inflame them with lust, and habituate them to impudence.

Another very indecent custom has unaccountably stole its way into several performances of genius and elegance. The custom, I mean of representing the muses, the graces, and other romantic personages in the form of beautiful ladies, partly, if not entirely, naked. It is true, here are no loose adventures; no immodest gestures, nay more, he artist expresses his own and consults your modesty, by presenting you with a position in profile, by the intervention of a foliage, or the lappet of a robe. But let me ask the ingenious operator, if he would choose to introduce his wife or his daughter, in such a manner, to public company? Is he startled at the question? is he shocked at the thought? Then let him reflect, and let others consider, whether that can be graceful or allowable in a picture, which would be brutal and unsufferable in common life.

Socrates (who, before his application to philosophy, practised as a statuary) could not but blush at this abuse of his art: and, being to form a representation of the graces, he represented them properly habited.

intent upon their own preservation, hang frightfully suspended on the edges of the precipice. The precipice seems to totter as they cling; and the alarmed spectator expects every moment a hideous downfall. Are you not startled at the view, Eugenio, and in pain for the hardy adventurers?

Eug. I am, Sir. And I wonder how they will extricate themselves from these perilous circumstances. I have read in Livy, that they cut their way through the rocks, after they had softened them with vinegar. But is this probable? how could they procure a sufficient quantity amidst those desolate mountains?

Asp. I believe their resolution and their perseverance were the vinegar. These open a road through rocks. These, under the conduct of prudence, and the favour of heaven,* surmount all obstacles. Influenced by these, the survivors press boldly on, and are determined to vanquish the horrors of nature, as a prelude to their victory over the forces of Rome. Let these, resolution and perservance I mean, be the companions of my Eugenio's youthful studies, and they will enable him also to conquer difficulties—even all the difficulties which lie in his way to true religion and sound learning.

What is our next draught! At each end we have a group of living figures. All the intermediate space is an extensive tract of land, diversified only by rapid rivers, horrid deserts, and mountainous, ridges; with here and there a few savage natives in uncouth dresses, and formidable arms. It is more like a map than a picture; and the most remarkable beauty is the aerial perspective; which puts a very agreeable cheat upon our eyes; causing us to behold on an ell of canvass the space of many hundreds of miles.

Eug. This represents the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks. First we behold them in the plains of Media; at an immense distance from their native country; without guides; without provision; and, what is the most desperate calamity of all, deprived of their ablest officers by treachery and murder. Well may they look dejected! How have I pitied them as I read their story? abhorred the perfidy of their enemies; and wished them all success in their hazardous enterprise!

Asp. Do not you perceive their drooping spirits begin to revive, and some gleam of hope diffuses itself through their countenances, while they listen to the eloquent Xenophon, who stands conspicuous in the midst, haranguing his soldiers, and rousing their courage. But, ah! what a vast extent of unknown climes must they traverse, with a numerous and victorious army harassing them in flank, or hanging upon their rear? What fatigues must they sustain, what hardships endure, before they arrive at their wished-for home!—Fired by the enchanting name, and animated by their brave philosophic leader, they resolve to push their way through all the extremes of peril and of pain. To scatter, with their little band, the encircling millions of barbarians, is the smallest of their achievements. They cross rivers, they scale rocks, whose slippery banks, and craggy summits, are lined with opposing nations. They wade through deserts of snow; and pass over inhospitable mountains, the far more dreaded abodes of desolation, drought and famine. They encounter the keenness of the northern storm, and all the rigour of the most malignant seasons. As some of these articles are incapable of being expressed by the pencil, the artist remits us to the historian, and has contented himself with marking out the most distinguished stages of this memorable expedition. Only we view the courageous itinerants, once again, on a pretty lofty eminence. There they appear, not with their former dejection, but in all the transports of joy.

Eug. This, Sir, is the mountain Tecqua, from whence they had the first view of the sea, and the first dawn of safety. There they embrace one another, and extol their commanders, especially the noble Xenophon, whose history gives me great delight, and his manly yet benign aspect strangely attracts my esteem. Methinks, under such a general, I could have been willing to take my share in all the toil and all the hazards of the expedition.

Asp. Would my Eugenio? Then I will list him under a Captain unspeakably more accomplished and beneficent. Young as you are, you shall, from this hour commence a soldier and a traveller;—a soldier, to fight against sin, and every temptation—a traveller, to pass through the wilderness of this world, unto the land of everlasting rest. Though your enemies may be numerous,

* Under the favour of heaven. I cannot but wish that the relator of Lord Anson's voyage round the world had anticipated Aspasio's remark; had made some grateful acknowledgments to an interposing Providence, in that masculine, nervous, noble narrative: A narrative of such signal deliverances, so critically timed, and so surprisingly circumstanced, as in the course of one expedition, are scarcely to be paralleled.

I am persuaded, it would have been no disparagement of the great commander, and his gallant officers, to have it thankfully recognised, on some very unexpected, yet most advantageous turn of affairs, "this hath God done!" Neither could it have detracted from the merit of the brave sailors, to have confessed, on many hazardous emergencies, that all their resolution, all their address, and the exertion of their utmost abilities, had been only lost labour, without the remarkable co-operation of divine goodness. And I am apprehensive, that it must considerably diminish the delight of many readers, to observe the blessed author of all these mercies passed by unnoticed, unacknowledged, and without any share of the praise.

The sarcasm on Pope Adrian and his exploits, I fear, would be too proper on this occasion, Hic Deus nihil fecit.

and your journey tedious, yet faint not, neither be discouraged. The Lord of heaven is your guide, and heaven itself shall be your exceeding great reward. When you arrive at those happy abodes, your delight will infinitely surpass all that the Grecians felt on Tecqua, when their ravished eyes beheld, and their tongues with ecstasy shouted, "the sea! the sea!"

The scene of yonder picture, I would venture to affirm, lies among the ancient Jews.

Eug. How can you tell this, Sir, at such a distance?

Asp. By "the fringes in the borders of their garments, and on each fringe a riband of blue." God Almighty commanded all the Jews to observe this peculiarity in their habit,* that their very clothes, being different from the apparel of their heathen neighbours, might admonish them not to be conformed to their idolatrous worship and licentious manners. This, as well as every other divine command, our Lord Jesus Christ most exactly obeyed. Therefore we are told by the evangelical historian, that the diseased woman, "who touched but the hem of his garment, was restored to health." *Hem* it is in our English bibles; but, if you consult that most excellent of all books, the Greek Testament, you will find, that the original word might more properly be rendered *fringe.*† However, let us pass from the drapery to the design.

Eug. Here we see David in one of the most threatening exigencies of his whole life. Saul, more like a blood-hound than a king, pursues the best of sons, and the most valuable of subjects. He has extended the wings of his very superior army, in order to surround‡ the injured hero and his handful of associates.

Asp. This is the most animated, and I think the most masterly performance, that has hitherto come under our notice. Consternation and doubt agitate their looks. Shall they surrender themselves, as so many tame victims, to a tyrant's fury; or shall they cut their way to safety, through the hearts of countrymen, friends, and brothers? Dreadful dilemma! While they are debating, the pursuers are closing upon them. A few, a few minutes more, must decide their fate. But who is the person that intervenes, just at this critical juncture?

Eug. It is a messenger from the principal inhabitants of Judea. He comes breathless and trembling, amazement in his face, and dust upon his head. "An invasion!" he cries, "an invasion! The Philistines have poured themselves upon our frontiers! The Philistines are overrunning the land!"*

Asp. Upon the receipt of this news, see what vexation reddens in the disappointed monarch's aspect! What anger lightens in his eye! At the same time, what pale reflections on his country's danger mingle themselves with the fiery passions, and almost quench the flame enkindling in his cheeks. Shall the vulture relinquish his prey, even when it lies fluttering under his talons? Galling thought! But his kingdom is at stake. If he does not immediately advance to repel the enemy, his all, his all is lost. Burning therefore with indignation, yet chilled with fear, he turns, hasty though reluctant, away. Are you not charmed, Eugenio, with this description of tumultuous and contrary passions, which afford the finest subject for historic painting, and are so happily expressed in this piece?

Eug. Indeed, Sir, I am shocked, rather than charmed. The very looks of that revengeful monarch fill me with horror. What must he suffer in his mind, who discovers such rage and anguish in his features! I would not have his furious temper, for all his royal power.

Asp. Then, my dear Eugenio, you must endeavour to suppress every emotion of

* One would wonder how the Jews can so tenaciously adhere to their law, and yet so apparently neglect its precepts. Where are the sons of Abraham, who observe this express and positive command of Jehovah! Though this indeed might be obeyed, yet many of the Mosaical injunctions are rendered, and by nothing less than the dispensations of Providence, absolutely impracticable. Is not this, therefore, a most incontestible proof—a proof, not invented by the arts of sophistry, but written by the finger of the Almighty himself—that the legal ordinances are abolished, in order to make way for a better dispensation? When the avenues are become inaccessible, the house untenantable, and the principal apartments irreparably decayed; is not this the most cogent admonition to the inhabitants, that they betake themselves to some new and more commodious residence? See Numb. xv. 38.

† Matt. ix. 20. Κρασπεδον.

‡ To this, or some such incident, may be applied a passage of the Psalms, which, in our translation, is very obscure; has scarce any sense, or if any, a very unjustifiable one. "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the wickedness of my heels compasseth me round about?" Psalm xlix. 5. Wherefore! The reason is very apparent: When wickedness cleaves to a person's heels, or habitually attends his goings, it raises an army of terrors; it unsheaths the sword of divine vengeance, and levels at his guilty head every threatening in the book of God.

Surely then another translation should be given to the words, and a different turn to the sense! And another translation the words will bear; a different sense the connexion demands: "Wherefore should I fear, when wickedness compasseth me about at my heels?" This is a fine spirited interrogation. This implies a great and edifying truth. From this also the verse appears, not only with propriety, but with beauty. When wickedness, or the malicious attempts of wicked men—compass me about, surround me, threaten me on every side—nay, when they are at my very heels, just upon the point to seize, overwhelm and crush me, so that the danger seems both inevitable and imminent; yet even then, having God's almighty power and inviolable faithfulness for my protection, wherefore should I be alarmed? alarmed! No; confiding in such a safeguard, I will bid defiance to my enemies, and bid adieu to my fears.

* This event is related 1 Sam. xxiii. 25, &c. And it is one of the most extraordinary instances of a divine interposal, at the very crisis of need, that any history has recorded.

envy and malevolence. You must cherish a cordial good-will to all men; and learn to rejoice in their excellencies and happiness, as well as in your own. Envy is the worm that gnaws, envy is the fury that embroils his wretched heart. And an author, with whom you will ere long be acquainted, has assured us,

> Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni
> Tormentum majus.—Hor.

The next is a kind of night-piece. Stars are in the sky, and the new moon rides on the skirts of the hemisphere; which affords just light enough to distinguish objects. This is a perfect contrast to the foregoing: We see no conflict of jarring passions; but the principal person appears sedate and composed, as the night that surrounds him. He stands on the bank of a river, thoughtful and attentive, as though he was pondering or executing some important project.

Eug. This is Cyrus the Great. He stands upon the banks of the Euphrates, not far from Babylon. He points with his sceptre, and is giving directions to his army. The directions are, to pass through the channel of the river (which is drained of its water) in order to surprise the city.

Asp. This is a prince of very superior dignity, the honoured instrument of executing Jehovah's counsels. He was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, and even mentioned by name, more than two hundred years before his birth. (Isaiah xliv. 28; xlv. 1.) Let us wish him prosperity; for he goes to humble the pride of Babylon, and release the captivity of Israel. See with what regular movements and what calm alacrity his troops advance! Silence seems to escort them, while, under covert of the shades, and with Providence at their head, they march along a road never before trodden by the foot of man. The soldiers of the garrison have abandoned their station on the wall, to join in the dissolute indulgence of this fatal night. The inhabitants, like many a heedless sinner, are lulled in indolence, and dreaming of pleasures, even on the very brink of ruin.

Eug. Why are those brazen gates which lead to the river, placed in such a distinguished point of view? They strike my eye more, I think, than all the monuments of art and grandeur, which adorn that superb city. And let me farther ask, whether the painter has not offended against probability, in suffering them to stand wide open? On approach of so formidable an adversary, I should expect to have found them shut with all possible security.

Asp. In this particular, the painter has showed his judgment, and not forgotten his piety. God had devoted that haughty and oppressive metropolis to destruction. And you will perceive, from this circumstance, how wonderfully he overrules all events for the accomplishment of his sacred purpose. Had those ponderous gates been shut,* the city had continued impregnable, and the whole enterprise been defeated. But, through some accidental forgetfulness, occasioned by the disorders of this riotous solemnity, or rather by a very signal interposition of divine vengeance, they are left open, and afford an easy entrance to slaughter and death, which rush upon the unhappy creatures all sunk in sleep, or overcharged with wine, as a concealed snare in some dreadful unexpected moment springs up, and inextricably entangles the unwary bird. Was I to inscribe this picture with a motto, I would choose the apostle's admonition, "be sober; be vigilant."

Who is this, with his length of hair† flowing upon his shoulders, with such amplitude of personage, such magnificence of mein, and noble plainness of habit?

Eug. This is my favourite piece. My father sometimes shows me the heads of the philosophers; but there is something so uninviting and severe in Socrates and Diogenes, that I could never much admire them. But this, Sir, is Scipio; the thunderbolt of war, as Virgil calls him. Here is something so lovely and engaging, as well as grand and majestic, that I am never weary of looking on him.

Asp. He appears with a lady of distinguished beauty in his hand.

Eug. This is the captive princess, who had been taken in war, who was set apart for the General's prize, but whom he is now restoring to her espoused husband.

Asp. You are right, Eugenio. He has just led in his lovely captive, attended by her husband and parents, amidst a full assembly of Romans and Celtiberians, the victors and the vanquished. His modest eyes, you observe, are rather turned from, than gazing upon the blooming virgin. Cannot you suppose, how the spectators must be affected, upon the opening of this extraordinary scene? Every one beholds the hero with admiration, the lady with delight. Every bosom is big with expectation

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* See this very momentous, though seemingly inconsiderable circumstance, finely illustrated by Mr. Rollin, and compared with a remarkable prophecy in Isaiah, Ancient Hist. vol. ii. p. 144, &c. A work, in which the most entertaining and instructive events of antiquity are regularly digested, elegantly related, and stripped of those minuter incidents, which make the story move slow, and are apt to fatigue the attention.

† I believe it was not customary with the Romans, especially their warriors, to have long flowing hair. This, therefore, might seem an offence against what the Italians call *il costume*, if the painter was not supported by the authority of Livy; who, in his descriptive picture of Scipio, gives us the following touches: 'Species corporis ampla ac magnifica. Præterquam quod suapte natura multa majestas inerat, adornabat promissa Cæsaries, habitusque corporis, non cultus munditiis, sed virilis vere ac militaris.—Lib. xxviii. c. 35.

or in pain for the event. After a short pause, he addresses himself to the lover, in words to this effect: "I am no stranger to your interest in this fine woman: The fortune of war has put her entirely into my power. The circumstance of my youth cannot render me insensible to so engaging a person: But with us Romans, honour and generosity have a more prevailing influence than transitory gratifications. Take your bride; be happy in each other; and when you look upon this gift, admire the Romans, be a friend to Rome." Upon this he delivers her (as you behold the action here represented) to the enamoured prince. —See how the crowds, that cluster and hang around, are struck with the beneficent deed! In the Celtiberians, we behold a mixture of veneration and surprise. Their looks are full of meaning. Methinks they are going to cry out, "excellent man!" In the Romans, we discern a conscious superiority, and exultation of mind. Triumph is in their features, as though they would say, "this wondrous man is ours." In the lady, we admire the accomplished and modest fair, uniting all the dignity of her birth with all the delicacy of her sex. What soft confusion and what tender joy appear in her countenance! She is lost in wonder, and at a loss for words: she speaks the acknowledgments of her heart by the silent eloquence of a tear, which steals down her glowing cheek to bedew the kind hand that has protected her innocence, and is delivering her to her lord. Her lord is under an apparent and a graceful struggle of love and gratitude: He doats upon his charming princess, and he almost adores his generous benefactor. We can hardly tell whether he is going to clasp the former in his arms, or throw himself at the feet of the latter. The aged parents express their transport in a different manner. Their knees are bent to the earth; their eyes are lifted up to heaven; they implore for their noble guardian, every blessing that the gods can bestow. Scipio himself displays all the magnanimity of the conqueror, tempered with the sedateness of the philosopher, and softened with the gentleness of the friend. He gives happiness; but he enjoys a greater. His eyes sparkle with a sublime delight; and he seems to anticipate the applause, which this truly heroic act will gain in all countries and in all ages.

Eug. Is not this a greater victory than any that he had won in the field of battle; and a nobler triumph than any that could be voted him by the applauding senate! Amiable Scipio! Might I be a Roman, I would be no other than Scipio.

Asp. I wish you, my dear Sir, the temperance and generosity of Scipio; but from a better motive than his. He, I fear, was too much swayed by a spirit of ambition, which you must endeavour to suppress rather than cherish. A spirit of ambition which pants after distinction, and thirsts for applause, is diametrically opposite to the genius of the gospel, (Gal. v. 26.) It is a lesson which must infallibly be unlearned, if ever we become possessors of faith, or partakers of Christ, (John v. 44.) It is "a root of bitterness," which naturally produces envy, (Gal. v. 26.) that most odious, and (as you have just now seen) most self-tormenting of all tempers. It is a habit of mind, which generally renders men incendiaries in the church, and disturbers of its tranquillity, (3 John 9, 10.) It is, therefore, more like an inchanted potion which inebriates, than a genuine cordial which animates.

Eug. From what motive then would you encourage me to be diligent in the pursuit of learning, and in the cultivation of every virtue?

Asp. Not, that you may acquire the poor, contemptible, perishing honour, which cometh from men;—but that you may please God, your Almighty Creator; that you may glorify Christ, your infinitely condescending Redeemer; that you may yourself attain what is the true dignity and only felicity of your nature; and may be serviceable to the best interests of your fellow-creatures—even their present holiness and their eternal happiness.

These are the grand and endearing encouragements which our holy religion purposes. These will operate, I am bold to aver, with a much sweeter and a far more sovereign efficacy, than all the glittering enticements which ambition can devise: and, what is above all other considerations weighty, these will be more likely, or rather these will be very certain, to receive the divine blessing.

You told me you was never weary of contemplating Scipio. For which reason I promise myself, you will not be fatigued or displeased though I have so long confined your attention to this portrait. But have we no hero of Britain, fit to join this illustrious triumvirate from Rome, Persia, and Judea?

Eug. The very next we meet is one of our English kings. But I cannot say that I remember either his name or his story.

Asp. How, my young gentleman! Do you read the annals of other nations, and not acquaint yourself with the affairs of your own country? If I was in your place, I would apply myself to the classical writers by way of study, and to some valuable English historian by way of amusement. Such an amusement is infinitely preferable to novels or romances, and will not only relax your attention, but enrich your mind.

Eug. I thank you, good Sir, for your admonition, and, if you please, I will now begin the study you recommend. Your explanation of these drawings shall be the rudiments of my knowledge, and I shall think it a happiness to receive my first instructions from so able a master.

Asp. It is honour enough for me, Eugenio, to have given you the hint. I only point out your game, or spring the covey; you shall be taught by a more expert proficient, to make it your own. Yet, though others may direct you with greater skill, none will rejoice in your successful pursuit, more sincerely than myself.

This is our renowned Henry the Fifth, as he appeared after the victory of Agincourt. You see the gallant conqueror clad in steel, and recent from the slaughter of the insulting foe. He seems to breathe an heroic ardour, which is irradiated and exalted by a lively devotion. If courage can be expressed by the pencil, this is its genuine likeness; keen, yet composed; grasping the sword, yet looking up to heaven. He that a little while ago drove the battle, like a whirlwind, on the legions of France, now bends a suppliant knee, and offers the eucharistic hymn to the Lord God of Hosts. No turbulent or disorderly joy riots among the soldiery. They express not the triumph of their hearts in frantic exultations or drunken revels, but in acts of thanksgiving to Jehovah: in an attitude which speaks the devout acknowledgment of the prophet, "Thou art our battle-axe and weapons of war," (Jer. li. 20.) or the grateful declaration of the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory," (Psal. cxv. 1.)

This last instance informs my Eugenio, that prayer is an honourable employ; has been practised by persons of the most admired endowments; is the surest method of obtaining success in whatever business we undertake, and of enjoying prosperity, in whatever circumstances we are placed.

The next piece is different from all the preceding. In those, armies with their banners displayed, ships of war riding at anchor, battering engines, and instruments of death, form the perspective. In this, we have all around, a lovely and rural landscape, expressive of peace, and enriched with plenty. Corn and cattle in the valleys, fruitful vineyards on the hills, and beautiful gardens surrounding the houses. But who is that graceful and august personage, seated on a stately throne of ivory and gold?

Eug. This is Solomon, having an interview with the Queen of Sheba. A large train of her attendants throng the avenues of the palace; some leading foreign animals; some bearing vases and caskets; all arrayed in strange apparel. The Israelites stare upon their outlandish visitants, their costly presents, and peculiar habits. Their visitants are as much surprised at the walls, the towers, and especially the temple of Jerusalem. But you, Sir, I apprehend, are most pleased with the venerable person who fills the throne.

Asp. Indeed I am; and so his royal guest. You observe in her robe, her retinue, her deportment, an unpolished kind of grandeur. But all in Solomon is so splendid, and at the same time so elegant; displays such a delicacy of taste and such a magnificence of spirit, that the Sabean princess is perfectly in raptures. See how she stands fixed and gazing with speechless admiration,* like one lost in astonishment and transported with delight! Her looks speak what, when she recovers the power of utterance, her tongue expresses: "It was a true report, that I heard in my own land, of thy acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen, and behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard."

Eug. This is a great compliment. Is it right, Sir, to praise a man in such plain terms, and such high strains, to his very face? I think I have heard Philenor blame such a practice, as inconsistent with refined manners; and I have heard my father say, no one is a better judge of fine breeding than Philenor. And if the most agreeable behaviour, added to the most winning conversation, are what you call fine breeding, I am sure Philenor is master of it to a very great degree. I love to be in his company, and am never better pleased than to hear him talk.

Asp. The compliment is high, but it is just. It is strictly conformable to truth, and proceeds from the most unaffected sincerity. If we take what follows into consideration, we shall have a pattern of true politeness; a propriety, and a refinement of address, far surpassing her Majesty's external state; "Happy are thy men; happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." Instead of envying, she congratulates the domestics of Solomon, and rejoices in their superior felicity. This is benevolence. "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel. Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice."—Here she ascribes all his royal virtues, and matchless accomplishments, to the bounty of heaven. Though they are applauded in the person of Solomon,

* This, I apprehend, is the meaning of that remarkable strong expression used by the sacred historian; "There was no more spirit in her," 1 Kings x. 5.

they are recognised as the free gift of God. This is piety. When the endowments we celebrate lead us to magnify, not their possessor, but their author, then the poison is corrected, and turned into medicine. Praise thus circumstanced loses its malignity, and is rendered salubrious.

It pleases me to perceive that you take so much notice of the conversation which passes between your worthy father and his ingenious friends. I promise myself, you will also remember the maxim, which we have now learned from a queen—a queen, whom not only the sacred historian, but our Lord Jesus Christ himself vouchsafes to mention, and with marks of approbation; whose name therefore will be had in honour, when Semiramis and Cleopatra, the heroines and the beauties, are consigned over to oblivion. The maxim which I mean is this: There must be an union of sincerity, of benevolence, and of piety, in order to constitute true politeness. Whoever pretends to fine breeding, and is destitute of these qualities, is nothing more than a pretender. He bears just the same proportion to this ornamental character, as the ape and the monkey bear to the man.

But we have not sufficiently examined our picture. The dome is of cedar, supported by pillars of marble, to which are annexed curtains of silk and embroidery. The pillars shine with the most glossy polish, and swell upon the eye with the boldest projections. The curtains, pendent in large and easy folds, seem not adhesive to the canvass, but waving in the air. The throne is exquisitely contrived, richly ornamented, and highly finished. It is evident the painter had in his eye that remarkable observation of Scripture, "There was not the like made in any kingdom;" and he has really done all which art could devise, or colours execute, in order to exemplify the great encomium.

If the monarch was absent, we should desire no better entertainment than to view the beauties of the apartment; but can hardly allow any attention to the edifice, when so graceful and so grand a presence bespeaks our regard. For I must own there appears to me something peculiarly excellent in this figure; a serenity and dignity, without any of that martial air which adds a tincture of ferocity to the warrior; a sagacity and penetration not to be equalled by the wrinkles of age, yet transparent through all the bloom of youth. Piety and wisdom, the love of God and the grace of his Spirit, give an elevation to the mind, a sacred charm to the countenance, and something more than mortal to the whole man. I am apt to suspect, Eugenio, that you yourself are ready to adopt a new favourite; that you now prefer Solomon even to Scipio; and had rather be like the "beloved of the Lord," than the darling of Rome.

Eug. Every thing in Solomon is so venerable and heavenly, that I am filled with awe, rather than fired with emulation. It is not for a boy to think of imitating such high perfection!

Asp. Why not, my dear Sir? It was God who gave Solomon his superior wisdom and exalted accomplishments. And God is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" as willing to hear, and as able to help you, as he was to hear and bless his servant Solomon. Neither let your youth be a discouragement. "Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings, he ordaineth strength, and perfects praise. (Psalm viii. 2.) Samuel ministered in the temple when he was but a child. (1 Sam. ii. 18.) Josiah, while he was yet young, began to seek after the God of his fathers. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.) Timothy was acquainted with the holy scriptures from his earliest years. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) And Solomon himself was none of the oldest, when he was favoured with that extraordinary vision, and made that admirable choice, at Gibeon. (1 Kings iii. 5, 6, &c.) a passage of scripture, which I dare say you have read, which I would recommend to your attentive consideration, and which I hope you will take for the model of your conduct. And if you, like that illustrious young prince, desire a wise and understanding heart, more than the affluence of wealth, or the distinctions of honour; "if you seek wisdom as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure; then shall you also understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii. 4, 5.)

The next that occurs, presents us with a view of the sea; and a most tremendous view it is.

Eug. This is the voyage related by the evangelist, when our Lord sailed with his disciples, and bid the storm be still, and made the ocean calm.

Asp. Then we may truly say, "a greater than Solomon is here!" Give me leave to hint, upon this occasion, that every picture of Christ must necessarily depreciate his glorious person. Therefore you will never think, that a few rays beaming round his sacred head, can properly distinguish the Son of God, or express the grace of his offices, and the divinity of his nature. It is not to display the perfections of the Lord Jesus himself, but only to give us an idea of one of his works, that the pencil has been employed on this grand subject.

You will also remember, that it was not the main ocean, but the lake of Tiberias, on which they sailed. However, the painter is at liberty to make his sea as large as he pleases, and his storm as terrible as

he can. Accordingly he has collected all the horrors of a tempest. Lightnings fire the arch above; and thunders, could thunders have been painted, would have rocked the ground below. Those flaming bolts have smitten a huge promontory, and tore its rugged brow. See how the rocky fragment is tumbling, with impetuous bound from cliff to cliff! The waters, lashed by furious winds, heave and toss their tumultuous billows: Here they rise in rolling ridges, there they rage in devouring whirls. Amidst these horrible commotions, you behold a vessel in all the extremity of distress: Straining under the blast, battered and half overwhelmed by the surge, she can no longer maintain the unequal conflict; she yields to the resistless flood; and begins, evidently begins to sink. Perplexed, amazed, and at their wit's end, the disciples run to and fro. They shift the tackling, lighten the stowage, try every expedient; and find, to their inexpressible affliction, every expedient ineffectual.

We cast our eye forward, and their divine Master appears, sedately rising from a gentle slumber. He sees the perplexity and horror of his companions, without the least emotion of alarm. He sees destruction approaching, heaven and earth mingling; and instead of being dismayed, enjoys the elemental war. What composure in his mien! what dignity in his attitude! what majesty, sweetened with compassion, in his aspect! such as could arise from no other cause, but a conscious and undoubted certainty that not one of the company should perish, not a hair of their head be injured; and that all this mighty uproar of nature should end in a demonstration of his mightier power, and a confirmation of his disciples' faith. He looks abroad into the mutinous sky, and the turbulent deep: He waves, with an authoritative air, his sacred hand; and adds the great commanding word, "Peace! be still." Do you inqure after the effect? Let Milton declare it:

> Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
> Stood ruled.

This is expressed in another draught. Where all is hushed, the tremendous agitations cease, and the most profound tranquillity takes place. The water is smooth as glass; we have the picture of a perfect calm, and view those very persons, who a little while ago, were in the wildest distraction, and in the jaws of ruin, surrounding their Lord as men alive from the dead. Their consternation is turned into wonder; and their pangs of fear into ecstasies of joy. They acknowledge the omnipotence, and adore the goodness of Jesus.

Eug. Well may they acknowledge his omnipotence, since winds and waves obey him. Great reason have they to adore his goodness, since he rescued them from the very jaws of death—that worst of deaths, perishing in the stormy deep.

Asp. If Jesus Christ had vouchsafed such a deliverance to my Eugenio, what would he have thought, or how would he have been affected?

Eug. I should have thought myself inexpressibly obliged, and that I could never show sufficient gratitude to so great a benefactor.

Asp. Assure yourself, then, my dear Sir, that he has done infinitely more for you: That he has delivered you, not indeed from being swallowed up by the raging billows, but from sinking into the pit of everlasting perdition: That he has not only rescued you from endless destruction, but obtained eternal life and heavenly happiness for you. —This he has done, not by speaking a word, or issuing a command; but by bearing your guilt, suffering your punishment, and dying the death, the most ignominious and tormenting death, in your stead. Should you not then unfeignedly love him? study to please him? and make it the reigning endeavour of your life to glorify him?

Here Theron returned, and the young student withdrew, after receiving some affectionate and encouraging compliments from Aspasio, who was going to enlarge upon the excellent taste of his friend, the instructive style of his pictures, the good sense and great proficiency of his son: But Theron, far from coveting the praise, and fully satisfied with the consciousness of acting the becoming part, prevented his discourse by stepping to a pair of glass folding doors, which, thrown open, admitted them into the study.

A chimney-piece of grey marble, with plain, but bold and protuberant mouldings, formed a very handsome appearance. In various little niches were fixed elegant busts; and on the several interstices hung beautiful prints, representing many of the most eminently learned men, who were the ornaments and blessings both of ancient and modern times. The shelves all around were accommodated, not encumbered, with books. Aspasio, running over the lettered backs, observed a collection of the most valuable authors in history and natural philosophy, in poetry and divinity.

You will easily perceive, said Theron, that I am somewhat singular in furnishing my study, as well as in ornamenting the avenue. My books are not for show, but use; and claim a regard, rather on account of their worth than their number. An immense multitude of volumes, I have always thought, is more likely to embarrass the attention than to improve the understanding. A huge library seems to resemble a perplexing labyrinth; and often bewilders the

mind, instead of leading it expeditiously to the acquisition of truth.

When people are eager to peruse a multiplicity of writings, it frequently happens, that in reading all they digest none.* They taste some empty and transient amusement, but collect no solid or lasting advantage. Their minds are somewhat like those capacious looking-glasses, which we have seen exposed in the most frequented and populous streets of London. They receive all manner of shadowy images, but no substantial impression. A thousand figures pass through them, not one abides in them.

Our books, replied Aspasio, as well as our friends, should rather be select than numerous. For my part, I would desire no more than two or three of the most correct and masterly writers in any science. These a person of moderate capacity may be able to comprehend; and not comprehend only, but enrich his memory with the choicest sentiments, and make the substance of their works his own. He will, by repetition and familiar converse, enter into their spirit, and acquire their manner; while a rambler in reading does little more than gratify his fancy, without refining his taste, or amending his heart.

Upon this Aspasio turned himself, and espied, in one corner of the apartment the celestial and terrestrial globes; in another, a large reflecting telescope; and on the top of a bureau, one or two of the best microscopes.

These instruments, resumed Theron, have opened an inexhaustible fund of the finest entertainments.† They have furnished us with new eyes, and brought up, I may venture to say, a new world into our view. They give us a sight of wonders, which may seem incredible to the incurious vulgar, and were utterly unknown to the most inquisitive sages of antiquity. They charm the eye with a display of inimitable beauties, where nothing worthy of notice was expected. They throw the mind into a pleasing transport of admiration; and from the meanest, lowest objects, raise the most amiable and exalted ideas of the all-glorious Creator.

I have often regretted, that such rational and manly gratifications should be almost universally supplanted by the fantastical and childish amusements in vogue. Why should not the contemplation of nature's surprising novelties be as acceptable an entertainment as the stale diversion of quadrille? be as refined an employ for a leisure hour, as to count the spots on a pack of cards? The ladies, I am very sure, might find brighter colours and more delicate ornaments, in the robes and head-dress of a common fly, than ever they found amidst the trinkets of a toyshop. And was the fair circle of females once acquainted with the radiant varnish and rich studs which enamel the cover of a beetle's wing, I am apt to think, they would view with less rapture, with more indifference, perhaps with a becoming disdain, all the pretty fancies of a beau's wardrobe.

A few days ago, when the accomplished Manilia favoured us with a visit, I showed her, through a magnifying glass, the sting of a bee, the scale of a soal, the wing of a gnat, and some other beautiful minims of nature, together with the powder which adheres to our finger when we touch the body of a moth. "Amazing!" cried the young lady; "What elegant figures! What enchanting finery!

> ——— "Smallest lineaments exact,
> In all the liveries deck'd of summer's pride,
> With spots of gold and purple, azure and green."
> *Milton*, b. vii.

"How perfect the polish, and how high the finishing, of that little weapon! This piece of defensive armour, how skilfully contrived, and how curiously wrought! Here rising into little ridges, like the bosses of a buckler, fitted to repel injuries: there, scooped into little cavities, designed, I suppose to diminish its weight; that the coat of mail may not encumber, even while it defends, the puny wearer. What I took to be a whitish despicable rag, is the neatest fan I ever beheld, mounted on sticks* inimitably tapering and slender, tinged with all the soft and lovely colours of the most glossy mother-of-pearl. But what astonishes me more than all, is the view of that coloured dust, which your instrument has turned into a cluster of feathers. Every one wrought off with a regularity and a delicacy that are beyond the power of description. The finest stroke drawn by the Italian pen, compared with the extreme minuteness of the shaft, is broad and bulky as an admiral's mast. A speck of leaf-gold, could it be weighed against the exquisite attenuations of the vane,† would seem more substantial and ponderous than yonder marble slab.

* The author of Night Thoughts has touched this subject with great judgment, and equal sprightliness.

> Voracious learning, often over-fed,
> Digests not into sense the moatly meal.
> This forager on other's wisdom leaves
> Her native farm her reason quite untill'd.
> With mixed manure she surfeits the rank soil,
> Dung'd, but not dress'd: and rich to beggary.

† Gentlemen of taste and seriousness cannot, I think, have a nobler piece of furniture for their studies, than the microscope and the telescope, the orrery and the air-pump. This apparatus would afford them a most delightful and improving amusement in a solitary hour; it would also give them an opportunity of entertaining their company in a truly elegant and very instructive manner. It would open a fine and ample field for displaying the glories of God the Creator, and of God the Redeemer.

* These sticks are the little ribs, which support, at proper intervals, the fine transparent membrane of the wing.

† Vane is the feathery part of a quill.

"How nice, even to a prodigy, must be the mechanism of the animalcule race! I see globules, I see tides of blood, rolling through meanders inexpressibly finer than the finest hair.—Stranger still! I see whole shoals of active creatures expatiating in a single drop of water;* taking their pastime amidst such a scanty canal, as unstraitened, and as much at large, as leviathan in the abysses of the ocean. A whole kingdom of those creatures, though collected into a body, are quite undiscernible by the naked eye. What then must be the size of every individual? Yet in every individual there is a complete system of limbs; each endowed with spontaneous motion; all assembled, though not crowded, in a living atom. To reflect upon the texture of vessels, and the operation of organs, so complex, so numerous, yet so inconceivably minute; how it awakens admiration, fills me with reverence of the Almighty Maker, and yields a pleasure infinitely superior to all the modish amusements of our sex! Your discoveries of life in miniature have given me a disgust of what is called high life, and its solemn fopperies. You have spoiled me, Theron, for a fashionable trifler. I shall no longer relish the dull economy of the fan, or the poor parade of the snuff-box."

Asp. Have you nothing to say of the telescope?—I believe it must be my province to celebrate this admirable invention; and I wish I could do it, with Manilia's brilliant imagination. If the microscope leads us downward, to the curious secrets of the animalcule creation, the telescope bears us upward, to the grand peculiarities of the starry regions. The eye, conducted by this wonderful guide, visits a variety of majestic orbs, which would otherwise be lost in unmeasurable tracts of ether. This, far more surprising than the discoveries of Columbus, has found out new colonies of worlds in every quarter of the nocturnal skies. This has placed a glittering crescent on the brow of one† of the planets; and has given others a most stately train of attendants.‡

Tell me, Theron, could you discern the full choir of the constellations, or distinguish the variegated face of the moon, without the aid of our telescopic tube? Could you, with your unassisted eye, get a sight of Jupiter's satellites, or procure a glimpse of Saturn's ring? Without that supplementary aid to our sight, they are quite imperceptible; though the satellites of the former are incomparably more magnificent than the retinue of all the monarchs in the world; and, compared with the ring of the latter, all the bridges on ten thousand rivers, are less than the ferule of your cane.

As the telescope to the eye, so is revelation to the understanding. It discovers truths, which, exclusive of such a discovery, had been for ever hid from the most sagacious minds. It is strange to the unlearned observer, that this ponderous globe of earth and seas should wheel its rapid circuit round the sun. But the telescope has rendered this fact clear to a demonstration. It is strange likewise to our natural apprehensions, that we should die in Adam, and be undone by our first parent's disobedience; nor less so, that we should be made alive in Christ, and derive our recovery from his imputed righteousness. But revelation makes this doctrine as certain as it is comfortable.

Ther. Does revelation make it certain?—This is a point not yet established but taken for granted. I rather apprehend, that revelation in no place maintains it—in many places disavows it. Since your absence, Aspasio, I have spent some time in searching the scriptures, with a particular view to this tenet; and I can find no such expression in the whole Bible as the imputation of Christ's righteousness. If it was so leading an article as you represent, surely it could not have been entirely forgotten by the inspired writers, nor utterly excluded from their body of divinity.

Asp. The very identical expression may not occur, and yet the doctrine be abundantly taught. I believe, you never met with the word *resurrection* in any part of the Pentateuch, nor ever read the phrase *satisfaction* in all the New Testament. Yet our Lord fully proved the truth of the former from the writings of Moses; and you yourself have acknowledged the latter to be the unanimous sense of the apostles and evangelists.

In the Epistle to the Romans, we have express and repeated mention of a righteousness imputed. What or whose righteousness can be the subject of this assertion? Not the righteousness of angels: They are a superior class of beings, and have no such intimate connexion with our nature. Not the righteousness of eminent saints: This is the exploded error of Popery; and furnishes the Romish zealots with that chimera of arrogance and folly, works of supererogation. Not any righteousness of our own: for it is positively

* In a single drop of water, Dr. Hook is said to have discovered, with his microscope, eight millions two hundred and eighty thousand animalcules. This is mentioned, because it is the prevailing philosophy of the age; though I must confess that M. Gautier seems to have gone a considerable way towards giving it another turn; as he has proved, before a learned assembly at Paris, that the vermiculares of Lewenhoek, and the living moleculæ of M. de Buffon, were only balls of air agitated by the fermenting of the seed. If so, it is not impossible but Dr. Hook's animalcules may be nothing more than balls of air, agitated by the fermenting of the pepper. Be this as it will, the young lady's remarks on the wonders of mechanism in the animalcule creation, I believe, will never be controverted.

† The planet Venus.

‡ The satellites of Jupiter and Saturn

declared to be without works, (Rom. iv. 6,) in which no works of our own have any concurrence, or the least share.—What other righteousness then can be meant, but the righteousness of our great Substitute, Surety, and Saviour, who took our nature, discharged our debt; and is therefore styled, "Jehovah our righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.)

Ther. This seems contrary to the whole tenor of the sacred instructions. What says the prophet? "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." (Ezek. xviii. 27.) Here that greatest of blessings, the salvation of the soul, is ascribed to a departure from evil, and a perseverance in good; to a real alteration in a man's own temper and conduct, not to any fanciful application of some transmissive righteousness from another.

Asp. Let me ask my Theron, is there no wickedness but riot and debauchery, profaneness and injustice? Unbelief, though it may pass without censure or notice in a system of morality, is, in the volume of revelation, declared a capital crime. Our Lord, speaking of the Holy Spirit, mentions it as a signal part of his office, that "He shall convince the world of sin." Of what sin? Scandalous violations of moral rectitude? This were a needless employ. The light of reason is sufficient to evince such a charge, and the court of conscience is erected to pass the deserved sentence. Of sin, adds the heavenly Teacher, "because they believe not on me," (John xvi. 9,) on my death, as the cause of their forgiveness; on my righteousness, as the ground of their acceptance; on my Spirit, as the powerful principle of their holiness.

Unbelief treats God as a liar, (1 John v. 10,) because it rejects the testimony which he has bore concerning his beloved Son. Unbelief tramples on the blood of Christ, and is a most contemptuous affront to all his saving offices. Unbelief would counteract the operations of the Holy Ghost, whose peculiar work it is to testify of Christ, and make manifest his righteousness. Unbelief instigates (could we have thought it possible?) a child of dust, a slave of sin, to idolize himself and his own performances. To say all in a word, unbelief is that great, that comprehensive iniquity, which scornfully rejects, or impiously renounces, the most glorious method of salvation which Omniscience itself could devise.

The wicked man, therefore, never turns from his wickedness, till he turns, by a true faith, to Jesus Christ. Till then, he is a rebel against the gospel, however he may pay some specious and partial regard to the law. So flagrant a rebel, that he stands particularly excepted, in the act of evangelical indemnity. For as "he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; so he that believeth not, is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him."*

Ther. What are the Psalmist's sentiments on this subject? Does not he represent the matter in a very different light? "Thou, Lord, art merciful; for thou rewardest every man according to his," not another's "works." (Psalm lxii. 12.)

Asp. Weighty saying! May it impress our very hearts! God is merciful, and therefore rewardeth. From whence it appears, that what we call a reward is really an act of mercy rather than of justice. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift," (says the apostle, altering his style, and making a most important distinction,) the gift of God "is eternal life." (Rom. vi. 23.) The inspired penman subjoins, not *for* but *according to*, every man's works. His works are the measure, not the meritorious cause. To merit, is the sole prerogative of the Saviour. To him it is owing, that our imperfect services are honoured with any acceptance; much more that they are recompensed with any reward.

Ther. Does not this exposition of yours clash with that truly generous acknowledgment of St. Peter? "In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts x. 35.) Here it is undeniably evident, that acceptance with our Creator is founded on a man's own piety, and personal integrity.

Asp. Rightly to understand this text, we should inquire into the circumstances of the history. The apostle had been strongly and most unreasonably prejudiced in favour of the Jews; imagining, that the salvation of Christ, like the dispensation of Moses, must be confined to his countrymen. But now, having considered the purport of his late heavenly vision, having compared it with the angelic message delivered to Cornelius; and being made acquainted with the character of that valuable man; he breaks out into this truly catholic declaration: "My prejudices are vanished. My sentiments are enlarged. From the instance before me, it is demonstrably certain, that God does not appropriate the blessings of his covenant to any particular person, family, or people. 'But, in every nation, he that feareth him, and,' from a principle of

* John iii. 18, 36. The words are exceedingly emphatical, and no less awful. Not barely he shall come into condemnation, but he (that believeth not) is condemned already. Though ever so civilized or refined in his outward conversation, he lies under a sentence of death, and is the object of divine wrath. Which not only will visit him, but abideth on him. So that, wherever he may be, whatever he may do, the displeasure of the tremendous Jehovah hangs over him, like a dreadful destructive sword; which, if he dies in such a condition, will inevitably fall upon him, and cut him in pieces eternally.

religion in the heart, 'worketh righteousness' in the life, 'is accepted;' so accepted, as to be an object of the divine favour, and an inheritor of eternal happiness."

This, I think, is the exact meaning of the place. And let it be recollected, that no one truly fears, or can possibly please God, without faith. (Heb. xi. 6.) For which reason, it seems necessary to suppose, that Cornelius, though a heathen by birth, had believed through grace. Nay, it is evident from the context, that he had heard of Jesus Christ; had some acquaintance with the design of his coming, and the execution of his office;* enough to be the ground of a real, though perhaps an infantile faith. The business of the apostle was, to lead this convert into the clear light, and full privileges of the gospel; to ratify and confirm his title to them, by the sacred seal of baptism; and introduce him, as the first fruits of the Gentiles, into the Christian church.

So that nothing can be concluded from this passage, but that the glad tidings of Christianity are for Jews, for Gentiles, for all people; that faith, even when weak, is productive of good works; and when sincerely improved, will certainly be increased —"will go from strength to strength."

Ther. Does not our Saviour, in describing the process, and fortelling the issue of the last decisive trial, assign a kingdom to the righteous? assign it in this precise view, as a proper remuneration of their own good works; saying in the most express terms, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: for," &c. (Matt. xxv. 30.)

Asp. Be pleased to take notice of the expression. They are bidden to inherit; and what is freer than an inheritance? Observe also the reason alleged, and compare it with the rule of judicature: "He that believeth," saith the supreme judge, "shall be saved." This is the avowed, the invariable standard, by which he proceeds in administering everlasting judgment. Accordingly, he confers eternal life on the righteous, as persons entitled to this great felicity on the foot of his own gracious appointment.

For denotes, not the foundation, but the evidence of their right. "I acquit such a person," says the arbitrator in a judicial claim; "for the witnesses depose that the debt is paid." The deposition, which answers to these righteous acts, is the proof; payment of the debt, which corresponds with Christ's perfect obedience, is the cause* of the discharge. "For ye have given, ye have abounded in all instances of duty to me, and love to your brethren; and thereby have manifested yourselves true believers."

It may be farther observed, that our Lord says not ye have done it to your fellow-creatures, but to "these my brethren," (Matth. xxv. 40.) He commends not every random act of good nature or generosity, but such kinds of beneficence only as carry the Christian stamp—were exercised to a disciple, "in the name of a disciple." And those most evidently spring from faith; these undeniably attest its sincerity.

Ther. Are not these distinctions more subtile than solid?

Asp. To me they appear in no such light. If you think otherwise, let us appeal to those excellent persons themselves. The turn, the very remarkable turn of their sentiments will fully decide our question. Do they lay any stress upon their own religious duties and beneficent deeds? Far from relying on them, farther still from pleading them, they bestow not a single thought upon them. Having fixed their hopes on the Rock of Ages, they forget these transient bubbles,† Nay, they wonder, that their exalted Master should condescend to make any honourable mention of such imperfect services. O that we may be enabled, through the whole course of our lives, to follow the example of their piety! and, when we stand before the tremendous tribunal, to imitate their humility and wisdom! Their humility, in renouncing themselves, and disclaiming all desert of their own: their wisdom, in reposing their whole confidence on the merits and righteousness of their Redeemer.

Ther. Our Lord makes no mention of this doctrine in his sermon on the mount. Whereas if it had been so very material, he would at least have touched upon it in that comprehensive summary of true religion.

Asp. Our Lord says not a word concerning the sacrifice of his death. Neither is there a syllable relating to his intercession for transgressors. But are these articles of our faith to be deemed fictitious or super-

* Acts x. 36, 37. Indeed it could hardly be otherwise, since Cornelius was settled at Cesarea, the residence of the lord-lieutenant, and seat of the civil, as Jerusalem was of the ecclesiastical government. In a place of such general resort, so very remarkable an event could not be unknown, especially as Philip the evangelist had fixed his abode in that city. See Acts viii. 40.

* The spring is come, says the countryman: for the orchard blooms, and the blackbird sings. The blooming of the trees, and the melody of the birds, were never supposed to create, only to characterise, the delightful season. They are not its cause, but the proof of its taking place.

† Bubbles they are, compared with the all-glorious obedience of Christ, or considered in reference to the grand affair of justification before God. But as bubbles, or watery vesicles inflated with air, are the means of exhibiting the beautiful colours of the rainbow; so these services, though poor and defective, bear testimony to the existence of that precious grace —faith.

fluous, because they are not expressly inculcated in that admirable treatise of practical divinity?

However, upon a more attentive examination, perhaps, we shall find the point most strongly implied, though not distinctly specified: its necessity demonstrated, though its nature be not explained. The illustrious Teacher opened his mouth, and with a peculiar solemnity said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," (Matth. v. 3.) But who are they? Not the persons who soothe themselves with the flattering conceit of the Laodicean church, "I am rich in obedience, and increased in spiritual goods," (Rev. iii. 17.) Those rather, who see their indigence, bewail their guilt, and hunger and thirst after the justifying merit of a Redeemer; who, from the very bottom of an humbled heart, confess, "Lord, I am no more able to conform all my conduct to thy most holy law, than I am capable of atoning for my innumerable sins. Christ must be my righteousness, as well as my propitiation, or else I am irrecoverably undone."

The inimitable preacher farther assures his hearers, that, "unless their righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Matth. v. 20.) How must Christians exceed the Pharisees? Not only in being sincere, in having respect unto all God's commandments; but also in possessing a complete righteousness, such as the divine holiness can with complacency accept, and in which the divine justice may with honour acquiesce. Nor can this be any thing less than the perfect obedience of the great Mediator. St. Paul's memorable testimony, concerning his attainments in the pharisaical, and his hopes in the Christian state, afford the very best comment upon this important declaration of our Lord, (Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.)

Ther. The Oracle of heaven, you know, was once consulted upon that most momentous of all questions, how a person may ascertain his title to life and immortality? And what is the tenor of the sacred rescript? We are referred to the ten commandments; and, in the most explicit terms, with the most peremptory air, told, "this do, and thou shalt live." (Matth. xix. 17. Luke x. 28.)

Asp. That particular person, if you please, was referred to the ten commandments; not we, and mankind in general. Our Lord, in the preceding verses, had been informing his disciples, that they must receive the kingdom of God, or the grace of the gospel, and the blessings it proposes, as a little child. And this can hardly signify, in consequence of their own doings.

Ther. "That particular person referred to! Not we, and mankind in general!" I do not understand your meaning, Aspasio.

Asp. You will observe, then, that our Lord's reply was not an universal direction, but an answer, *ad hominem*, peculiarly adapted to the young gentleman's application, which, however it may be admired, was none of the wisest. Instead of asking, "How shall a poor guilty mortal, who is every day offending, obtain forgiveness from the righteous God?" instead of saying, "How shall I, who am not able to think a good thought, make sure my title to an eternal weight of glory?" our querist demands, "what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" The reply proceeds upon the inquirer's own principles, "If you expect salvation upon such legal terms, know, that your obedience must be nothing less than a perfect conformity to the divine law. Perform all its precepts, in their utmost extent, and with an unremitted perseverance, then"—But, alas! such perfection is too high for fallen creatures, they cannot attain unto it. Necessarily, therefore, must they drop all such pretensions, and have recourse to some other method of justification.

Ther. Why did that "wonderful counsellor," if such was the purport of his answer, express himself so obscurely? Why did he not divert his promising scholar from this fruitless attempt, and put him in the right, the practicable way of obtaining salvation?

Asp. This he did with the finest address, and in the most skilful manner. Had our Lord affirmed, "You are worldly, you are covetous, your riches are your god;" such a charge would in all probability have been as confidently denied as it was plainly urged. Therefore he brings this specious hypocrite to a test* which could not be evaded, and which was sure to discover the truth, a test which laid open the palpable and enormous defects of his so much boasted obedience; which made it appear that, instead of keeping all the commandments, this vain self-justiciary had not obeyed the very first; but amidst all his towering imaginations of himself, had been, and at that very instant was, a sordid grovelling idolater, who preferred his transitory possessions on earth to an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. Could any expedient be more suitable to the case, or better calculated to reduce him, intoxicated as he was with pride, to a sober humble mind; to beat him off from his false foundation, "the right-

* Matt. xix. 21. "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor." This direction seems to be much of the same nature with that other part of our Lord's reply: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Both were personal, both occasional, both adapted to particular circumstances. The latter is no more the stated evangelical way to heaven, than the former is indispensably obligatory on all Christians.

cousness which is of the law," and lead him to a reliance on the promised, the expected, the present Messiah?

It puts me in mind of my friend Sagacio's conduct, which seems to have some conformity with our Lord's procedure, and may possibly tend to illustrate its propriety. Visiting one of his unlearned neighbours, he found him in company with a certain talkative stranger, who was haranguing at an extravagant rate on the wonders of astronomy. Sagacio soon perceived that the chief furniture of this extraordinary adept lay in a little acquaintance with the technical terms, and somewhat more than a little share of assurance. How should he bring the self-plumed sciolist to a little modesty of sentiment, and decorum of conversation? He took leave to ask, "What the word astronomy might signify? The orator was struck dumb in a moment. He had never informed himself, it seems, that astronomy related to the order and regulation of the stars. This single question taught our minute philosopher more effectually than twenty lectures on the subject. It taught him his own ignorance, and that he had the very rudiments of his so much admired science still to learn.

Ther. What will you say to those famous passages in the epistle of St. James, "By works a man is justified,"—"Was not Abraham our father justified by works?" (Jam. ii. 21, 24.) Can any words be plainer in their meaning? or can any meaning be more directly opposite to the whole scope of your argumentation?

Asp. This I would say, Theron: the passages you quote, when detached from the context, may seem inconsistent with the declarations of another apostle; as a limb, when wrenched from its natural situation, appears with an air of disproportion. Whereas, reduce the dislocated part, and it will recover the symmetry of its shape, it will harmonize exactly with the animal system. Replace likewise these assertions, consider them in connexion with the whole paragraph, and they will be found, if not unisons, yet perfect concords with the strain of St. Paul's teaching.

What is the point which St. James undertakes to illustrate? To distinguish a genuine from an insincere faith. "If a man say, he hath faith," (Jam. ii. 14.) this is mentioned as the boast of some hypocritical professor. So that the apostle is evidently dealing with a pretender to the precious gift; and therefore replies, "Shew me thy faith," prove the reality of thy claim; prove it to me and to the church, to thy fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians. If unproductive of righteous and godly works, we must pronounce it spurious, worthless, dead.

Having detected the counterfeit, he proceeds to describe the sterling. The grand characteristic of which is, a frame of mind, and a course of action, corresponding with the doctrine believed. By this touchstone, the faith of our renowned progenitor was tried, and, being tried, was "found unto praise, and honour, and glory." "Was not Abraham our father justified by works?" Justified! How? As to acceptance with the Supreme Judge? No: this was effected long before the Patriarch offered up Isaac. But when he exercised that heroic act of self-denial, resignation and obedience, then his justification was evidenced to all generations. "His faith was made perfect," answered its proper end, and appeared to be of the true, the triumphant, the scriptural kind, since it overcame the world, overcame self, and regarded God as all in all.

Upon the whole, St. Paul speaks concerning the justification of our persons, St. James concerning the justification of our faith.* St. Paul describes the manner of being justified before the all-seeing God; St. James points out the proof† of a justified state, as it is visible to men. The former proceeds from the immaculate righteousness of Christ, placed to our account; the latter consists in the fruits of righteousness adorning our life. Rightly understood, therefore, these passages are not the least contradictory to the epistles of St. Paul, or to the scope of my argumentation. But are a seasonable caveat, and a proper preservative, against misunderstanding those, or perverting this.

Ther. I wish you would read that concise but judicious abridgment of true religion, comprised in the fifteenth psalm. The sacred penman, for his own, and for the information of all mankind, asks, "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?" To this most interesting inquiry, the following verses are a full and satisfactory answer; the whole of which turns upon the discharge of moral duties; "walking uprightly and working righteousness;" without a syllable, or a single hint, concerning the very superior

* That the expression used by St. James signifies this declarative justification is plain from 1 Tim. iii. 16, where the apostle, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, says ἐδικαιώθη. He was justified in or by the Spirit; declared to be the true Son of God; manifested on earth, and recognised from heaven, as the undoubted Saviour of the world.

† A very little reflection, I should imagine, must convince every unprejudiced reader, that St. James cannot possibly be stating the method of justification before the infinitely righteous God; because he never so much as mentions the death of Christ, "who made his soul an offering for sin; to whom gave all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins; and besides whom, there is no other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved. Could an apostle so absolutely forget his Lord; and in a case where every other inspired writer acknowledges Him, nay, acknowledges him to be ALL IN ALL!

excellence of faith, or the extreme necessity of a vicarious obedience.

Asp. I have often read, and I well remember, that beautiful, that instructive psalm. And I beg leave to observe, once for all, with relation to such passages of the Old Testament, that they suppose the persons whom they describe to be convinced of their natural corruption, to be humbled under a sense of their actual guilt, and to live in a conscientious observance of the expiatory sacrifices; all which had an invariable reference to Christ, and derived their whole virtue from his mediation.

Would any of the Jewish saints, think you, have dared to advance a plea for eternal blessedness, upon the foot of their own conformity to such moral directions; neglecting, at the same time, the sacrifices of the three great festivals, or a believing improvement of the daily oblation? By no means. They were, and they would acknowledge themselves deplorably defective; they would plead the promise of free grace, and fly to the blood which God himself had appointed to make an atonement for their souls. By such sentiments, and such a conduct, they reduced to practice the very essence of our doctrine; disavowing their own deeds, however virtuous or religious, and trusting in the strength of Israel, "the Lord our righteousness," who alone fulfilled all the precepts contained in this excellent formulary of duty; who was also the substance of every purifying and of every propitiatory rite.

Ther. Has not the sacred writer expressly said, at the close of the psalm, "Whoso doeth these things, shall never fall?"

Asp. He has; and this, I apprehend is his meaning. "Persons of such a temper, and such a practice, bear the marks of God's children, and are meet for his glory. Accordingly, they shall never fall either into total apostacy here, or final condemnation hereafter. They are now heirs, and in due time shall be possessors, of his eternal kingdom."

But you will take notice, that all these duties and qualifications only characterise, not constitute, the inheritor of heaven. You will likewise advert to another very remarkable circumstance in the description: "He setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes;"* or, as the more expressive original speaks, he is despicable and vile in his own sight; so far from aspiring to self-justification, that he even condemns and abhors himself, and falls down, as a most unworthy wretch, at the foot of infinitely free grace.

Ther. I cannot but think it is the current doctrine of scripture, and I am sure it is one of the first principles which the light of nature teaches,—That the most high God must necessarily love righteousness, and take pleasure in the righteous.

Asp. If the light of nature was to publish a gospel, I believe it would be formed upon your plan. It would bestow favour only on the innocent, the virtuous, and the holy. But the gospel of Christ runs in a very different strain: This brings pardon for the condemned, and blessings for the accursed: This is health to the sick, and recovery to the ruined. "The Lord hath anointed me," saith its divine Author, "to preach good tidings to the meek,"* who are humbled under a sense of their sinfulness. "He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted," who are wounded with a conviction of their undone state;—"to proclaim liberty to the captives," the wretched captives of Satan; "and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," bound in the chains of ignorance, impotence, and misery.

As I am myself a most unworthy sinner, you must not be displeased if I espouse the cause of those unhappy creatures. Yet though a friend of sinners, I am no enemy to the righteous. I entirely agree with my Theron in allowing, that the most high God necessarily loves righteousness. Only I want to be informed, where this admirable and lovely quality is to be found? Not

† Psal xv. 4. בכוהעוב יוכמאם I cannot say that I admire the Bible translation of this clause: "In whose eyes the vile person is contemptible." Methinks, it does not savour of the tender and benign spirit of our religion, which teaches us to honour all men, to despise no one's person, but only to detest the wickedness of the wicked.

Should the sense I have opposed have its weight, the sense I have preferred is incomparably weightier. If to despise the vile, is a religious act; to think meanly of ourselves, is a much more advanced, and a far more difficult instance of true religion. This is to copy the highest pattern of human excellence, who, notwithstanding his very superior attainments, accounted himself less than the least of all saints, nay, the very chiefest of sinners.

* Isa. lxi. 1. Upon this passage of Isaiah I would beg leave to observe that the word meek seems not to answer or convey the prophet's idea. By glad tidings to the meek, we are inclined to think of persons endued with that placid and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. This might discourage many people, who know themselves to be destitute of such a gracious habit. This might lead others to suspect, that some amiable disposition is previously necessary, in order to receive the benefits of redeeming grace. Which is a very mistaken, and will prove a most uncomfortable forbidding notion.

The original עניים signifies, in this place, the afflicted; not so much those who are beautified with meekness as those who are oppressed with misery, spiritual misery especially; not excepting even those who are slaves to their own unruly passions. The Lord Jesus never finds, but makes people meek. Meekness is one of the fruits of his Spirit, one of the blessings which he bestows on the unworthy.

The whole paragraph is a description of extreme wretchedness. What can be more distressed than the man whose outward circumstances are impoverished and ruined; whose spirit is broken under the weight of his calamities, who is taken captive by the enemy, is thrown into a dungeon, and loaded with irons? This is the prophet's representation, this is the picture of unconverted sinners; and to these, to those Christ Jesus is a ransom, a deliverer, a portion.

among the Gentiles: They have swerved from the dictates of natural conscience. Not among the Jews: They have broke the holy commandment delivered on mount Sinai. Not among Christians: For, if God should enter into judgment with us, we could not answer him one of a thousand. In the kingdom of Ethiopia, or in the country of the Moors, where will you find the native whites?

The Son of God found none among the race of Adam that were entitled to the character of righteous. He who gave himself a ransom for all, makes no application to such persons.* Why? Because he sullenly disesteemed personal goodness, or was unable to distinguish the excellency of inherent virtue? No; but because he knew, that, amiable as these qualifications are, they have no existence in the human heart, till the sinner, reconciled by his death, be sanctified also by his Spirit.

You remember, perhaps, that remarkable answer which the Spartans once returned to a threatening embassy from some of the neighbouring states? Nothing could be more concise; and, I think, nothing was ever more spirited and significant.

Ther. Those neighbours gave them to understand, by their ambassadors, "That, if they entered their territories, they would burn their towns, make the inhabitants prisoners, and spread destruction wherever they advanced." To which insolent menace, the brave Lacedemonians made no other reply, than—*If.* Is this the story to which you refer?

Asp. The very same. And when you are speaking of human righteousness, as the cause of our acceptance with the eternal God, I would borrow the language of a Spartan. *If*, shall be my reply.—*If*, seclusive of the obedience, and independent on the Spirit of Christ, you can furnish yourself with this endowment; or *if* you can carry your righteousness to that perfection, which may equal the purity of the law, and comport with the majesty of the Lawgiver; then trust in it—let it be the ground of your confidence, and seek no better foundation.

But whosoever shall in this manner seek for his recommendation to the favour of God, will act like the mistaken countryman in Horace, who, being unable to ford the river, took up a resolution to wait till the stream was all run by:

"At ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum."†

Ther. Here, I fancy, we must take leave of your countryman. If he adheres to his resolution, we shall find him in the very same situation when breakfast is over; and may resume our subject, just where it is discontinued.

DIALOGUE VII.

Ther. To me, who have spent the greatest part of the winter in town, these scenes of the country are inexpressibly pleasing. Take who will the gilded saloon, and the silken settee, so long as I can shelter myself under the canopy of such a spreading beech, and use one of its coarse misshapen roots for my seat.

It is true we see no longer those splendid brocades, and elegant toupees, which distinguish the Park and the Mall: but we have full in our view a multitude of honest rustics, pursuing their cheerful labours in yonder meadow; some mowing the luxuriant herbage; some raising it into regular cocks; others loading their waggons with the hay, or clearing the ground with their rakes. The ground, cleared of its soft encumbrance, appears fresh and green, like another spring; while the exhalations of the tedded grass, floating in the air, give a rural perfume to the gale. And which, my Aspasio, which are the most valuable objects:—The little labourers of the hive, that enrich themselves, and regale their masters? or the gay flutterers of the garden, whose whole life is nothing but sport, and their highest character is, to be insignificantly pretty?

Asp. In this retirement we hear none of the wanton and corrupting airs of the opera; no, nor the majestic and ennobling melody of the oratorio.* But we have a band of music stationed in the grove, and a concert of native harmony warbling from the boughs. We are entertained with the music which charmed the human ear long before Jubal found out his instruments, (Gen. iv. 21,) and thousands of years before Handel composed his notes. The bulfinch, and a multitude of little tuneful throats, strike the key. The thrush below, and the skylark responsive from above, diversify and exalt the strain. The blackbird, somewhat like the solemn organ, with notes perfectly mellow and gracefully sonorous, crowns the choir; while the turtle's melancholy voice,

* Matth. ix. 13. "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

† Vain man desist; such flattering hopes forego:
It flows, and flows, and will for ever flow.

* Majestic and ennobling.—This, I think, is the true character, and expresses the real tendency of the oratorio. Nevertheless, it may not be improper to observe, that if we carry a trifling or irreligious spirit to the entertainment; if we attend to the musical airs, but disregard those sacred truths which enter into the composition; such a behaviour will be little better than a profanation of holy things. I fear it will be a species of taking God's adorable and glorious name in vain.

and the murmuring water's plaintive tone, deepen and complete the universal symphony.

This is the music which constituted the first song of thanksgiving, and formed the first vocal praise, that the all-gracious Creator received from his new made world. This is neither the parent of effeminacy, nor a pander for vice, but refines the affections, even while it amuses the imagination.

Ther. All the entertainments of nature are calculated to secure our innocence, as well as to gratify our fancy. And what is another very agreeable circumstance, those gratifications which afford the sublimest pleasure are exhibited gratis, while those which enervate the mind and debauch the affections must be dearly purchased. Every one cannot gain admittance into the boxes or the pit, when some celebrated tragedy is brought upon the stage; but every one may behold the beauteous exhibitions of spring, and the finished productions of autumn. All may contemplate the machinery of nature, and the wonders of creation; thereby enjoying a far more exquisite amusement, without any of the guilt or any of the danger.

The inhabitants of yonder villages have never beheld the splendid procession which solemnizes the coronation of a monarch, nor the gaudy illuminations which distinguish the anniversary of his birth. But they see, almost every morning, a much nobler spectacle displayed in the east. They see the great Ruler of the day, or rather the envoy from day's eternal Sovereign, making his entry amidst the spaces of the sky. The heavens are strewed with colours, which outvie the pinks and carnations. The grass is decked with dew-drops, and every plant is strung, as it were, with pearls. All around, the darkness retires, and sweet refreshing gales arise. At length the magnificent luminary appears. And what is all the ostentatious pomp of kings, what is all the glitter of the most brilliant court, compared with his transcendent lustre? This spectacle we may behold without loss of time or prejudice to health. Nay, we cannot behold it without improving one and redeeming the other. So beneficial are even the pleasures which nature yields; so serviceable the very diversions to which she invites!

Asp. Thus gracious is the Almighty Maker in the constitution of material things. The substantial and the valuable are open to every one, are accessible by all. Only the tinsel and the trappings are the property of a few, the poor prerogative of wealth.

No less gracious is God in the disposal of spiritual favours. These are infinitely more excellent, and yet are equally free. We are invited to buy them, "without money and without price." (Isaiah lv. 1.) What do you give for the benefits of the rising sun, or the delights of this rural melody? The case is much the same with regard to the righteousness by which we are justified, and all the blessings of salvation.

Ther. This brings to our remembrance the countryman whom we left on the banks of the river. And for aught I can see, Theron and the rustic are pretty much upon a footing: the first as far from acceding to your notions, as the last is from gaining his point.

Asp. Have you any objection, Theron, to these gifts of nature, because they are neither purchased by your money nor produced by your own toil?

Ther. But who can ever expect to obtain pardon, and acceptance, and eternal salvation, at so cheap a rate! It seems to be all delusion, Aspasio.

Asp. So cheap! Then you would pay somewhat, I perceive, by way of price. But give me leave to ask, what price did you pay to God your Maker, for fashioning you in your mother's womb? what price have you paid to God your Preserver, for upholding you ever since you was born? or what price do you think of paying to God the supreme Proprietor, for the ground on which you tread, for the air in which you breathe, for the light by which you see? Just the same price must you advance to God your Saviour, for all his justifying merits.

Both these and those proceed from the same benefactor. They are all absolutely necessary, either for the welfare of the body, or the happiness of the soul. And they are all vouchsafed on the same free terms. For thus saith the prophet: "His going forth," in the dispensation of the gospel, "is prepared as the morning." Christ, with all his precious privileges, "shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." (Hos. vi. 3.) However, if you are acquainted with a different or a better way, be so good as to communicate your knowledge.

Ther. Some, you may observe, depend upon their inoffensive behaviour. They live peaceably; they do no harm to their neighbours; they are guilty of no gross offence against God. And why should they not hope to obtain his favour? They apprehend the prophet Samuel establishes their hope, when he makes this solemn appeal: "Whose ass have I taken? whose ox have I taken? or whom have I defrauded?" (1 Sam. xii. 3.) Nay, they imagine, that our Lord himself has authorized their expectation, by giving this character of Nathaniel: "An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." (John i. 47.) A freedom from outward injustice and inward hypocrisy, is

all the qualification, applauded in the one case, avowed in the other.

Asp. This negative goodness (if it deserves to be called goodness) was a plea for the empty Pharisee. But none, I presume, would choose to be associated with such a companion, either in character here, or in condition hereafter.

Samuel, in the place you mention, is vindicating himself only to his fellow-creatures, and only in the capacity of a magistrate. He speaks not of his justification before the Judge of quick and dead. This he well knew must be derived from another source, and must rest upon a firmer bottom.

The "Israelite without guile," was a person who not only abstained from every sin, but performed every duty; and without any wilful neglect of the one, or any allowed indulgence of the other. This instance, therefore, will by no means prove the sufficiency of your negative righteousness, which seems to have just the same degree of excellency as a fountain that never issues in water, or as a cloud that never descends in rain.

Ther. In this particular, Aspasio, your sentiments are mine. But I would add morality to civility; the virtuous to the inoffensive conversation. And if we not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; if we use temperance, exercise charity, and keep all the commandments to the best of our power, is not this a sufficient foundation for our hope?

Asp. Yes, Theron; if, as you add morality to your civility, you add perfection to both. Otherwise you must be ranked, not among the claimants, but among the delinquents. You have no title to a reward, but stand in need of pardon.

It is a principle of justice, founded on the unalterable constitution of things, that the debtor be acquitted, when he has paid the debt. But supposing him, instead of gold to bring iron; instead of talents to return pence, instead of defraying, to increase the score daily; can he then reasonably expect, or legally claim a discharge?

With respect to such an obedience, we may pass our verdict in the figurative, but very expressive language of Isaiah: "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." (Isa. xxviii. 20.) It can neither give rest to the alarmed conscience, nor afford protection to the guilty soul. If we have nothing better to plead, we shall not be able to lift up our heads in the last decisive judgment; "but must enter into the rock, and hide ourselves in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty." (Isaiah ii. 10.)

Ther. We will go a step farther, and take in the exercise of devotion. We will read God's word, pray to his divine Majesty, and regularly attend on his public worship. Here now are social accomplishments and moral virtues, completed by the performance of religious duties.

Asp. Completed! I fear that expression will scarcely abide the test of a single query. Have you then performed all your duties, with that ardent love of God, and undivided view to his glory; with that adoring gratitude to the blessed Jesus, and that child-like dependence on his Spirit, which the nature of things requires, and the scriptures of truth enjoin? If not, your duties, be they moral or religious, or both, are far from being complete; nay, they are utterly defective, and for that reason absolutely insufficient for your justification. They are clipped or sophisticated coin; and will that be current in the world of glory?

Ther. Allowing them to be defective, they are at least sincere. And though not free from all alloy, yet if they bear the image and superscription of integrity, why should they be rejected as "reprobate silver?" (Jer. vi. 30.) Why should they not obtain the currency you mention?

Asp. "Alas!" says a judicious and admired writer, "the imperfections of our best services daily forfeit the blessings of time. How impossible then is it, that the sincerity of them, amidst so many frailties and defects, should purchase the glories of eternity!"

Ther. Be your writer ever so judicious, I can confront him with others, equally capable of judging, and diametrically opposite in opinion. What says that wise and brave man, the successor of Moses, and generalissimo of the armies of Israel? Joshua, I am sure, declares himself on my side: "Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity," is his last solemn charge to the people. (Joshua xxiv. 14.) Even the great apostle, on a review of his ministry, makes it matter of self-gratulation, that he "had his conversation in godly sincerity." (2 Cor. i. 12.)

Asp. You have quoted the charge delivered by the servant; be pleased to recollect the protestation made by the master: "Not for thy righteousness," says Moses, "or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go to possess their land." (Deut. ix. 5.) Even an earthly Canaan was not given to the Israelites, as the reward of their own, either outward obedience or inward sincerity. Much less can we expect the kingdom of immortality on account of any uprightness of our intentions, or piety of our actions.

However, as the doctrine of sincerity is the favourite and the fashionable tenet, I will conform a little to the taste in vogue. You shall have no reason to complain, that

I am either a cynic or a stoic.* Let it suffice us to be sincere; only let us refer ourselves to the apostle for a description of this darling qualification; "That ye may be sincere, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God." (Phil. i. 10, 11.)

Here are three properties of acceptable sincerity.—It must bear fruits, "the fruits of righteousness;" and bear them abundantly, so that we may be filled with them. The branch and the fruits must derive,—that its vigour, these their flavour, and both of them their very being—from the all-supporting, all-supplying root Christ Jesus. Then, instead of terminating in self-justification, they must redound to the honour of God. It is not said, these shall justify you, but "these shall glorify your father which is in heaven."

This kind of sincerity can never be too highly esteemed, nor too zealously encouraged. But this, you will observe, flows from the grace of Christ, and issues in the glory of God; therefore does but very poorly attest, either the sufficiency of human ability to perform good works, or the sufficiency of human works to win the prize of our high calling.

Ther. Do you then exclude all works? Will you make a mere nothing, both of our moral endowments, and of your evangelical obedience?

Asp. They are excluded, both the one and the other, from all share in justifying us; yet not by me, but by an authority to which there can be no objection, and from which there lies no appeal. Speaking of salvation, thus saith the wisdom of God, "Not of works——"

Ther. Works of the ceremonial law, I suppose. These, we all acknowledge, are under the Christian dispensation, as a bond cancelled or an act repealed. But sure you will allow a better office, and a nobler character to that course of obedience which is regulated by the commands of Christ.

Asp. St. Paul will allow it no such office as that for which my Theron is pleading. "Ye are saved," says the apostle. Ye are delivered from wrath, reconciled to God, and made heirs of his kingdom. How? "By grace, through faith," (Eph. ii. 8.) Grace, like a magnificent sovereign, from the riches of his own bounty, and without any respect to human worthiness, confers the glorious gift. Faith, like an indigent petitioner, with an empty hand, and without any pretence to personal desert, receives the heavenly blessing.

Both grace and faith stand in direct opposition to works, all works whatever—whether they be works of the law, or works of the gospel; exercises of the heart, or actions of the life; done in a state of nature, or done under the influences of grace; they are all and every of them, equally set aside in this great affair.

That the bill of exclusion is thus extensive, or rather quite unlimited, appears from the reason assigned: "Lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 9; that all pretence of glorying may be cut off from fallen creatures; that the whole honour of obtaining salvation may be appropriated to him, "who hid not his face from shame and spitting."—And is he not worthy, unspeakably and infinitely worthy, to receive this unrivalled honour as a recompense for his unparalleled humiliation?

Ther. All our good works, we allow, are recommended by Christ. They prevail for our justification only through his merits. So that we still depend upon the Redeemer; and, by this means, pay him the highest honour.

Asp. Depend upon the Redeemer! No, my dear friend; you rely upon your own pious acts, and moral qualifications. They, they are your grand recommendation. The office consigned over to the divine Jesus, is nothing more than to be (as it were) master of the ceremonies. He may have the credit of introducing your fine accomplishments with a kind of graceful air. But is this an office suited to his incomparable dignity? Was it for this that he bowed the heavens and partook of our nature? Was it for this that he became subject to the law, and obedient unto death? Only for this, that he might usher in our own endowments with a plume and a scarf? Surely, Theron, you can never entertain such low thoughts of the incarnate God, and of Christ's mediatorial undertaking.

Ther. Neither can I entertain such low and vilifying thoughts of our own virtuous attainments. They distinguish persons of eminence and worth from the sordid wretch, and execrable villain, just as the noble faculty of reason distinguishes the man from the brute.

Asp. To deny good works the merit of justifying us, is very different from vilifying them. You are going to build a new house, Theron: Pray, do you intend to hew your timber from the flimsy tendrils of the vine?

Ther. No certainly.

Asp. Because you do not think its feeble shoots proper to form the beams, and support the roof, of your intended edifice; do you therefore affront them, depreciate them, or disallow their usefulness? By no means. They may beautify your walls with their ornamental spread, and enrich the desert

* The cynic had no complaisance, the stoic was quite inflexible.

with their delicious fruit. This is an office suitable to the nature of the plant; and from this it receives sufficient estimation, without pretending to the honours of the oak.

Virtuous attainments, I own, are a considerable distinction in the present state of things; and, what is a higher encomium, (I shall now outshoot you in your own bow,) they will distinguish the true believer from the hyprocritical professor, even at the great tribunal. But let them be content with their province, and not intrude upon the Saviour's prerogative. To effect justification be his, to discriminate the justified, theirs. Neither let them elate their possessors with a vain conceit of themselves, who, though they were meek as Moses, holy as Samuel, and wise as Daniel, must confide in nothing but the boundless mercies of the Lord, must plead nothing but the infinite merits of his Christ.

This is the theology both of the Psalmist and of St. Paul. They derive the blessedness promised in scripture, not from the shallow stream of human accomplishments, but from the inexhaustible ocean of divine grace: "Blessed is he whose unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." (Psalm xxxii. 1.)

Ther. Will Aspasio then, like many of our modern disputants, mutilate the holy word? industriously display what seems to strengthen his argument, but artfully secrete what tends to overthrow his scheme? How could you forget, or why should you suppress the following clause, "and in whose spirit there is no guile." Was you afraid it would demolish your opinion; and point out an upright honest mind as the cause of this blessedness?

Asp. Far was I, my dear Theron, from any such groundless apprehensions, and equally far from all such delusory designs. "Shall I talk deceitfully for God?" (Job xiii. 7.) His sacred cause does not need it, and his exalted majesty would disdain it. No, I would condemn my tongue to eternal silence, rather than speak a syllable, either to conceal or disguise the truth.

Most readily we will admit the sentence you mention, "In whose spirit there is no guile." It is evident from the context, that these words are not descriptive of a person in whose heart and conversation there is no iniquity, but of a penitent sinner, whose mouth freely confesses the iniquity of them both, confesses without any reserve or the least attempt to palliate; which, instead of invalidating, corroborates my argument, since, according to your own allegation, the highest merit consists in a free acknowledgment of sin, or a total renunciation of all worthiness.

Ther. When, therefore, we join repentance to all our other works, lament our deficiencies, and implore forgiveness, surely this must be available with a merciful God, and cannot but entitle us to the happiness of heaven.

Asp. How strange does it sound, at least in my ears, for poor miserable guilty creatures, to talk of entitling themselves to the happiness of heaven by any deeds of their own! when it is owing wholly to God's rich forbearing mercy, that they are not transmitted to hell; owing wholly to God's free preventing grace that they are enabled to think a good thought.

But not to enlarge upon this consideration, I would ask, whether those penitential exercises were attended with a hearty detestation of sin, and an utter abhorrence of the sinner? (Ezek. xxxvi. 31.) If they were, you would then renounce yourself universally. You would never think of placing the least dependence on any thing of your own, nay, you would even loathe yourself. If they were not, then your very repentance falls short, and is to be repented of. It is as if "one came to the press-fat for to draw out fifty vessels, and there were but twenty." (Hag. ii. 16.) It is, if I may continue the prophet's metaphor, and the prophet's language, "the scant measure, which," in this your spiritual traffic, as well as in the affairs of secular commerce "is abominable." (Micah vi. 10.)

Or, should your repentance be without a failure and without a flaw, I must still say to my friend, as our Lord replied to the young ruler, "one thing thou lackest." In all these acts of humiliation, you have only taken shame to yourself, whereas a righteousness is wanting which may magnify the law and make it honourable. Should God, without insisting upon this, pardon and reward, he would not act according to his glorious character, nor be at once "a just God and a Saviour." (Isaiah xlv. 21.) And if you can find this righteousness, "either in the depth, or in the height above;" in any person or any object, save only in the imputed obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, I retract whatever I have advanced.

Ther. A preacher and an author has lately assured us, that we are to be "accepted of God, and saved by our own obedience." If so, I need not scruple to repeat my assertion, that our own duties, especially when accompanied with repentance, are a real and proper foundation for life eternal.

Asp. Then the apostle was under a great mistake, when treating of Christ and his merits, he ventured to assert, "other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, even Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

Ther. If you will not credit a modern

preacher, I can produce a decision, made by one of the most ancient and authoritative synods: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18.) Repentance unto life is their unanimous voice, and my unexceptionable voucher.

Asp. I can easily guess the assembly to which you refer. But I can hardly grant it the venerable name of a synod. It consisted of some Judaizing converts, who adhered with a tenacious and bigoted zeal to the Mosaic rites. However, though I might scruple my Theron's appellation, I readily acquiesce in their determination.

It is not said, those Gentiles were penitent, and therefore God granted them life. This should have been the language of the assembly, in order to establish my friend's way of thinking. On the contrary, they were dead in sin. God, of his free goodness, granted them repentance, which is both the beginning and a substantial part of true life, even of that life which is founded on justification, is carried on by sanctification, and completed in glory.

I would farther observe, that repentance is a turning of the heart. And when it is repentance unto life, it is a turning of the heart from every other object, to the great and sole fountain of good, Christ Jesus. (Acts xix. 4.)—Were men slaves to sensuality? When they repent, they are turned to Christ, for refined and heavenly affections. Were they wont to confide in themselves and their own works? As soon as they truly repent, they turn to Christ for a better righteousness; and thereby, for everlasting acceptance with God. In short, they turn from every false stay, and fly only to Christ, depend only on Christ, looking not to their own tears of humiliation, not to their own duties or graces, but "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 21.)

Ther. Suppose it should be wrong to expect such a vast reward, as the inconceivable glories of heaven, on account of our own duties, yet to set them wholly aside, to allow them no influence at all, not so much as the least co-operation in turning the scale; this is an access on the other hand. If the former is presumption, the latter is fanaticism.

Asp. I must confess, I do not thoroughly understand what you mean by fanaticism. Neither is it of much significancy to enter upon the disquisition of an obnoxious term. I would only maintain, that on us unworthy sinners, whatever is bestowed by the righteous God, is bestowed, not as a debt* to our works, but as the donation of pure grace.

Ther. I think, it is sufficiently of grace, if we acknowledge good works to be wrought by the assistance of the divine Spirit; and then admitted, together with our Saviour's merits, as a recommendation to the divine favour.

Asp. The Pharisee could make his acknowledgments for the assistance of grace: "God, I thank thee," was his language. Yet this did not exempt him from the charge of pride, nor secure him from the sin of boasting. Besides, if good works are wrought by the operation of the divine Spirit, they draw a bill upon our gratitude, not upon the bank of heaven; they render us the obliged, not the deserving party. To think or teach otherwise, is errant popery,* however it may lurk under a veil of Protestantism.

You bring to my mind a memorable story. Two persons were travelling through the deserts of Arabia. The one utterly unarmed, the other wore a sword and carried a musket. As the place was exceedingly dangerous, the latter, solicitous for the safety of his companion, makes him a present of his firearms; which was no sooner done, than a lion espies them, and advances fiercely towards them. The foremost discharges his piece, and wounds their horrid aggressor. The wound neither killing nor disabling, only enrages the monster. He seizes the unfortunate marksman, and is upon the point to tear him limb from limb. His fellow-traveller flies to his succour, snatches up the carbine, which dropt from the other's hand, and fells the ravenous beast to the ground; then, drawing his sword, stabs him to the heart, and rescues his friend.

The lion thus slain, they take off the skin, which he who slew the lordly savage claims as his own. "No," says his grateful friend, "as you did part of the execution with my weapon, I insist upon half of the shaggy spoil. I expect satisfaction likewise for the loss of my piece, which you broke in the encounter." To obtain both, he commences a law-suit against that generous associate, who not only gave him the weapon, but saved the prosecutor from the very jaws of destruction.

Ther. If I had been judge, I should, without much hesitation, have determined such a cause. Instead of costs and damages for my plaintiff, I should have transmitted the wretch to the pillory.

Asp. I believe all the world would applaud your sentence. Only be pleased to remember, that the procedure on which you

* *Bestowed as a debt*, is, I must allow, somewhat like jargon. But perhaps jargon and inconsistency may not be without their propriety in this place, as they tend to show the genius of that doctrine which would connect such contradictory ideas.

* Good works, says a champion for the church of Rome, are "mercatura regni cœlestis,—the price we pay, or the commodity we barter, for the kingdom of heaven.

so justly animadvert, is the very picture of our excessive unreasonableness, if we presume to write ourselves creditors, and the divine Being debtor; because he has delivered us from the bondage of corruption, and enabled us to perform the duties of godliness.

Theron paused, as somewhat struck by the representation. After a short interval, Aspasio resumed the discourse.

Believe me, my dear friend, salvation, both in the root and all its branches, is entirely of grace. Or else believe me, for the many cogent testimonies of scripture, which most circumstantially ascertain this great truth. Election is of grace: "Having predestinated us into the adoption of children," not on account of human worthiness, but, "according to the good pleasure of his will, (Eph. i. 5.) Equally gratuitous is our effectual vocation: "God hath called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace," (2 Tim. i. 9.) Faith, with all its precious fruits, is owing to the same cause: "By grace ye are saved through faith," (Eph. ii. 8.) From hence springs justification, together with all its attendant privileges: "Being justified freely by his grace."* This is the origin of regeneration, and every living principle of godliness: "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth," (Jam i. 18.) The consummation of bliss flows from the same all-supplying source: "The gift of God is eternal life," (Rom. vi. 23.) It is, in every respect, a gift, not only without, but contrary to all desert of ours.—So that the foundation is laid in the riches of grace; the superstructure is reared by the hand of grace, and when the top-stone is brought forth, when our felicity is completed in the kingdom of heaven, the everlasting acclamation will be, "Grace, grace unto it!" (Zech. iv. 7.)

This is that glorious gospel, which human learning could never have discovered; which carnal reason cannot understand; which the wisdom of this world accounteth foolishness; which the envy of the devil, and the pride of man, will always oppose.

Ther. What say you to the opinion which Ouranius so strenuously maintains, that we are justified, not by the merits of Christ imputed to us, but by Christ himself formed in our hearts? And Ouranius is none of your proud or carnal people. His writings are remarkable for their strict piety, and his life is as exemplary as his principles.

Asp. You know, Theron, I have nothing to do with the persons of men, but with the truths of the gospel. Ouranius, though eminently devout, may be mistaken: And if this is his way of thinking, he quite misapprehends the doctrine of grace.

What is written in the oracles of scripture? "The Lord justifieth the ungodly," (Rom. iv. 5.) What is implied in the maxim of Ouranius? He justifieth the holy, the heavenly, the Christ-like.—"A man is justified by faith," (Rom. v. 1,) says the secretary of heaven. He is justified by works, says the pen of Ouranius: only let them be works of a superior order, such as are internal, spiritual, and wrought by the operation of Christ on the soul.—According to this notion, every one is justified by his own love, his own purity, his own zeal. Whereas, an unerring writer has most solemnly declared, "that by one man's obedience, many myriads of sinners, even all the redeemed world, shall be made righteous." (Rom. v. 19.)

This notion, I think, is legalism in its greatest subtilty, or highest refinement. It disannuls the merit of Christ, it vacates all imputation, and makes our salvation to consist wholly in the work of sanctification. Against which, if you remember, I entered my protest in one of our first conferences.* And now, having ventured to animadvert on the tenets of others, it may reasonably be expected, that I should give an account of my own faith.—"I am justified; my soul is accepted; not because Christ has put his laws in my mind, but shed his blood for my sins; not because I myself am enabled to walk in all godly conversation, but because the Lord Jesus has fulfilled all righteousness as my surety."

Ther. I am for neither of the extremes. The middle way is most eligible. This is what sound sense approves, and the sacred system authorizes, "Whoso believeth on me," says our Lord, "shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life," (John iii. 15.) "Blessed," adds the beloved disciple, "are they who do his commandments; that they may have a right to the tree of life; and may enter in, through the gates, into the city, (Rev. xxii. 14.)

Conformably to these texts of scripture, I would neither reject our Redeemer's merits nor repudiate good works. As this shady tree, and these cooling breezes, unite their properties, to render our situation agreeable; so those two causes, acting in conjunction, exalt us to the favour of God, and constitute us heirs of heaven. God himself has joined them. And I must urge my remonstrance in our Lord's own words,

* Rom. iii. 24. Δωρεαν τη αυτου χαριτι. One of these words might have served to convey the apostle's meaning. But he doubles his assertion, in order to give us the fullest conviction of the truth, and to impress us with a sense of its peculiar importance; "Freely by his grace."

* See Dialogue II. p. 160.

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Asp. Would you then make impotence itself a coadjutor with omnipotence? does this humble the sinner? does this exalt the Saviour? No: it is a most injurious infringement of his mediatorial dignity. Instead of excluding, it evidently introduces boasting. In consequence of such a scheme, it would be said by the inhabitants of the heavenly world, "Thanks to our blessed Redeemer for this happiness! yet not to him only, but to our own righteousness also.

Can you imagine, that the obedience of Christ is insufficient to accomplish our justification? Must its efficacy be reinforced by the accession of our works? And what are these works of ours, that they should enhance the value, the immense value of our Redeemer's? Maimed, tarnished, worm-eaten things: eaten by the worms of self-seeking, self-admiring, self-love; tarnished by a thousand vanities, maimed by ten thousand negligences. To join these in commission with our divine Master's righteousness, would be infinitely more disgraceful than to tack the beggar's rag on the monarch's robe; would be altogether as needless as to dream of augmenting the sea by the drops of our bucket.

Ther. Worm-eaten? What reason have you to represent our acts of obedience under this sordid and shameful image?

Asp. I thought you could hardly brook this disparaging expression. It is somewhat like petty treason against the dignity of man. My reasons I would postpone to some other opportunity, when if you please we will give the cause a full hearing.

At present, to make amends for this vile slander, I will suppose your works to have no defect; nay to have all the perfection which you yourself could wish. Will you glory on this account? You are too modest, I am sure, to avow or patronize such a practice; yet, if we say or think concerning any attainments of our own, "This is the ground on which I expect to escape condemnation, and inherit life;" we do, in the most offensive, though not in the most explicit manner, glory.*

Or, will you reckon, that these services, because faultless, are in any degree meritorious? Let us hear our Lord's decision in the case: "When ye have done," not only some, "but all those things which are commanded you." And where is the man, or what is his name, who, in any nation, or in any age, has done all that is commanded?

> Where shall I find him? Angels, tell me where?
> Shall I see glories beaming from his brow?
> Or trace his footsteps by the rising flowers?

Yet even in such a case, if all this were performed, what shall we say? We are no better than unprofitable servants; we have done nothing more than what was our indispensable duty to do, (Luke xvii. 10.) And have, on this footing, just the same claim to honours and rewards, as the negro slave, after the despatch of his daily business, has upon the estate or the wealth of an American planter.

Ther. But what say you to those passages of scripture which I have quoted? You have given them a hearing, but no answer. They, I do insist upon it, expressly assert, therefore incontestably prove, an union of Christ's merit and our own works in the business of salvation.

Asp. It is written in the book of Revelation, "Blessed are they that do his commandments." And wherefore? Because the obedience of faith is attended with a real blessedness on earth, and demonstrates our title to eternal blessedness in heaven. It is, though not the purchase, yet the evidence of our right to the tree of life.

All this I acknowledge. But where, I beseech you, does the scripture join the obedience of Christ and the obedience of man, as mutually conducive to the justification of a sinner? The scripture utterly disavows such a copartnership, and asserts what our homily expresses, "surely, there can be no work of any mortal man (be he ever so holy) that shall be coupled in merit with Christ's most holy act."§ The scripture steadily declares, that, in this greatest of transactions, Christ is not an accessary, but the principal; nay that he is *all*. "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that, through this" illustrious and exalted "person,† is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things." Through this person, without any partner or coadjutor. By him; not by him and our works jointly, but by him solely; without the concurrence of any other action or any other agent. This was typified by the high-priest, when, on the solemn day of expiation, he went into the tabernacle alone, and made the figurative atonement without any associate, (Lev. xvi. 17.) From all things: by him they are wholly, as well as solely justified;

‡ "Omnis causa justitiæ et salutis est materia et objectum καυχησεως. Unde apostolus: Nam si Abraham ex operibus justificatus est, εχει καυχημα;" *i. e.* Whatever is the cause of righteousness and salvation, is a real and proper foundation for glorying. Therefore the apostle acknowledges, "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory." Rom. iv. 2.

§ Homily on Good Friday.

† Acts xiii. 38. Διατουτου, the word man is not in the original. So that I think, "this illustrious and exalted person," is the fullest and most exact translation.

freed from every charge, whether of omission or commission, and rendered, not in part only, but completely acceptable.

I hope, therefore, you will no longer consider the supremely excellent Jesus as a partial cause of our justification. What would be the consequence, if a person should fix one foot on the bank of yonder river, and rest another on the fluid stream?

Ther. He must unavoidably fall.

Asp. And what says our divine instructor to those double-minded Galatians, who could not believe themselves safe and complete in the merits of Christ alone, but must be seeking some other foundation, on which to repose a share at least of their confidence? He says, and they are awful words; they call for my Theron's most serious regard, "ye are fallen from grace." (Gal. v. 4.)

Let me entreat my friend to beware of this error. I think it is the prevailing error of our times; and so much the more dangerous, because it is somewhat specious. To pour contempt upon the blessed Jesus, with the libertines and deists, would be shocking to a mind that retains the least reverence for sacred things. Entirely to set aside the meritorious efficacy of his undertaking, with the Arians and the Socinians, would be afflictive to a conscience that is impressed with the least sense of sin. Whereas, to erect our merits on the foundation of Christ's; to be found in his, yet not renounce our own righteousness; this is both plausible to our reason, and pleasing to our vanity; this seems to honour the divine Saviour, even while it gratifies human pride. But this is an egregrious falsehood, and cannot stand: This is an abominable idol, and must be laid in the dust. Christ, like the real mother of the child, will have the whole or none, (1 Kings iii. 26.) the whole—unshared, unrivalled, undiminished glory of our salvation.

Let me again entreat my dear Theron to beware of this error. It is the main pillar in the Roman heresy, and the master-policy of the Popish Machiavilians. Christ hath merited, that we may merit, is their grand maxim, and their grand delusion. Hence come their penances and their pilgrimages, hence the hypocritical mortifications of some, and the extravagant austerities of others; this enriches their shrines, and fills their cloisters. And to those seminaries of superstition let it be banished, let it be confined. There let them raise their scaffolding, and try to enlarge the dimensions of the sky; there let them kindle their flambeaux and attempt to increase the lustre of the sun. And when they have effected this easier task, then will we Protestants follow their example, and adopt their system; then will we also think of adding our own righteousness, by way of supplement to the dignity and efficacy of our Lord's.

Ther. If we are justified wholly by our Lord's righteousness; if nothing need be added, if nothing can be added to its all-comprehending fulness, what becomes of the generally-received opinion, that Christ obtained for us only a possibility of being saved, or put us into a capacity of acquiring salvation.

Asp. It will be discountenanced and overthrown, as extremely dishonourable to the Redeemer, and no less uncomfortable to the redeemed. When Christ procured our pardon, and recovered our title to life, it was all his own doing. "Of the people there was none with him," (Isa. lxiii. 6.) In both cases his work was perfect. Hear his own testimony: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," (John xvii. 4.) Should you want an explication of these words, I refer you to the comment of an apostle: "He, that is, Jesus Christ, has obtained eternal redemption for us," (Heb. ix. 12.) This was his work, and it is fully executed. He has—he has obtained eternal redemption; and left nothing for his people, but to accept the glorious purchase, and live as becomes the redeemed of the Lord.

This truth is written, as with a sunbeam, in the pages of the gospel; and sounds, as with a voice of thunder, in the songs of heaven. "Salvation to our God," they cry, "that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb," (Rev. vii. 10.) Those saints in glory ascribe the whole—the whole of their salvation they ascribe to the grace of God, and to the blood of the Lamb.

Ther. Have not many of our ablest divines represented faith, obedience, and repentance, as the terms of acceptance? Christ, according to this account, procured not the blessing itself, but only the grant of easier conditions on which it may be enjoyed.

Asp. What says that sublime Being who gives the ablest divines all their wisdom? "My righteous servant shall justify many," (Isa. liii. 11.) not pave the way, or adjust the preliminaries, but despatch the very business; "shall justify." The terms of acceptance, for fallen and rebellious man, were a full satisfaction to the Divine justice, and a complete conformity to the divine law. These, impracticable by us, were consigned over to Christ. By him they were thoroughly accomplished; and by this accomplishment of them, he purchased for us all blessings. Among others, he purchased the gift of faith, the grace of repentance, and ability to yield thankful, dutiful, evangelical obedience. These, therefore, are very improperly called, the terms which are really constituent parts of our salvation.

To sum up all in a word—the whole tenor of revelation shows, that there are but two methods whereby any of the human race can be justified: Either by a perfect obedience to the law, in their own persons; and then the reward is of debt:*—Or else, because the Surety of a better covenant has satisfied all demands in their stead; and then the reward is of grace. There is no trimming or reconciling expedient. You may choose either of the two; but no third is proposed or allowed.

Ther. Was there not a different method for the ancient people of God?

Asp. None, Theron. In the state of primitive innocency, a perfect and persevering observance of the divine command was the condition of life and immortality. When, by the first grand apostacy, this became impossible, a free pardon, and gracious acceptance, through the blessed Jesus, were substituted in its stead. Which economy, like a fountain of life, was opened, when God promised "the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head," (Gen. iii. 25.) It ran like a salutary rivulet through the antediluvian world;—continued its progress along the patriarchial age;—flowed, in broader streams, under the Mosaic dispensation;—is derived down to us, abundantly enlarged, by the coming of Christ, and the ministry of his apostles;—will be transmitted with an increasing spread to the latest posterity;—nor ever cease to amplify and extend its influence, till, as the fountain is become a river, the river is augmented into an ocean; and "the knowledge of the Lord" our righteousness "fill the earth, as the waters cover the abysses of the sea," (Isa. xi. 9.)

There was, I confess, a diversity in the administration, but no difference in the nature, of the blessing. Jesus Christ, however variously manifested, was the "same yesterday," is the same "to-day," will be the same "for ever," (Heb. xiii. 8.) as it is the very same sun which gleams at early dawn, which shines in the advancing day, and glows at height of noon.

My simile reminds us of the time, and leaves a most important doctrine upon our memories. Suppose we take the admonition, and begin to move homeward.

Ther. We need be in no hurry, Aspasio. My watch tells me, that we have half an hour good. Besides, I have something farther to allege, and from a very great authority, which seems directly contrary to your notion.

Asp. Just as you please, Theron. If you choose to stay, I am all compliance with your inclination; and, would truth permit, I should be all conformity to your opinion.

Ther. You know who it is that asks, "What doth the Lord require of thee?" And neither of us need be informed, what it is that the prophet replies; "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God, (Mic. vi. 8.) But I want to know what you think of this passage.

Asp. I think it is absolutely inconsistent with your scheme. This passage inculcates humility. But your scheme is the very reverse of that amiable virtue. A self-justiciary walking humbly with God, is little better than a contradiction in terms.

The Lord has said, "Ye shall be saved by grace."* Your system replies, "No, but by our own works.—It is declared in scripture, "that the gift of God is eternal life." It is implied in my friend's doctrine, that this happiness is the wages of our own deeds.—"My son shall have all the glory of a sinner's salvation," is the unalterable decree of the Most High. "We will have a share in the honour," is the language of your opinion.—Look, how wide therefore is the east from the west! so remote is such a strain of teaching from the practice of walking humbly with our God.

Ther. But consider, good Aspasio; have I not the prophet's authority for my opinion? Are not his words expressly on my side? does he not mention those duties of morality and piety as the appointed method of obtaining the divine favour.

Asp. He mentions, I apprehend, a solicitous inquiry; to which he gives a satisfactory answer; then subjoins a practical improvement of the whole. The inquiry is expressed in these words: "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams; with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Mic. vi. 7, 8.) To which it is replied, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good," for this important purpose; namely, the Messiah; pointed out by all thy sacrifices, and described in the preceding chapter. Atonement for sin, and peace with God, are to be made by a better hand, and in a better way, than thou proposest. He "whose outgoings have been from of old, from everlasting," (Mic. v. 2.) He, who is the Son of the highest, and yet

* Rom iv. 4. Pactional debt; founded on the promise of the covenant, not springing from any worth in the obedience.

* Eph. ii. 5. This text lays the axe to the very root of spiritual pride, and all self-glorying whatever. Therefore, the inspired writer, foreseeing the backwardness of mankind to receive it, yet knowing the absolute necessity of its reception, again asserts (ver. 8.) the very same truth in the very same words.

the seed of "her that travaileth;" (Mic. v. 3.) He has undertaken, and will fully execute, this great office.

"And what doth the Lord thy God require of thee?" What temper, what conduct, what expressions of gratitude, from his people, who are reconciled through the blood of Christ, and admitted to the blessings of the new covenant.* They are to testify their thankfulness, by the alacrity, uniformity, and constancy of their obedience; or by the conscientious discharge of every moral, social, and religious duty.

If this be a true interpretation of the text, instead of establishing, it overturns your cause.—But I have another objection to your method, perhaps more weighty than the foregoing.

Ther. Pray, let me hear it.—I am not so enamoured with my notions, but I can bear to have them censured; nor so attached to my scheme, but I can relinquish it for a better.

Asp. I would illustrate my meaning, by a common experiment in optics. When objects are viewed in a concave speculum, or in the hollow of a polished spoon, how do they appear?

Ther. Inverted.

Asp. Such is my friend's system of religion. He inverts the order of the gospel: He turns the beautiful building upside down, and lays that for the foundation which should only be part of the superstructure. Not so the apostle Paul. He, like a wise master-builder, places Christ as the foundation-stone, and rears his edifice of practical godliness on that all-supporting basis. —Examine his epistle to the Romans; which is unquestionably the completest model of doctrine, and the noblest body of divinity extant in the world.

He first discovers the depravity of our nature, and the misery of our condition: He then displays the method of our recovery by Christ, and the blessings freely vouchsafed in his gospel: After which he delineates the offices of morality, and enforces them by the most engaging motives; motives drawn from the free unbounded loving-kindness of God our Saviour, and from the rich invaluable benefits of his grace;† privilege he plants as the root; from which duty blooms as the flower; godliness grows as the fruit.

The same order is observed by St. Peter in his very concise, but very accurate map, of the way to heaven: "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ," (1 Pet. i. 2.) First, the everlasting and electing love of the Father.—Then, the enlightening and renewing agency of the Spirit; who testifies of Christ, and applies his death to the soul, purifying the heart by faith; from whence, as from a fountain of living water, flows true sanctification, and every act of filial obedience, every species of real holiness; all which, being partly defective, and partly polluted, must be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, and made acceptable by his dying oblation.

Ther. Is this the constant method in which the sacred writers represent the gospel salvation? Do they always observe this particular order, in arranging its doctrines and its duties? Or, is it not an insignificant circumstance which goes first, provided we take in both?

Asp. To observe this order, I am persuaded, is no insignificant circumstance. It is of great consequence both to our establishment, and to our growth in grace. Is it a matter of indifference to the archer whether he send the point or the feather of his arrow foremost? Can he, in either case hit the mark with equal ease, and equal certainty.

I believe, you will find, that the sacred writers, in all their evangelical discourses, invariably adhere to this order. Nay, it took place even under the legal dispensation. When the Lord God published his law from Mount Sinai; when he wrote it with his own finger, on tables of stone; how did he introduce the precepts? how enforce their observance? Let us attend to the preamble, which is the language of love, and the very spirit of the gospel: "I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," (Exod. xx. 2.) "I have already delivered thee, with a mighty hand, from the most sordid and insupportable slavery. I have promised thee, for thy possession, the delightful country of Canaan, 'a godly heritage of the hosts of nations, (Jer. iii. 19.) Nay, I myself am thy portion; a God in covenant with thee; engaged by an inviolable contract, and with the exertion of all

* Thy God is the phrase. Which denotes an interest; implies an appropriation; and is the peculiar language of the covenant—Thy God; not made so by thy humble walking, but by an act of his own grace, previous to any obedience of thine.—According to Theron's principles, the prophet should rather have said, "Walk humbly (not with thy God, but) that he may be thy God."

† This, I think, is the best platform for an evangelical catechism. The ruin of man, occasioned by sin—his recovery, effected by Christ—his gratitude, to be expressed by way of obedience.—This plan is carried into execution by the Palatinate divines: who have formed upon it, a summary of catechetical instruction, than which I have met with nothing of the kind more clear and satisfactory: more edifying and animating: more exacty consonant to the benign spirit of the gospel, or better calculated to make mankind both holy and happy. This piece the reader may see, together with a judicious, and very valuable exposition of it, in the Latin works of Henricus Altingius, vol. i. quarto. Which, I believe, may be bought for a trifle, yet are more precious than gold.

my attributes to do thee good. Therefore keep the statutes, the judgments, and ordinances, which I am now going to establish." Could there be a more winning inducement, or a more endearing obligation to obedience?

I might point out the same strain running through the exhortations of Moses and the songs of David, the sermons of the prophets and the writings of the apostles. But this I wave, not through an apprehension of its difficulty, only from a fear of prolixity. However, you will not think me tedious if I produce one more instance from the great master of our schools. "For we ourselves were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another," (Tit. iii. 3—8.) Here he sets before us a dismal but exact picture of our depraved and undone condition. Then he presents us with a delightful view of our redemption, both in its gracious cause and precious effects. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he has shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Having thus provided for our happiness, he then promotes our holiness. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men."

I make no comment* upon the passage; because I hope you will commit it, as a noble depositum, to your memory. Your own diligent meditation, accompanied with humble prayer, will furnish out the best exposition. Only I would just remark, that the apostle, always consistent, always uniform, marshals his thoughts with his usual exactness. Good works are not disbanded, nor yet suffered to lead the van, but made to bring up the rear.* When he mentions these fruits of the Spirit, he mentions them, not slightly as matters of small moment, but earnestly, as affairs of great importance. It is his desire and his charge, that all believers should be careful;† have their hearts upon the business; should use their best contrivance, and exert their utmost endeavours, not barely to practise, but to maintain; to be exemplary, distinguished, and pre-eminent in the exercise of every virtue, because this virtue, and those works, though not the ground of a reconciliation with God, are amiable in the eyes of all, and honourable to the Christian profession. They are also a necessary ingredient in personal happiness, and the apparent means of social usefulness.

Ther. This view of the evangelical plan is, I must confess, new to me; and particularly your ordonnance of the epistle to the Romans.

Asp. If this be new, perhaps what I am going to advance may be strange. We have been talking about acceptance with God, and debating whether our own good works are the cause of this inestimable blessing. What will you say, if we can perform no good work, till we are interested in Christ, and accepted by God?

Ther. Say!—that this is razing foundations.

Asp. It is razing the wrong, the foundation falsely so called, which will certainly deceive as many as make it their trust. And is it not prudent, when we are building for eternity, carefully to examine the ground? Is it not friendly to divert a man from the treacherous sand, and lead him to the unshaken rock? For this cause I said it once, and for this cause I say it again, that we can perform no good work till we are interested in Christ, and accepted of God.

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* Perhaps the reader will give me leave, though Aspasio has declined the office, to add a short expository stricture upon the most distinguished parts of this very important paragraph. I. We have the cause of our redemption; "not works of righteousness which we have done, but the kindness, the love, the mercy of God our Saviour." II. The effects; which are, 1st, Justification—being justified, having our sins forgiven, and Christ's righteousness imputed: all this, without any the least deserving quality in us; solely by his grace, and most unmerited goodness. 2d, Santification—expressed by the "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" whose influences purify the soul, as the washing of water cleanses the body; and introduces an improvement into all the faculties of the mind, somewhat like that annual renovation and general smile of nature, which the return of spring diffuses over the face of the earth. III. The end and consummation of all; "that we should be made heirs of the heavenly kingdom; and live, now in the assured hope, hereafter in the full enjoyment of eternal life."

* The same order is observed by St. John, Rev. xiv. 13. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Not go before, to open the everlasting doors, and give them admittance into the mansions of joy. But they follow them, when admitted: As the robe, which, on a king's coronation day, flows from his shoulders, cannot but accompany him, wheresoever he goes. It may be pertinent, on the mention of this illustration, just to hint, that as it is not the robe of state which makes the king; so neither is it the external practice of holiness which makes the Christian. An union with Christ, an interest in his merits, and the indwelling presence of his Spirit; these, and nothing short of these, constitute the true Christian. Yet, as the royal robe is an attendant on majesty, and distinguishes the monarch; so practical godliness is inseparable from faith, and adorns the believer.

† φροντιζωσι. This is somewhat like that emphatical expression, which so often occurs in the Old Testament, השמרו לעשות "Ye shall observe to do; ye shall be very diligent to fulfil; ye shall be very exact in performing."

Ther. Produce your reasons, Aspasio. And strong reasons they must be, which are forcible enough to support such an opinion.

Asp. The case seems to speak for itself. How can a man that is evil do works that are good? Would you expect to "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" But let us hear what our unerring Teacher says; "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John xv. 4.) Nothing can be more express and full to our purpose. But that which follows is far more awful and alarming to our consciences. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv. 6.) From which it appears, that the human heart is never actuated by good tempers, that the human life can never be productive of good works, until a man is ingrafted into Christ, no more than a branch can bear valuable fruit, while it continues in a state of separation from the tree.* It appears also, that persons alienated from Christ are, and all their performances too, like broken, withered, rotten boughs—fit for nothing, but to be committed to the flames, and consumed from the earth. Both they and their services, far from being meritorious, are, in the estimate of heaven, worthless and despicably mean.

Ther. What! are all the noble deeds, performed by the advocates for morality and lovers of virtue, worthless in themselves, and despicable before the supreme Being? Worthless and despicable (grating words!) only because they are not attended with the peculiarities of your faith? Can the want of this little circumstance change their nature, and turn their gold into dross?

Asp. My dear Theron, call not the circumstance little. It is sufficient, were your works more precious than gold, to debase them into tin, into lead, into dross.—When the poor shepherd brought you, yesterday morning, a present of some wood-strawberries, bringing them as an humble expression of his gratitude, they were kindly received. But if he had offered them as a price for your house, or as the purchase of your estate, how should you have regarded them in such a connexion? No words can express the disdain you would have conceived. When Barnabas presented a sum of money to the apostles, for the supply of their necessities and the relief of indigent believers, (Acts iv. 37,) it was welcome to them, and pleasing to God. But when Simon the sorcerer offered his gold to Peter and John; offering it, not from a principle of faith, but as an equivalent for the Holy Spirit; not in order to testify his thankfulness, but rather to play the huckster with heaven, it was rejected with the utmost indignation. (Acts viii. 20.)

I leave my friend to apply the preceding instances. Only let me beg of him to believe, that if my words are grating, they are extorted by the force of truth. If I am obliged to blame what he calls good works, it is, as a great critic blames eloquence, "with the tenderness of a lover." But my censure falls only on their faulty origin and unbecoming aim. Let them spring from the grace of Christ as their source, let them propose the glory of Christ as their end; then, instead of putting a slight upon them, or giving them a bill of divorce, I would court, caress, and wed them. Whereas, if neither this end be kept in the view, nor that principle operate in the heart, I must persist in questioning the genuineness of their character, nay, in denying the very possibility of their existence. There may be a mimicry of holy actions: but it is mimicry only; as empty as the combs made by those wasps, and no better than a flame that is painted.—I have an authority for this doctrine, which I think you will not offer to controvert.

Ther. What authority?

Asp. That of our church: who declares, in her 13th article; "Works done before the grace of Christ, and inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasing to God; forasmuch as they spring not out of faith in Christ." Faith in Jesus Christ purifies the heart. Till this be done, we have neither disposition nor capacity for holy obedience. Nay, without faith in Christ, our persons are abominable,* our state is damnable, and how can any of our works be acceptable?

Such a one, you say, is honest in his dealings, temperate in his enjoyments, charitable to the poor. I allow it all. But unless these seeming virtues are referred to the glory of the supreme Jehovah, unless they flow from faith in the crucified Jesus, they may be acts of worldly policy, of selfish prudence, of Pharisaical pride—they are by no means a pleasing oblation to the

* This discovers an error which is often committed, in our attempts to instruct little children. What is more common than to tell them, "If they will be good, God Almighty will love and bless them."—Whereas, they should rather be informed, "that they are sinners; but that God Almighty has given his Son to die for sinners; and, if they pray to him, he will forgive their sins, will make them holy, make them happy, and bless them with all spiritual blessings in Christ."

* "To the defiled and unbelieving is nothing clean." Tit. i. 15. The apostle joins *defiled* and *unbelieving*, to intimate, that without a true belief nothing is clean. The understanding and the conscience are polluted. Both the man and his doings are impure.

Lord Almighty.* Nay, instead of being acts of duty, and objects of approbation, they stand condemned in the scripture, and are breaches of the commandment. They stand condemned in that scripture, which declares, "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. xi. 6.) They are breaches of that commandment, which requires, "whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 32.)

Upon the whole, if we will submit to the determination of our established church, or acquiesce in the decision of our divine Master, we must acknowledge, that there is no such thing as a good work, till we are reconciled to God, and our persons accepted in his sight. Therefore, to represent our own works as the means of reconciliation and acceptance, is both chimerical and absurd. Chimerical, because it builds upon a phantom, and takes for a reality what has no existence: Absurd, because it inverts the natural order of things, and would make the effect antecedent to the cause.

Ther. Before we quit this agreeable retreat, let me ask my Aspasio, what he purposes by running down all those works which are the produce of inward religion, and essential to true holiness: whose excellency is displayed in the clearest, and whose necessity is urged in the strongest terms, throughout the whole Bible?

Asp. I am far from running down works which are the produce of inward religion, and therefore may be justly styled, "works of faith, and labours of love." But I would caution my Theron and myself to take care that our works be accompanied with those circumstances which alone can render them truly good. Let them arise from faith, and bear witness to love; or else we shall have "thistles instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley." (Job xxxi. 40.)

I would also persuade my friend, and I would habituate myself, not to repose our confidence in any works whatsoever; lest they prove a bruised reed, that breaks under our weight—or a pointed spear, that pierces us to the heart. We shall never be like the church, "who comes up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved," (Cant. viii. 5,) so long as we bolster up ourselves with a conceit of personal righteousness. This was the error, the fatal error of the Pharisees; this the film which blinded the eyes of their mind, and sealed them up under the darkness of final unbelief.

Besides, my dear Theron, if you expect to be saved by your own duties, you will be loath to see the worst of your condition. To see the worst of your condition, will be a dagger to your hopes, and as death to your soul. You will therefore be inclined to "daub with untempered mortar," (Ezek. xiii. 10.) Instead of acknowledging the deep depravity of your nature, and the numberless iniquities of your life, you will invent a thousand excuses to palliate your guilt; and by this means erect a wall of partition between your soul and the merits of your Redeemer; which will be a greater inconvenience, a more destructive evil, than to cut off all supply of provision from an army, or even to intercept the sunbeams from visiting the earth.

Ther. Now you talk of armies, I must observe, that though I have scarce been able to keep my ground, in this argumentative action, I cannot allow you the honour of a victory, as a retreat is very different from a rout.

Asp. I would also remark, that my friend has changed the intended plan of our operations; has almost continually acted upon the offensive; while my part has been only to sustain the shock. At our next encounter, you may expect to have the order of battle reversed. I shall direct my forces to begin the charge. Put yourself therefore in readiness for a brisk attack.

Ther. You act the fair enemy, Aspasio, I must confess, in thus giving the alarm, before you make the assault.

Asp. This hostility may appear fairer still, when I assure you, that my weapons aim not at the destruction of your comfort, or the demolition of any valuable interest. Only they would be "mighty through God, to pull down the strong holds" of unbelief, and bring every self-exalting, every rebellious thought, "captive unto Christ," (2 Cor. x. 4, 5,) captive, in a professed submission to his righteousness, as well as a dutiful subjection to his commands. And when such is the tendency of the campaign, it will be your greatest advantage to lose the victory; it will be better than a triumph to acknowledge yourself vanquished.

DIALOGUE VIII.

Ther. Our last conversation ended with a challenge. To decline or delay the ac-

* Might not this observation be made, with great propriety, in our infirmary and other charitable sermons? Should not the audience be exhorted to abound in acts of benevolence, from a grateful regard to the infinitely-merciful and condescending Jesus? 2 Cor. viii. 9. Should they not, before all things, be directed to make sure their interest in the Redeemer's merits? that their persons may find favour, and their alms acceptance. Eph. i. 6. Should they not be admonished, that without this believing application to Christ, whatever they do, whatever they give, is worthless in the eye of their Maker, and will be fruitless to their own souls. Heb. xi. 6. In this respect our Saviour was eminently typified by the Jewish altar; on which every sacrifice, by whomsoever brought, was to be offered, and separate from which no sacrifice, however costly, could be accepted. Exod. xx. 24; Levit. xvii. 3, 4.

ceptance of it, would look like cowardice in me, and be a piece of injustice to you, Aspasio. Therefore I am now ready to give you all the satisfaction which a gentleman can demand. Only, as the weather continues hazy, I believe my study must be the place of action.

Asp. A challenge, Theron!

Ther. What, Sir! do you bogle? would you eat your words, and play the poltroon?

Asp. Perhaps I may have an inclination to follow the example of a brother hero, who ran away from the field of battle just as his comrades were advancing to charge the enemy; and when called to an account for his behaviour, right worthily alleged, that his retreat proceeded, not from any timidity of mind, no, but from a concern for the public good; "for," quoth he, "if I had been knocked on the head to-day, how should I have been able to fight for my country to-morrow?"

You smile, Theron, at my doughty warrior, and his sage maxim. But, since you have glanced at a certain modish custom, give me leave very seriously to assure you, that, if the affair was to be determined by sword and pistol, I should reckon such a conduct, a resolute refusal at least, not at all unmanly, but the truly wise and gallant behaviour. For surely it can never be an instance of wisdom, to hazard my life at the mere caprice of a turbulent ruffian, who is a stranger to all the principles of humanity and generosity, but a slave, an abandoned slave to his own ungovernable passions. Surely it can never be an act of real bravery to expose my person, because some foolhardy practitioner in the fencing-school is desperate enough to risk his! The gentleman, the true gentleman, should exert a becoming dignity of spirit, and scorn to set his welfare on a level with that of an inconsiderate and barbarous bully.*

Ther. But honour, my Aspasio, honour is at stake. Better to lose our life than forfeit our reputation. Better to be in a grave than to be the jest of every coffee-house; and perhaps pointed at, as we pass the streets, for mean-spirited, sneaking, or, as the gentlemen of the sword so elegantly speak, white-livered animals.

Asp. Forfeit our reputation! Amongst whom, I beseech you? A few rash and precipitate creatures, the pupils of La Mancha's knight; the sons of chimera* and cruelty; whose applause is infamy; and their detraction the highest praise they can bestow. From every judicious and worthy person, your conduct will be sure to gain approbation, and your character esteem. When Cæsar received a challenge from Antony, to engage him in single combat, he very calmly answered the bearer of the message: "If Antony is weary of life, tell him, there are other ways to death, besides the point of my sword." Who ever deemed this an instance of cowardice! All ages have admired it as the act of a discreet and gallant man; who was sensible of his own importance, and knew how to treat the petulant and revengeful humour of a discontented adversary with its deserved contempt.

Barely to lose our life, is the smallest of those evils which attend this mischievous practice. It is pregnant with a long, an almost endless train of disastrous consequences to parents, wives, children, friends, associates, and the community. It is an infallible expedient to be deprived of the favour of the infinite God, and to be excluded from the joys of his eternal kingdom. It is the sure way to become an object of abhorrence to the angels of light, and be made the laughing-stock of devils, in their dungeons of darkness.† Shame, everlasting shame, shall be the reward of such gallantry, "the promotion of such fools." (Prov. iii. 35.)

Ther. With regard to this point, I am entirely of your opinion, Aspasio, however I may differ in other particulars.

Asp. Say you so, Theron? Would you then tamely submit to affronts, insults, and injuries?

Ther. As to the trifling affronts of a peevish, incontinent tongue, I would treat them with a superior scorn. And when thus treated, they are sure to recoil, with the keenest edge, and severest weight, upon the impotent malice which offers them. The wretch should see, that I could pity his misery, and smile at his folly. But as

* Aspasio calls the person who gives the challenge a bully. And such, notwithstanding all the maxims of fantastical and false honour, he will certainly be found, when tried at the bar of reason or justice. For, if the most impetuous, irrational, and brutal barbarity, is allowed to constitute a bully, he has an indisputable title to the character, who, on account of a mere punctilio, or some slight affront, would destroy a life that might be of service to society, might be a blessing to various relatives, and is intimately connected with a blissful or miserable immortality.

* This kind of gentry are styled, in a book, with which they have little or no acquaintance, but whose maxims will be had in reverence when their names are lost in oblivion, בְּנֵי שָׁאוֹן "the sons of bluster, or the children of noise." Jer. xlviii. 45.

† "Let me tell you with confidence," (says an excellent person, addressing himself to one of these unhappy desperadoes) that all duels, or single combats, are murderous: blanch them over (how you list) with names of honour and honest pretences, their use is sinful, and their nature devilish." See the select works of Bishop Hall, in one volume folio, page 526, where the reader will find a happy mixture of true oratory and sound divinity; a rich vein of fancy, and a sweet spirit of piety; contemplations upon the histories of scripture (which, I think, are our prelate's master-piece) almost as entertaining and instructive, as the subjects illustrated are important and wonderful. Notwithstanding a few stiff or antique phrases, I cannot but esteem the works of this author amongst the most valuable compositions extant in our language.

to injuries, the case is otherwise. Should any one assault my person, it is at his peril. He would find, and perhaps to his smart,

Et nos tela manu, ferrumque haud debile dextra
Spargimus, et nostro sequitur de vulnere sanguis.
VIRG.

Here the fundamental and everlasting law of self-preservation calls upon us to play the man. And I am sure, Christianity does not require us to yield our throats to the knife, or open our breasts to the dagger.

But to retire to deliberate, to sit down and indite a formal challenge, seems to me altogether as savage and iniquitous, as to assault on the highway. He that demands my money on the road, or extorts it by an incendiary letter, or decoys me into the snare by a forged and counterfeit note, is stigmatized for a villain, is abhorred by every person of integrity, and when detected is rewarded with a halter. Why should we reckon the headstrong bravo less injurious, who makes his attempt upon my very life, and thirsts with insatiable fury for my blood?

Asp. He allows you a fair chance, it is said.

Ther. A chance! Of what? Either of falling a sacrifice to his rage, or of imbruing my hands in his blood. Which is neither more nor less than reducing me to a necessity of launching into damnation myself, or of transmitting a fellow-creature to eternal vengeance. And is this an extenuation? this a mitigating circumstance? It really proves the practice so inexcusably wicked, that nothing can be pleaded in its defence. The very argument used to justify the horrid deed, inflames its guilt, and aggravates its malignity.

It is a pity but the legislative authority would interpose for the suppression of such a flagrant wrong to society, and such a notorious violation of our benign religion. Why should not the laws declare it felony to make the first overture for a duel? Since it is always more heinous, and frequently more pernicious—is always murder in the intention, and frequently issues in double destruction; the one inflicted by the stab of violence, the other executed by the sword of justice.

Might it not, at least, be branded with some mark of public infamy, or subjected to a severe pecuniary mulct? so that a gentleman of spirit and temper might have it in his power to return the compliment of a challenging letter with some such answer:—

SIR,

"However meanly you may think of your life, I set too high a value upon mine, to expose it as a mark for undisciplined and outrageous passions. Neither have I so totally renounced all that is humane, benevolent, or amiable, as to draw my sword for your destruction, because you have first been overcome by precipitate and unreasonable resentment. You have given me an opportunity of acting the gentleman and the Christian. And this challenge I accept, as a note under your hand for five hundred pounds;* which will very soon be demanded according to law, by, Sir,

"Yours, &c."

Asp. But to resume the proper subject, the nature of our engagement; which I now recollect, and which was explained when I ventured to give what you call the challenge. As it is not my Theron, but the obstacles of his faith, and the enemies of his felicity, that I am to encounter, perhaps I shall have courage to stand my ground; and, instead of violating all the obligations of equity, honour, and conscience, I shall certainly evidence my love to my friend, may possibly promote his truest good.

Ther. I do not see how this can be effected by your late attempt. You undertook to run down all works of righteousness as absolutely unable to find acceptance with God, and equally insufficient to recommend us to his favour. It is for the credit of these, which Aspasio has depreciated, that I enter the lists.

Asp. Pray, what is the standard to which these works of righteousness must be conformed, and by which their sufficiency may be determined?

Ther. The moral law, doubtless; I know no other standard of righteousness, nor any other way of becoming righteous.

Asp. You will, I hope, ere long be acquainted with another way. At present, I agree to your proposal. We will join issue on this footing, and try the merits of our cause before this tribunal. Yourself shall be the judge. I will only ask your opinion, and refer myself to your decision. You see, I am soon weary of the military style. I had obtruded myself on a part which I was not qualified to act, and now resume a more becoming character.

Ther. If you place me on the bench, I

* Might not the refuser of a challenge be dignified with some honorary distinction, resembling the civic crown amongst the ancient Romans; since, by his cool and temperate bravery, he saves one life from the sword, another from the halter? Was some honorary distinction, on the one hand, united to a pecuniary forfeiture on the other, I cannot but think they would prove an effectual method to check the progress of this destructive evil. It would break the teeth of malice with her own weapons, and turn the artillery of revenge upon herself. Those detestable passions would be loath to indulge themselves in this horrid manner, if it was made the sure way to ennoble and enrich the object of their rage.—N.B. The civic crown was an ornament assigned to those soldiers who had in battle rescued a fellow-citizen from impending death.

shall allow of no such digressions, but shall keep you close to the subject.

Asp. Has your Lordship then considered the nature of the divine law, and the extent of its obligations?

Ther. It obliges all persons, and comprises the whole duty of man. It forbids all immorality, and enjoins every virtue.—Are not these your sentiments?

Asp. They are, when somewhat enlarged.—The empire of the law, as prohibitory of evil, extends both to the outward and inward man. It takes cognizance of the actions; it judges every word. All the operations and all the dispositions of the soul come under its sacred jurisdiction. It is indeed a discerner, not only of the working thoughts, but also of the dawning intentions; and arraigns them both at its awful bar. "It pierces even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit." (Heb. v. 12.) Not the inmost recesses of the breast are too deep for its penetration, nor all the artifices of the deceitful heart too subtle for its detection. Other laws forbid the unclean act; this condemns the wanton eye, and irregular desire. Other laws punish the injurious deed; this passes sentence on the unguarded sallies of passion, and the most secret emotions of resentment. So eminently true is that remark of the Psalmist, "thy commandments are exceeding broad." (Psalm cxix. 96.) Tell me now, Theron, has your obedience been commensurate to this extensive platform of duty?

Ther. If the law be so very extensive—

Asp. Nay, my friend, you cannot suspect, that I have stretched, to an undue extent, the obligations of the divine law, since this interpretation is established by an authority too great to be controverted, too clear to be misunderstood—even by the authority of Christ himself; whose sermon upon the mount is a professed exposition of the commandments, and maintains in the most explicit manner all that I have advanced. So that if our Lord's exposition is just, I think it will be neither rash nor uncharitable to say, there is not a man upon earth but has broke them all.

Ther. Are we all idolaters then? all adulterers? all murderers? Shocking to imagine!

Asp. It is shocking, I confess. But how much more so, if such delinquents expect justification by their own deeds?

Ther. This is no proof of your assertion, my good friend.

Asp. To be fond of gold, to be enamoured with the world, to love any creature more than the ever-blessed Creator, are instances of idolatry, (Col. iii. 5; Phil. iii. 19,) not quite so gross, but altogether as real, as to set up idols in our temples, or pay acts of adoration to senseless images. Have you always been free from this apostacy of the affections?

Our infallible Teacher has informed us, that unreasonable anger, contemptuous language, and malevolent wishes, (Matt. v. 22,) are each a species of murder, and not many removes from the assassin's deadly stab. Have you been always meek, always benevolent, and never chargeable with this mental homicide?

We are farther assured, that the indulgence of inordinate desire is, in the impartial estimate of heaven, as the commission of the impure deed. (Matt. v. 28.) And evil concupiscence of every kind violates that sacred precept, "Thou shalt not covet."* Has your will been invariably upright, and warped with no irregular inclination? are you wholly unpolluted with this adultery of the heart?

I wait not for a reply. I have often heard you plead guilty to all—yes, to all and every of these charges respectively.

Ther. Where, and when, Aspasio?

Asp. In the most sacred place, and on the most solemn occasion. And not you only, but a whole multitude of self-condemned criminals. Our church, you know, has ingrafted the decalogue into her public service; and taught all her members to answer, after the repetition of each commandment, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." Is there any sense in these words? or have we any meaning when we utter them? If we have, surely they must imply an ac-

* Rom. vii. 7. Aspasio's observation brings to my remembrance a remarkable incident; which, as it is quite pertinent to our purpose, the reader will allow me to relate. It passed between a friend of mine, and a certain ingenious stranger, into whose company he happened to fall. The gentleman was extolling, at an extravagant rate, the virtue of honesty; what a dignity it imparted to our nature! how it recommended us to the Supreme Being! he confirmed all by a celebrated line from Mr. Pope.

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Sir, replied my friend, however excellent the virtue of honesty may be, I fear, there are very few men in the world that really possess it. You surprise me, said the stranger. Ignorant as I am of your character, Sir, I fancy it would be no difficult matter to prove even you a dishonest man. I defy you. Will you give me leave, then, to ask you a question or two, and promise not to be offended? Ask your questions, and welcome. Have you never met with an opportunity of getting gain by some unfair means? The gentleman paused. I do not ask, whether you made use of, but whether you have met with such opportunity? I, for my part, have; and I believe every body else has. Very probably I may. How did you feel your mind affected, on such an occasion? Had you no secret desire, not the least inclination, to seize the advantage which offered? Tell me, without any evasion, and consistently with the character you admire. I must acknowledge I have not always been absolutely free from every irregular inclination, but—Hold, Sir, none of your salvos. You have confessed enough. If you had the desire, though you never proceeded to the action, this shows you was dishonest in heart. This is what the scripture calls concupiscence. It defiles the soul. It is a breach of that law, which "requireth truth in the inner parts;" and, unless you are pardoned through the blood of Christ, will be a just ground of your condemnation, "when God shall judge the secrets of men."

knowledgment of disobedience in every particular. The criminal arraigned at the bar never falls on his knees, and craves forgiveness, till he either confesses or is convicted. This then must be the purport of our response. "We are verily guilty concerning this thing. And we humbly implore, both pardoning mercy for the past, and strengthening grace for the future."

Give me leave to urge my question a little farther. Is there a single day in which you have not transgressed, some way or other, this sacred rule?

Ther. If the law of God will dispense with no deviation, not even the first starts of thought, or the least wanderings of desire—But surely to affirm this, is to extend the law beyond all reasonable bounds. The motions of evil desire, if indulged, are undoubtedly criminal. But are they also, when restrained, breaches of duty? I should rather imagine, that such temptations are thrown in our way for the trial of our obedience—which, had they no power over our affections, would not be trials; and when they are resolutely withstood, cannot be faults.

Asp. What was the judgment of our reformers? And what is the voice of our church? We may find both in the ninth article. "Although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." It is not said, concupiscence hath then only the nature of sin when it is ripened into action; but of itself, and before it breaks out into the commission of iniquity. Of itself it is contrary to the pure nature, and therefore cannot but be condemned by the perfect law of God.

Ther. This I can truly plead in my own behalf, that it has not been customary with me to offend; at least not presumptuously, or of deliberate wickedness.

Asp. My dear Theron, do not offer to palliate your guilt. Such an opiate may stupify, but will not cure; or rather, like opiates ill prepared, it will intoxicate the mind, and counteract the operation of every healing medicine. Besides, it is not only pernicious, but false and unreasonable. You know the use of that solar microscope, and are able to inform me of its effects.

Ther. I ought to be pretty well acquainted with these experiments; since it has long been my favourite diversion to employ a few spare hours in such agreeable speculations.

Asp. You have seen the body of an insect, accommodated to the surprising instrument. When, in this situation, the animal was pricked by a very fine needle, your eye, your naked eye, just perceived the puncture, and discovered, perhaps a speck of moisture oozing from the orifice. But in what manner were they represented by the magnifying instrument?

Ther. The puncture was widened into a frightful gash; the speck of moisture swelled into a copious stream, and flowed like a torrent from the gaping wound. An ox, under the sacrificing knife, scarce looks more bulky, or bleeds more largely.

Asp. Do you not apprehend my design?—If we, short-sighted mortals, and almost blinded with self-love; if we cannot but be sensible of our faults, how flagrant must they appear, in what enormous magnitudes, and with what aggravating circumstances, to an eye perfectly pure and infinitely penetrating!

Instead of attempting to extenuate our offences, let us make some such improving reflections: "If this holy law, which prohibits the minutest failure, from the indictment; if this all-discerning God, who sifts our conduct even to the smallest defect, be the judge; if our personal goodness, which abounds with imperfections, be our plea; what can we expect at that decisive hour, when the Lord shall "lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet?" (Isa. xviii. 17.) Surely, this consideration should incline us to adopt the wise and ardent wish of the apostle, "That we may" now, in this our day, "win Christ, and" at the last tremendous audit, be "found in him; not having our own righteousness, which is of the law," for the foundation of our hopes, "but the righteousness which is of God, by faith in Jesus Christ." (Phil. iii. 8, 9.)

Consider the law in its nobler capacity, as enjoining whatever is excellent. Can you hope, Thereon, to be justified by it, if you fall short of its demands, not barely in a few instances, but in every action of your life, and every temper of your heart?

Ther. Such a hope, cherished amidst such circumstances, would be fallacious and absurd. But I trust, I am not so very faulty, or rather so entirely abandoned, as your interrogatory supposes.

Asp. Have you duly weighed the perfection and spirituality of the divine law? It is a transcript of the unspotted purity and absolute rectitude of the divine nature. It requires an unreserved obedience to all God's commands, and a most unfeigned submission to all his dispensations; without regretting the former as a grievous yoke, or repining at the latter as rigorous treatment. It calls, not only for external duty, but also for the most upright imaginations, and devout affections. Nay, it insists upon the exercise of every virtue, and that in the highest degree: love to God, without the least lukewarmness, and love to all our neighbours, without any unkindness; a

sanctity of desire, that knows no stain, and a humility of mind that is free from all elatement. In a word, it requires us to be perfect, "even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

Do any of your actions come up to this exalted standard? Are any of your graces thus refined?

Ther. Am I then absolutely an insolvent before the great Lord of the universe? Have I no lamb in my fold without a blemish? nothing in my life, nothing in my heart, but what is defective and defiled?

Asp. Indeed, my friend, this is not your condition alone, but the condition of the most irreproachable person on earth. There is none perfect, in any character, or in any work, no not one. None that obeys the divine law, uniformly, invariably, and completely.

Cast your eye upon the names which are subjoined to those beautiful prints. How elegant is the engraving! How accurate are the letters! The strokes most delicately fine! Their shape most exactly true! Let me ask you to transcribe them with your pen; and make the copy equal to the original. Preserve all the noble boldness of the Roman stamp, and all the graceful softness of the Italian touch. What! could you not execute this task, even in your present unimpaired health, and with the exertion of all your skill? How shamefully then must you fall short, if your eyes were dim with age; if your hands shook with a paralytic disorder, and your understanding was oppressed with a lethargic dulness! Such is really the case with regard to all the children of men. Our nature is depraved; our moral abilities are enervated; and our intellectual faculties clouded. And can we, in such a state of impotence, transcribe that sacred system, which is the very image of God—transcribe it into our tempers, and render it legible in our lives, without diminishing one jot or tittle of its perfect purity.

Ther. Though I fall short, there are Christians of a much higher class; Christians, I do not doubt, who have these laws written on their hearts, all whose tempers are cast into this heavenly mould. Nor am I myself without hopes of making more considerable advances in holiness.

Asp. May your hopes be quickened into vigorous endeavours, and your endeavours be crowned with abundant success! What you suppose concerning very eminent Christians, I cannot wholly admit, neither do I wholly deny. They may have all their tempers cast into the heavenly mould; but then they are conformed to the sacred pattern only in part. There is a resemblance, yet not such as that clear and steady mirror (pointing to a fine glass over the chimney-piece) exhibits, but such as some turbulent and muddy stream reflects. If the breasts of these eminent Christians were formed on the model of Drusus'* house, I verily think you would have a lower opinion of their acquisitions and virtue.

David, whom God himself dignifies with the most exalted of all characters, and "styles a man after his own heart;" who to a most inflamed love added a most accurate knowledge of the divine testimonies, was deeply sensible of the truth I would inculcate. After an attentive contemplation of the sublimity, the extent, the sanctity of those heavenly institutes, he breaks out into this humbling exclamation, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" (Psalm xix. 12.) "Was the most vigilant conduct, or the most purified soul, examined by this consummate rule, innumerable would be found the slips of the former, and glaring would the failures of the latter appear."

Ther. I cannot see the reason for degrading human nature to such an extravagant degree, and ranking human works among the refuse of things.

Asp. Do you ask the reason of this remonstrance? It is to preserve us from the mischievous error of the Pharisee, who, measuring himself, not by the true, sublime, and extensive sense of the law, but by a false, debased, and mutilated interpretation, became haughty in his own conceit, and abominable in the sight of God. Hear him trumpeting his own praise: "I am no extortioner, no adulterer." (Luke xviii. 11.) This the poor vain creature fancied was a sufficient obedience paid to the second table. See him still strutting in his own imaginary plumes:† "I fast twice in the

* Mat. v. 48. Our Lord, having explained several commandments of the law, sums up the whole, and gives us the spirit of them all, in this most refined precept; "Be ye perfect, even," &c. If the reader pleases to take this passage into consideration, he will have a more satisfactory answer to Theron's objection, concerning the first motions of evil desire; more satisfactory, I mean, than was suggested in the preceding pages. There the reply turned upon human testimony; here it rests upon divine authority.

I hope, the candid reader will, on other occasions, remember this observation. And if, at any time, the strongest reasons are not assigned, let him suppose it probable, that they are omitted in one place, only to be introduced and urged, perhaps with greater advantage, in another.

* When Drusus, a noble Roman, was deliberating upon a model for his new house, the architect offered to build it in such a taste that no eye should overlook any of his rooms. "You quite mistake my inclination," said Drusus, "I am for the reverse of your plan. I would have my house so contrived that every passenger may see whatever is transacted within."

† This seems to give the genuine signification of το υψηλον εν ανθρωποις, Luke xvi. 15, not "that which is highly esteemed," εντιμον ενδοξον. The proposition, taken in this sense, is neither necessary nor universally true. The meekness of Moses, the

week; I give tithes of all that I possess." (Luke xviii. 12.) This he foolishly dreamed was a due compliance with the demands of the first table. The young ruler seems to have been under the same delusion, when he had the assurance to declare, "all these things," which are prescribed by the divine law, "have I kept from my youth up." (Matt. xix. 20.)

A more pestilent opinion it is scarce possible for the mind of man to entertain, and nothing can appear more egregiously mistaken, if we consider the vast comprehensive scope of the sacred precepts, and are convinced that they require a most exact conformity, in every particular and every punctilio.

Ther. Is there nothing valuable, then, in regularity of conduct and integrity of heart? nothing valuable in our acts of charity, and habits of virtue? nothing whatsoever that may recommend us to our Maker?

Asp. From our fellow-creatures they stand entitled to respect, imitation, and gratitude; but before infinite perfection, they must drop their claim, and lie prostrate in the dust, imploring forgiveness, not challenging a reward. We all discern a beauty and a twinkling lustre in the stars, when viewed under the shades of night. But when the magnificent source of day arises, their beauty vanishes, their lustre is darkness. Such are human accomplishments when compared with the perfect law, or beheld by the piercing eye of the supremely glorious God.

Ther. Methinks this notion confounds the difference of good and evil and by rendering all our actions blamable would render them all alike. This is levelling with a witness!

Asp. It only shows, that there are blemishes in all; whereas, some are flaw and blemish all over. Is there no difference between the leopard's spots, and the raven's foot? If I maintain that neither of those animals are perfectly white, does this imply that both are equally black?

All we perform, however specious it may seem, is very far short of our elevated rule; therefore cannot procure the divine favour, or entitle us to the kingdom of heaven. Nay, if God should enter into judgment with us, on the foot of our own performances, he would discover such defects, even in the choicest instances of our obedience, as must render them matter of condemnation,* not meritorious of applause.

Be pleased to observe this penknife.—What can be more exquisitely keen than the edge, or more nicely polished than the blade; but how do they appear when beheld through one of those microscopes?

Ther. The edge less sharp than the woodman's axe, or rather more blunt than his iron wedge. The polish resembles a mass of coarse metal, rudely hammered on the anvil.

Asp. How very delicate is the cambric, which forms your ruffles, and gives such an ornamental air to your whole dress! Nothing can be finer than the threads, or more exact than the texture. But what is their appearance in a microscopic view?

Ther. You would take the fine threads for hempen cords; and would almost be positive, that they had been wattled together by the clumsy hands of the hurdle-maker, rather than curiously wove in the artist's loom.

Asp. That lovely piece of enamel, which makes a part of your lady's pensile equipage, quite charms the spectator with the justness of its figure, and the radiancy of its colours. But—

Ther. Under the scrutiny of this searching instrument it loses all its elegance; and instead of winning our admiration, provokes our contempt. It looks like a heap of mortar plastered on by the mason's trowel.

Asp. You see then, Theron, what gross indelicacies, what bungling inequalities, this supplementary aid to our sight discovers, even in the most finished works of human art. So, and abundantly more, does the immaculate purity of God discern imperfections in our most upright deeds and most guarded hours.

I said immaculate, and I ought to have said more; for God is not only unerringly wise to detect, but infinitely pure to abhor, all contamination. Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are endowed with immaculate, but the Lord is possessed of infinite purity. Have you considered this attribute of the Godhead, Theron?

Ther. I have; and not without amazement at the charming, the awful descriptions of it, which occur in the sacred writings. God is not only holy, but, as the lawgiver of the Jews very sublimely expresses himself, "glorious in holiness," Exod. xv. 11. The sacred penmen, treating of this illustrious perfection, seem to labour the important point. They indulge the loftiest flights of imagination: they employ the boldest figures of speech; and add the most glowing colours of eloquence; not without frequent acknowledgments, that all the force of language is abundantly too feeble for the unutterable subject.

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fortitude of Joshua, the wisdom of Solomon, were highly esteemed among those very men to whom our Lord addressed his discourse; yet none can suppose, that the endowments of those illustrious personages were "an abomination in the sight of God."

* To this assertion St. Cyril bears a very express testimony: "Even those of our actions which seem to be performed in a right manner, could not escape censure and blame, if God should examine and bring them to the test."

One of the prophets, addressing the King eternal, immortal, invisible, breaks out into this ecstatic exclamation: "O Lord, my God, my Holy One, thou art of purer eyes than" (to allow, shall I say? This is an ascription of praise unspeakably too mean for thy surpassing excellency: Thou art of purer eyes than) "to look upon evil, and canst not behold iniquity," (Hab. i. 13.) Another, wrapt into a prophetic vision, sees the seraphim veiling their faces in token of profound humiliation; hears those sons of ardour and love, crying in loud responsive strains, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabbaoth!"* Nay, so transcendently holy, says another devout worshipper, that all created glory is totally eclipsed in his presence: "He looketh to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight, (Job. xxv. 5.) And "his very angels," those refined and exalted intelligences, "he chargeth with folly." (Job. iv. 18.)

Asp. Very majestic descriptions! And pray let us observe the impressions which such beamings of the divine effulgence made upon the saints of old. Moses, drawing near the cloudy pavilion, the presence-chamber of the Holy One of Israel, says, with emotions of uncommon dread, "I exceedingly fear and quake!" (Heb. xii. 21.) When Job is favoured with some peculiar manifestations of the omnipotent God, see his posture! hear his words! "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," (Job xlii. 6.) How strong is the language! how deep the abasement! When Isaiah saw the incomprehensible Jehovah sitting upon his throne, and the princes of heaven adoring at his footstool, seized with a pang of reverential fear, he cried out, "Woe is me! I am undone! for I am a man of unclean lips!" (Isa. vi. 5.) When Ezekiel beheld an emblematical representation of him who dwelleth in light inaccessible; when the Ancient of Days, veiled under a human shape, appeared to Daniel; though one was a devout priest, and each was an eminent prophet, yet, overwhelmed with a mixture of veneration and terror, they both "fell down at his feet as dead," (Ezek. i. 28; Dan. x. 8, 9;) and this, not before a full display, but only before a glimpse of the Godhead, which, though partial and transient, was too dazzlingly bright for an eye of flesh to bear.

O my friend! my Theron! what figure must our mean performances, our low attainments, make before this immensely glorious God? Let us examine the behaviour and spirit of Job a little more particularly. He is one of your favourite examples, and indeed very deservedly, for in piety he had no superior and no equal—"there was none like him in the earth;" yet, when he has to do with the Maker of all things, and the Judge of all men, he pours out his abashed soul in these very remarkable professions: "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse."—(Job. ix. 20, 21, 30, 31, 32.) He declares yet farther, "If I wash myself in snow water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou," O righteous and eternal God, "plunge me in the ditch;" manifest me, notwithstanding all this care and circumspection, to be a guilty and filthy creature; yea, so very guilty and filthy, that my own clothes, were they sensible of the pollution, could not but abhor me.

This he confesses, not because he was an habitual sinner, or chargeable with any scandalous immorality, but because his mind was filled with the most affecting sense of

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* Isa vi. 3. The poets and writers of a bold imagination are particularly fond of machinery; of introducing celestial beings, in order to give some peculiar dignity to their plan, or some additional strength to their sentiments. With what inimitable propriety and surprising emphasis is this species of fine writing used in scripture, especially in the passage quoted above.

Let us only consider the personages. These are the seraphim; pure and active spirits, likened by the psalmist to flames of fire; styled by the apostle dominions and principalities of heaven, who excel in strength and wisdom, in every high and bright accomplishment. Their attitude. They wait around the King immortal, seated on his exalted throne. They stand; are in a posture of service; with their wings outstretched, ready to fly at the first signal. They stand not with their eyes reverently cast down, but with their faces covered, to denote the deepest self-abasement, as creatures that are conscious and ashamed of their own meanness, or as overcome with the insupportable glories which beam from uncreated majesty. Their action. They celebrate, not in cold conversation, but with rapturous songs, not with single voices but in a grand choir. (see Psalm lxxxvii. 5, 6.) the amiable yet tremendous sanctity of the Lord Almighty. Their manner of expression. Though filled and penetrated with the prodigious theme, they attempt not to describe it. Impracticable that, even by the tongue of angels! They express themselves, therefore, in the language of profound admiration, in repeated, in reiterated acclamations to the wonderful attribute; "Holy! holy! holy!" The effects of this august appearance. The posts of the door shake at the voice,—the ponderous and magnificent pillars of brass (see 2 Chron. iii. 17,) tremble like a leaf. The spacious and beautiful house is filled with tokens of the divine indignation; is involved in clouds of smoke; and joins with the trembling columns, and adoring seraphs, to tell the thoughtless world, "what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!" The prophet himself is struck with astonishment,—is overwhelmed with awe,—and cries out, "as a woman in her pangs."—Can any thing be more enlivened, impressive, and alarming?

If I shall not trespass upon the reader's patience, I would beg leave to add a remark concerning the word Sabaoth, which, though a Hebrew expression, is retained in that excellent hymn entitled *Te Deum*; and which some people, I am inclined to believe, inadvertently confound with Sabbath. The latter signifies the rest of the seventh day, and in this connexion, yields a sense not very apposite, and comparatively mean. Whereas, the former denotes armies or hosts, and furnishes us with an image truly grand and majestic, worthy to be admitted into the songs of seraphs. It glorifies God, as the great, universal, uncontrollable Sovereign, who exercises a supreme dominion over all the orders of being, from the loftiest archangel that shines in heaven, to the lowest reptile that crawls in dust; who says to a legion of cherubs, Go; and they go;—to a swarm of insects, Come; and they come;—to any, to every creature, Do this; and they do it. See Matth. viii. 9.

God's inconceivable holiness and infinite glory. "For," adds the venerable sufferer, "he is not a man as I am;" but a Being of such extensive knowledge that nothing can escape his discernment, of such exalted purity that every spot of defilement is loathsome in his sight. For which reason, it is absolutely impossible that I should answer him," with reference to my own personal righteousness, or that we should come together in judgment, on any such footing, without confusion to myself, and ruin to my cause.

To all this he subjoins, what is still more memorable and exemplary: "Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul, I would despise my life." He supposes himself in a higher state than your most advanced Christian, "though I were perfect;" yet even in such a state, were it attainable and attained, "I would not know my soul;" not dwell upon, not plead, no, nor so much as cherish a thought of, my own accomplishments and acquirements. In the important business of justification, they should stand for cyphers; they should be thrown into shades; they should entirely disappear. Nay more, "I would despise my life:" my life, with all its most shining actions and most distinguished virtues, should be reckoned insignificant and despicable, just as insignificant and despicable, with respect to this great transaction, as a wandering spark would be, if appointed to diffuse day amidst the darkness of night, or produce spring amidst the depths of winter.

Ther. These are alarming hints, Aspasio, I must confess. A law which requires an exact and universal obedience, both in heart and life! A God of such majesty, purity, and glory, that men of the most approved integrity are overwhelmed with confusion in his presence! I shall consider them at my leisure with the attention they deserve. At present, I believe opportunity is giving us the slip. Yonder coach seems to be moving this way, and the livery looks like Philander's.

Aspasio, desirous to fix those convictions, which are of the last consequence to our faith and salvation—very desirous to fix them on his friend's mind, replied:

Asp. As your visitants are at a distance, give me leave to observe, that the wisest of men, attending to the first of these particulars, has poured contempt upon all human excellency: "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccl. vii 20.) The apostle of Christ takes shame to himself on the same account, and teaches all mankind to strike the sail of self-conceit: "In many things we offend all." (James iii. 2.) David, considering the latter of these points, prays with the utmost earnestness, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" and assigns this humbling reason for his petition, "for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." (Psalm cxliii. 2.) This induced Nehemiah, who had been so nobly zealous for the honour of his God, not to confide in his own valuable services, but make application to forgiving goodness: "Spare me, O Lord, according to thy great mercy." (Neh. xiii. 22.)

Had I set before you the example of the poor publican, who smote upon his breast, durst not lift up his eyes to heaven, but cried, from the bottom of a polluted heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke xviii. 13,) self-love might possibly have whispered, "Surely I am not to be ranked with that abominable wretch. I stand upon some better footing than such an infamous offender." With respect to the enjoyment of eternal life, we stand upon no better, upon no other. And when low as that obnoxious despised creature, we are upon the very same ground with the most exalted saints. They all appear before the Majesty of Heaven, in the same attitude of unfeigned humiliation, and with the same acknowledgments of utter unworthiness. For it is a certain truth, and admits of no exception, that to justify sinners is not the privilege of human obedience, but the sole prerogative of "the Lord our righteousness."

Ther. Is not the practice of Hezekiah an exception to your rule? These, if I recollect aright, are the words of that holy king: "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. (2 Kings xx. 3.) You see, he puts the issue of his trial before the everlasting God, upon his own integrity and his own obedience.

Asp. These are his words, but they are not used with this view. He humbly represents before the great Sovereign of the world, how beneficial his former life had been, and how serviceable his prolonged life might be, to the best interests of the Jewish nation. He recurs to his obedience, not that he may establish his hope of eternal happiness in heaven, but that he may obtain a reprieve from the grave, and a lengthening of his tranquillity on earth. Neither is this obedience gloried in by way of merit, but only pleaded by way of argument, as though he had said, "Remember, gracious God, how I have exerted my royal authority to suppress idolatry, to extirpate vice, and to promote thy true religion. Consider how greatly thy people stand in need of such a vigilant and zealous governor; and to what a miserable condition both church and state may be reduced, if thou takest away thy servant by this threatened but untimely stroke. And,

for the welfare of Judah, for the honour of thy name, for the support of thy own worship, *O spare me a little!*"

Aspasio paused, expecting a reply. As Theron continued silent and musing, Aspasio, with a smile of benevolence, proceeded.—Come, my Theron! why so deep in thought? Have you any objection to the evidences I have produced! They are some of the most dignified characters and illustrious personages that could be selected from all ages: kings, princes, and patriots; priests, saints, and martyrs. Should these be deemed insufficient, I can exhibit a larger and nobler cloud of witnesses:—larger, for they are a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues; nobler, for they stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. Ask those shining armies, who they are, and whence they came? Their answer is comprised in one of my favourite portions of scripture, one of those delightful texts, from which I hope to derive consolation even in my last moments. For which reason, you will allow me to repeat it, though it may perhaps be mentioned in a former conversation: "We are they who came out of great tribulation; and have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore, are we before the throne." (Rev. vii. 14, 15.)

Some of them laid down their lives for the sake of Christ; many of them were eminent for works of righteousness; all of them were endued with real holiness. Yet none of these qualifications constituted their passport into the regions of endless felicity. They had "washed their robes," had fled to the atonement, and pleaded the merits of Jesus their Saviour. Hereby they had "made them white;" this was the cause of their acquittance from guilt, and their complete justification: and therefore, on this account, their persons were accepted; they were presented without spot before the throne, and admitted to that fulness of joy, which is at God's right hand for evermore.

Ther. I have no objection to your witnesses. But, methinks, your doctrine is strangely debasing to human nature.

Asp. A sign, Theron, that is agreeable to the genius of the gospel; which is calculated, as the eloquent Isaiah foretold, to humble the sinner, and exalt the Saviour:* "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." (Isaiah ii. 11.) "Man, though naturally vain, shall be made sensible of his numberless offences; shall see the defects which attend his highest attainments; shall confess the impossibility of being justified by the deeds of the law; and place all his hope upon the propitiatory death, and meritorious obedience, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

* This corresponds with a very valuable maxim, which an eminent divine once recommended to his people, as a touchstone to distinguish evangelical truth.—"That doctrine," he said, "which tends
To humble the sinner;
To exalt the Saviour;
To promote holiness;"
That doctrine which tends to accomplish all these designs, you may embrace as sound. That which is defective in its influence on any one of them, you should reject as corrupt.

DIALOGUE IX.

THERON, impressed with the last conversation, was very desirous to resume the subject, and renew the important debate. With this view he conducted his friend into a retirement commodious for the purpose.

They enter a spacious lawn, which lay opposite to the house, and stretched itself in the form of an expanded fan. The mounds on either side were dressed in verdure, and ran out in a slanting direction. The whole, to an eye placed at a distance, bore the resemblance of a magnificent vista; contracting by slow degrees its dimensions, and lessening at last into a point, which the regular and graceful seat with all imaginable dignity supplied.

Nature had sunk the lawn into a gentle decline, on whose ample sides were oxen browsing and lambs frisking. The lusty droves lowed as they past, and the thriving flocks bleated welcome music in their master's ear. Along the midst of this verdant slope ran a spacious and extensive walk, which, coated with gravel, and fenced with pallisadoes, looked like a plain stripe of brown intersecting a carpet of the brightest green. At the bottom, two handsome canals, copiously stocked with fish, floated to the breeze; whose waters, beheld from every front room in the house, had a fine effect upon the sight, not without a refreshing influence on the imagination. At the extremity of one stood a stately colonnade. The roof was elevated on pillars of the Ionic order; and the area slabbed with stones, neatly ranged in the diamond fashion. Several forest chairs accommodated the anglers with a seat, while the bending dome supplied them with a shade.

Corresponding, and on the margin of the other canal, was erected a summer-house, of a very singular kind.—The lower part had an opening towards the north. It was cool; it was gloomy; and had never seen the sun. It carried the romantic air of a grotto, or rather the pensive appearance of a hermit's cell. The outside was coarse and rugged with protuberant stones. Partly overspread with ivy, partly covered with moss, it seemed to be the work of ancient years. You

descend, by steps of turf, through a low and narrow door. A scanty iron grate, instead of a large sweeping sash, transmits a glimmering light, just sufficient to discover the inner structure, which appeared like one continued piece of rock-work—a cavern cut, you would imagine, from the surrounding quarry. Above, hung an irregular arch, with an aspect rather threatening than inviting. Below, lay a paving of homely pebbles; in some places a little furrowed, as though it had been worn by the frequent tread of solitary feet. All around were rusticity and solemnity; solemnity never more visibly seen than through a gloom. The furniture of the same grotesque fashion with the apartment. A bench hewed, you would suspect, by nature's chisel, out of the solid stone; a sort of couch, composed of swelling moss, and small fibrous roots. From one corner trickled a pure spring, which crept with a bubbling moan along the channelled floor, till its healthy current was collected into a bason, rudely scooped from the ground. On the edge of this little receptacle lay chained a rusty bowl, and over it stood an antique worm-eaten table. On the least obscure part of the wall you discern, dimly discern, a parchment scroll, inscribed with that sage, but mortifying admonition, "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!"

Over this recess, so pleasingly horrid, and adapted to solemn musings, arose an open and airy Belvidere. You ascend by winding stairs; and coming from the uncouth abode below, are sweetly surprised with an elegant hexagon. The ceiling lofty, and decorated with the softest, richest, almost flowing fretwork. The wainscot, in pannels of oak, retained its native auburn; so beautifully plain, that, like an amiable countenance, it would have been disfigured, rather than improved, by the most costly paint. On this were disposed, in gilded frames, and to great advantage, a variety of entertaining landscapes. But none surpassed, none equalled, all were a foil to the noble, lovely views which the windows commanded. The chimney-piece, of white shining marble, streaked with veins of vivid red. Over it was carved a fine festoon of artificial, in it was ranged a choice collection of natural flowers. On a table of glossy walnut lay a portable telescope, attended with Thomson's Seasons, and *Vanierii Prædium Rusticum.**

The whole was fitted up in the highest taste, and furnished with every pleasurable ornament, on purpose to harmonize with that lavish gaiety, which seemed to smile over all the face of nature: on purpose to correspond with that vernal delight, which came breathing on the wings of every fragrant gale: I may add, on purpose to remind the beholder of those immortal mansions, which are decorated with images infinitely more splendid, with objects unspeakably more glorious; where holy beings will spend, not a few vacant hours in refined amusement, but a boundless eternity in the consummation of joy. For, to a well-turned mind nature is a preceptor; and these are her instructive lessons: To the pure in heart, even sense is edifying, and these are its delicate moralities.

The redundant waters of the canal rolled off in a spreading cascade; which, tumbling from many a little precipice, soothed the air with a symphony of soft and gurgling sounds, nor ever intermitted the obliging office,

"From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve."

But when the fanning breezes dropt their wings, when the feathered choir were hushed in sleep, when not so much as a chirping grasshopper was heard throughout the meads, this liquid instrument still played its solo, still pursued its busy way, and warbled, as it flowed melodious murmurs.

Asp. Such, Theron, so uniform, uninterrupted, and invariable, should be our conformity to the divine law. But, alas! those sacred precepts are so exceeding broad, that the most enlarged human obedience is far from being commensurate to their extent; so absolutely holy, that our highest attainments fall vastly short of their exalted perfection. How then can we expect justification from such a consummate rule? How dare we place our dependence upon such imperfect duties? especially before a God of unerring discernment and immaculate purity.

Ther. Because mankind are incapable of pleasing their Maker, by yielding an absolute and invariable obedience to the moral law; does it follow from thence, that they cannot render themselves acceptable to him, by an universal course of sincere obedience?

Asp. I think it follows from what has been already observed. If you desire new arguments, they are at hand.

The law, says the teacher of the Gentiles, is the ministration of condemnation.* How can this be true, if it requires no more than a sincere obedience; such as is proportioned to our infirm state? If this be sufficient to justify, and entitle us to our Creator's favour, the law ceases to be the ministration

* "Vanierii Prædium Rusticum." A most elegant Latin poem; which treats of every remarkable peculiarity relating to the business of a country life, or the furniture of a country seat. It entertains us with a description of the most agreeable objects, in an easy flow of the purest language, and most musical numbers.

* 2 Cor. iii. 7. In this place, I apprehend, the apostle means the moral law, and that principally, as that alone was written and engraven on stones. Elsewhere, I believe he uses the word in a larger sense; and intends to exclude all law whatever from bearing any share in our justification.

of condemnation. It becomes (which is flatly contradictory to the apostle's doctrine) the ministration of righteousness.

The law is styled, by the same inspired teacher, "a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."* How can it, upon your supposition, be qualified for such an office? If a sincere obedience be the whole of its demands, it can no longer direct us to Christ, it will no longer deliver us over to a Redeemer's merit; but must draw and attach us to itself, teaching us to look upon its precepts, and our own conscientious observance of them, as the tenure of eternal life.

Do you insist upon a third proof? A third presents itself; not so much founded on argumentation, as deduced from example. How was Abraham, the friend of God and father of the faithful, justified? By a course of sincere obedience? No; but by faith in the promised Messiah. "Abraham worked not," with a view to obtain justification; but believed on him, who justifieth the ungodly.† How was David, the man after God's own heart, justified?† By his zeal for the Lord, and by his eminent services? No; but by a righteousness imputed; even that righteousness of the blessed Redeemer, through which "iniquity is forgiven, and sin pardoned." And can we be said to walk humbly, or can we be thought to walk surely, if, refusing to tread in the steps of these exemplary saints, we diverge into a path of our own devising?

Ther. "Of our own devising!" No, my friend; there is a milder law introduced by the gospel, condescending and merciful to our infirmities, which accepts of sincerity instead of perfect obedience.

Asp. When was this milder law introduced, and the stricter abrogated? Not upon the entrance of sin, I presume. At this rate, the original law must be the creature of a few days, perhaps of a few hours only. But can we imagine, that the all-wise and unchangeable God would ordain a system of precepts to be disannulled as soon as enacted? Not in our Lord's time, I am very certain. That holy commandment, which requires supreme love to God, and perfect charity to men, he assures us, was still in force, Matth. xxii. 37, 38, 39. Nay it is evident, from the nature of the Deity, and from our relation to one another, that it always will be in force, that it never can cease, but is necessary and everlasting.

"A milder law, condescending to our infirmities!" What can be the purport of such an institution? It must be supposed to speak the following language: "Be it known unto you, O children of Adam, that you are no longer enjoined to love the Lord with all your strength, nor to love your neighbour as yourselves. Once, indeed, I insisted upon absolute purity of heart; now I can dispense with some degree of evil concupiscence. Since Christ is come, and his gospel preached, you need not always be clothed with humility; but may feel some little emotions of pride. In short, because you are weak, I will connive, or even accommodate my demands to your enfeebled and depraved condition."

Not to urge (what must be shocking to every ear) that such a doctrine would make the Holy One of God a minister of sin, and the gospel of our salvation a patent for licentiousness; let me only ask, Does this agree with our Lord's declaration, "One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled? Matth. v. 18. Is this suitable to the perfections of the divine Legislator? "with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning," James i. 17. Will this consist with the avowed resolution of the Almighty Jehovah, "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable?" Isa. xlii. 21.

Ther. However you may decry what I call the milder law, St. Paul asserts it to be the Christian scheme. This he strenuously argues for as the only scheme by which any man can be justified in the sight of God.

Asp. Does he, Theron? in what epistle? what chapter? what verse? He says, addressing himself to the Galatian converts, "I do not frustrate the grace of God, for, if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain," Gal. ii. 21. From which passage, we learn two very momentous truths, that were we to derive a justifying righteousness from the law, this would not only be derogatory to the honour of grace, but subversive of its very being; that by seeking justification through our own conscientious behaviour, we make, as far as in us lies, the death of Christ a vain thing, for which there was no occasion, and of which there is no use.

To the same purpose it is written in that invaluable epistle to the Romans, "If they which are of the law be heirs," if they who trust to their own performance of the law

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* Gal. iii. 24. "Παιδαγωγος," a schoolmaster; who pretends not to finish the education of youth, but directs them to, and prepares them for, higher studies or nobler employs. The law, in like manner, aims not at furnishing us with a title to happiness; but fits, disposes, and disciplines us, for the all-sufficient Redeemer.

† These two examples are, with the truest judgment, selected, and with the utmost propriety applied, Rom. iv. 1, &c. Rom. iv. 6, &c. Abraham was the most illustrious pattern of piety among the Jewish patriarchs: "In glory there was none like him," Eccles. xliv. 9. David was the most zealous and seraphic of their kings; "a man after God's own heart," 1 Sam xiii. 14. If neither of these was justified by his own obedience, but each by an imputed righteousness, if they both obtained acceptance with God, not as upright beings, who might claim it; but as sinful creatures, who must implore it; the consequence is glaring. It is such as must strike every attentive understanding, and must affect every individual person.

are thereby entitled to the heavenly inheritance; "faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect," Rom. iv. 14.—See now, my friend, the tendency of your opinion! It is not a mere speculative mistake, an error of inconsiderable consequence, but such as strikes at the fundamentals of the gospel. Instead of being the only Christian scheme, it totally overthrows Christianity itself.* For it would render the promise abortive, and supersede the necessity of faith; it would destroy the very existence of grace, and make even the death of Christ a superfluous transaction.

Ther. This I see, Aspasio, that the method of obtaining acceptance on account of our own sincerity, is a benign expedient, such as corresponds with the compassionate nature of the Deity, and is what the apostle styles, "being justified by faith, without the deeds of the law."

Asp. How! To be justified by faith, and justified by sincerity, the same thing? Is it possible that these should be equivalent terms? Let me illustrate my query by a similitude, which our present situation suggests. Sometimes an easy comparison is more convincing than a laboured argument.

From this pleasing eminence we command an extensive view of the country. Our eye connects the artless grandeur of nature with the elegant embellishments of the summer-house. Nor is the public road the least entertaining part of the scene; because it presents us with a moving picture, with a perpetual succession of new objects. How many travellers have passed in review since we took our seat in this agreeable elevation! Just at this instant a stage-coach bolts out of the lane, filled, I presume, with passengers that reside in the neighbourhood, or are to lodge in the next market-town. We will suppose them set down at their journey's end. An acquaintance visits them, congratulates them on their arrival; and asks that customary question, "how they came?" "We came," say they, "without walking a step ourselves, yet by walking, as well, and as far as we are able." Is this answer intelligible? Are these methods of travelling consistent? So intelligible is my friend's doctrine; so consistent is justification vouchsafed without the deeds of the law; and justification obtained by performing the deeds of the law as well as we are able.

* St. Paul says of those preachers who taught justification by the works of the law, "they would pervert," or (as the original word μεταστρεψαι may be translated) subvert and overthrow "the gospel of Christ." To pervert, give a wrong turn, or a false colour, seems not to express fully the apostle's idea, nor to preserve the native energy of his argument. The Greek word is equivalent to the Hebrew חכר, which we generally render *evertere*, Gal. i. 7.

Ther. Without the law, signifies without the necessity of an exact and unerring conformity to it.

Asp. This is not without, but by the law, qualified in the rigour of its demands, and departing somewhat from the perfection of its precepts. Could you affirm with any propriety, that this part of the hemisphere is without the sun, because an intervening cloud has moderated its fervour and abated its glare?

What says the apostle? His words in another place will determine his meaning in this. If a state of acceptance with God be of works, be referable to our own obedience, whether sincere or perfect, "it is no more of grace."* Works and grace, in point of justification, are irreconcilable opposites. On this pinnacle they cannot stand together. One must supplant and overthrow the other.

But why do I speak of grace? If my friend's opinion prevail, grace is at an end. What we took to be the gospel, turns out a covenant of works. Salvation ceases to be a free gift, and becomes a necessary payment. For "to him that worketh," that performeth what the law requires, "is the reward not reckoned of grace;" but he may claim it as his due, it must be paid him as matter of debt; Rom. iv. 4.

Ther. You take no notice of what I urged concerning the benignity of this scheme, and how much it magnifies the clemency of the great Legislator.

Asp. But why should clemency erect its throne on the ruins of almost every other attribute? This method would dishonour the veracity of God, which has denounced a curse upon every deviation from his revealed will. It would depreciate the administration of his justice, which cannot but punish whatever violates his sacred precepts. It would greatly derogate from the dignity of his law, and make it a mere thing of wax to bend, and truckle, and take its form from the sin and weakness of human nature.

Ther. Will the divine law then make no favourable allowances for human infirmities, for constitutional faults, and strength of passion?

Asp. Far be it from me to represent the law of the Most High, either more strict, or more yielding, than it really is. To avoid all possibility of such a mistake, let us hear the declaration of the law itself: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." Gal. iii. 10.

* Rom. xi. 6. The passage produced by Aspasio, refers immediately to the doctrine of election, and but remotely to the privilege of justification. However, as the former includes the latter, if that be perfectly free, this cannot be the consequence of works. The argument therefore, I apprehend, is conclusive, though the proof is not so direct.

"Every one;" without any exception of persons, without any regard to pleas, either of human weakness or violent temptation. —"That continueth not;" it is not enough to observe these holy commandments in the general tenor of our conversation. Our course of obedience must be without any intermission, from the earliest dawn of reason to the latest period of life. "In all things;" we must refrain from all the sins that are forbidden, and from every approach towards them. We must practise all the virtues that are enjoined, and in their full extent of perfection.

In a word, the law insists upon obedience, perfect in its principle, perfect in all its parts, perfect in every degree, and in each of these respects perpetual.* The least deficiency in any one particular renders us liable to vengeance; and notwithstanding any repentance for transgressions, notwithstanding all pretensions to sincerity of heart, subjects us to the curse.

Theron paused:—he seemed to be struck with surprise;—but rallying his thoughts, replied, If this be the sense of the passage; who of all flesh can be saved?

Asp. Say rather, If the extent of the divine law be so enlarged, if its demands be so high, and its sanction so awfully rigorous, then must "every mouth be stopped; —then is all the world become guilty before God; and by the works of the law shall no man living be justified."

Ther. Will not such excessively severe doctrine drive people into despondency, or even drown them in despair?

Asp. No, Theron; unless it be such a despair as is the parent of heavenly hope, and productive of those amiable twins—peace and joy: A despair, I mean, of being reconciled to our offended God, and of obtaining eternal happiness by any satisfaction or any duties of our own.

Ther. Surely, you forget the gracious manifesto published by the condescending King of heaven: "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not," 2 Cor. viii. 12. Is it not plain from this text, that infinite goodness will admit our honest, though imperfect endeavours; and, since we are not able to pay an unsinning, will mercifully accept our best obedience?

Asp. I do not forget, but possibly my friend may misapply, the gracious manifesto. To whom was the word of this consolation sent? To true believers, who had "given their own selves to the Lord," 2 Cor. viii. 5; who "were established in Christ," 2 Cor. i. 21; "and abounded in faith," 2 Cor. viii. 7. If you likewise, my dear Theron, acknowledge yourself a vile sinner in your worst, and an unprofitable servant in your best estate; if, in consequence of this acknowledgment, you fly for refuge to the wounds of a crucified Saviour, and rely for salvation only on his obedience unto death; then you imitate those Corinthian converts; then you may apply that indulgent declaration to yourself; and then would I venture to address you, in the elegant and cheering language of the royal preacher, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth"* both thy person and thy performances.

But if you overlook the righteousness of the blessed Jesus: if you depend upon yourself and your own attainments; you are (how shall I speak it) not accepted, but accursed. In such a case you have already heard your doom denounced by the leader of the Jews, and may hear it ratified by the apostle of the Gentiles: "As many as are of the works of the law," who seek justification by their own observance of its commands, "are under the curse." Gal. iii. 10.

Ther. Under the curse! Because our attempts to obey, though faithfully exerted, are attended with defects! Is not this unreasonable and shocking? Unreasonable, that the God of justice should establish a law of such consummate perfection, as no child of Adam can, even with his utmost assiduity and care, fulfil? Shocking, that the God of mercy should thunder out so severe a denunciation on the least inadvertent breach, on every unavoidable failure? This exceeds the relentless rigour of Draco, or the tyrannical impositions of Egyptian task-masters. Draco is said to have written his laws in blood; yet he never enacted such institutions as were absolutely too strict and difficult to be observed. And though the Egyptian task-masters insisted upon the full tale of bricks, without allowing the necessary proportion of straw; yet the punishment they inflicted was incomparably less than everlasting destruction.

Asp. If God Almighty, in delivering his law to fallen mankind, intended to propose the means of their justification, your argument would be valid, and your inference unde-

* That the law insists upon an obedience absolutely perfect, will be farther evident to the attentive reader, if he considers the tenor of St. Paul's argumentation, in his epistles to the Romans, and to the Galatians; particularly Rom. iii. 23. iv. 15. Gal. iii. 21.

* Eccl. ix. 7. Aspasio's remark discovers an ambiguity in the word accepted. If people mean, that sincere obedience shall be accepted, as their justifying righteousness, as that which constitutes their title to everlasting felicity, the proposition is extremely false. If they mean, that the sincere obedience of believers, though very imperfect in itself, shall be graciously regarded in Christ, and find favour through his all-recommending merit, the sentiment is unquestionably true.

niable. But the Supreme Legislator had a very different, a far more mysterious design. However, before I proceed to touch upon this point, let me desire to know your opinion.—For what reasons, think you, was the law ordained?

Ther. For what reasons? To deter men from the commission of vice, and excite them to the practice of virtue. To set before them a rule for their conduct which, if they diligently observe, they shall be rewarded with eternal happiness; which, if they presumptuously transgress, they shall be punished with eternal misery.

Asp. If man had never fallen, this doctrine had been sound divinity, and this method a practicable scheme. But ever since the fall, such a way of salvation is somewhat like the north-east passage. As mountains of ice, and the severest rigours of winter, block up this,—so extreme impotence in man, and the utmost perfection in the law, bar up that. "The law," saith the apostle, "is weak;" is incapable of furnishing us with a title to the heavenly felicity;* not through any defect in its precepts, but "through the flesh," through the inability of our degenerate nature.

Yet I must confess you are not alone in your opinion. Multitudes have unwarily entertained the same notion; not apprehensive that they frustrate hereby the grace of God, and render it of none effect with regard to themselves. If you examine the scriptural account, you will find it quite of another strain.

Ther. Pray let me hear the scriptural account. For whenever those divine oracles speak, I am all attention: Wherever they interpose their authority, I am all submission.

Asp. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. iii. 20. Far from being our justifier, it is our accuser. It arraigns, and proves us guilty. It demonstrates, beyond all possibility of contradiction, that the very best among us have failed and come short of our duty; nay, that the very best among us have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

"I was alive without the law once," says the apostle, Rom. vii. 9. I thought myself upright and holy; and entitled, by virtue of these qualifications, to life eternal. "But when the commandment came," shining in its purity, and operating with power, "sin revived:" a clear and lively sense of guilt shot, like a piercing ray, through all my soul. I saw myself chargeable with many past provocations. I felt myself subject to much remaining corruption. In consequence of which "I died:" my vain conceits were blasted; my presumptuous hopes expired; I could not but acknowledge myself justly liable to condemnation and death.

Ther. It had this effect on Saul, when he was a malignant and barbarous persecutor. But when people are virtuous and benevolent, what purpose does it then serve?

Asp. A very important one; yet such as may probably, at the first hearing, affect you with a little surprise. "The law entered," says the apostle, "that the offence might——"

Ther. Be restrained, no doubt.

Asp. That the offence might "abound," Rom. v. 20. is the assertion.

Ther. Surprising indeed! Is it possible that God's law should give countenance to sin? nay, add spurs to the sinner?

Asp. Let us beware of mistaking our sacred casuist. The law entered, not that the commission of sin might be authorized, but that the abundance of our sins might be manifested; that all mankind, even your virtuous persons, may perceive the great multitude of their iniquities, the greater impurity of their hearts,* together with the utter imperfection of their highest attainments, and best services.

This end could not be answered by a law relaxed in its demands, or warping to our weakness; only by a system of precepts every way exact, and in all degrees perfect. Whoever would represent to his neighbours the spots that sully, or the scars that disfigure his countenance, must effect the design, not by a stained, but by a pure mirror.

Ther. "The knowledge of sin, and a conviction of our exceeding sinfulness:" these are intentions which I should not have suspected.

Asp. These are not all. There is another intention of the law, equally necessary, and no less awful: "it reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Romans, i. 18. Having set before the sinner his innumerable offences and enormous guilt, it denounces the doom which he deserves; it unsheathes the sword of justice, and threatens the offender with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

Ther. A modern writer supposes, that God may set aside the law, in favour of frail men. I might far more reasonably suppose, that he would mitigate the law, on the same consideration. But what you urge makes me afraid to lean on so precarious a prop.

Asp. To look for comfort and salvation from this quarter, would be to lean, as the

* Rom. viii. 3. Therefore he says in another place, "If there had been a law given, which could have given life." Gal. iii. 21. It is the same way of speaking, and intended to denote the very same impossibility, which is implied in that speech of Jehovah to Abraham, "If a man can number the dust of the earth." Gen. xiii. 16.

* And therefore was law given them, to evince
Their natural pravity.—*Milton, b.* 12. l. 287.

Arabian proverb speaks, "on a wave of the sea," which will not only fail to support, but will certainly swallow up the unadvised and rash depender.

No, Theron; rather than the divine law should lose its honours, Sodom and Gomorrah were laid in ashes; the ancient world was destroyed with a deluge; the present frame of nature is destined to the flames, and all its unholy inhabitants will be condemned to hell. Nay, rather than the least tittle should pass unaccomplished, its curse has been executed on God's own Son, and all its injunctions have been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

Ther. As I dare not confide in the modern provisionary *salvo*, so neither can I accede to your severe and terrifying notions. The laws of a wise and beneficent governor are calculated for the good of his subjects. What good, what advantage can accrue to us, from receiving such a sentence, and possessing such convictions?

Asp. Though I might mention many advantages, I shall content myself with selecting one, which is not only valuable in itself, but the introduction to every spiritual blessing. When, by the instrumentality of the law, and the illumination of the Spirit, we are brought under such convictions, then we are taught to see our danger; then we are made to feel our misery; and then we shall no longer sleep in security, but solicitously look out for deliverance, and gladly accept the sovereign remedy.

Ther. The law, according to your representation, is intended to accuse me—to convict me—to condemn me. So it becomes, instead of a salutary, a killing system.

Asp. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." 2 Cor. iii. 6. If we adhere to the literal sense, without attending to the spiritual design; if we regard only the precept and the sanction as they stand in themselves, and neither consider nor improve them as acting in subserviency to the Mediator's righteousness; they are doubtless a killing ordinance, and bind us down under a sentence of death. But, rightly improved —Hold! let me proceed no farther with the argument.

You are a sportsman, Theron, and delight in the manly recreations of the field; you must therefore have read that fine poem, which so elegantly describes your favourite diversion.

Ther. The Chase, I suppose you mean.

Asp. The same. Do you remember the large description of the royal stag-chase?

Ther. Perfectly well. It is not a week since I perused the whole passage, and with as much pleasure as if it had been entirely new.

Asp. Then you can give me a summary of the agreeable narrative.

Ther. I can. But will not this chase lead us away very far from our subject?

Asp. Perhaps not so far as you imagine. I have a reason for my request.

Ther. What reason, I beseech you?

Asp. You shall soon know. Only favour me with the account.

Ther. I protest, I cannot discern the least connexion between these rural sports and the grand topic of our conversation. However, since you command, I will implicitly obey.

The stag, roused from his lair, shakes his dappled sides; tosses his beamy head; and, conscious of superior agility, seems to defy the gathering storm. You see, speaking of poetry, I have caught something of the poetical strain.

Asp. This enlivened manner excites my eagerness, and makes me more desirous to hear the sequel.

Ther. First, he has recourse to stratagem, and evasive shifts. He plunges into the copse; darts across the glade, and wheels about in doubling mazes, as though he would pursue even the foe he avoids. The full-mouthed pack unravel all his windings, and drive him from his wily arts.

Now he betakes himself to flight, and confides in his speed. He bursts through the woods, bounds over the lawns, and leaves the lagging beagles far behind. The beagles, slow but sure, trace his steps through woods, through lawns, through half the extended forest: Unwearied, still unwearied, they urge their ardent way, and gain upon the alarmed object of their pursuit.

Again he flies, flies with redoubled swiftness; shoots down the steep; strains up the hill; and takes shelter in the inmost recess of some sequestered grove. The sagacious hounds hang, with greedy nostrils, on the scent. They recover, by indefatigable assiduity, the ground they had lost. Up they come a third time; and, joining in a general peal of vengeance, hurry the affrighted animal from his short concealment.

Perplexed, and in the utmost distress, he seeks the numerous herd. He would lose himself, and elude his pursuers, amidst the multitude of his fellows. But they, unconcerned for a brother's woe, shun the miserable creature, or expel him from the selfish circle. Abandoned by his associates, and haunted with apprehensions of approaching ruin, he trembles at every leaf that shakes. He starts; he springs; and wild, and swift as the wind, flies he knows not where, yet pours all his soul in flight. Vain, vain are his efforts! The horrid cry, lately lessened, thickens upon the gale, and thunders in his ear. Now the poor breathless victim is full in view: his sprightliness forsakes him; his agility is spent. See how he toils in yonder valley with faultering limbs and a hobbling gait! The sight of their game quickens the

pace, and whets the ardour, of the impetuous hounds. With tumultuous violence they rush in, and with clamorous joy demand their prey.

What can he do, surrounded as he is with insulting tongues and ravenous jaws? Despair is capable of inspiriting even the timorous breast. Having nothing to hope, he forgets to fear. He faces about, and makes a resolute stand. The trunk of a sturdy tree covers his rear, and his own branching horns defend him in front. He rushes upon his adversaries, gores some, lays others grovelling on the turf, and makes the whole coward pack give way.

Encouraged by this unexpected success, his hopes revive. He rallies once again his drooping spirits; exerts the little remainder of his strength, and springs through the midst of the retiring rout. It is his last, last chance. He stretches every nerve; once more loses sight of the rabble from the kennel; and, finding no security on the land, takes to the water! He throws his burning sides into the river, sails down the cooling stream; and slinks away to the verge of some little shelving island. There finding a resting place for his feet, he skulks close to the shady margin. All immersed in the wave, excepting only his nostrils, he baffles for a while the prying eye of man, and the keener smell of brute.

Discovered at length, and forced to quit this unavailing refuge, he climbs the slippery bank. Unable to fly any longer, he stands at bay against an aged willow; stands, all faint with toil, and sobbing with anguish. The crowds that gather round him with merciless and outrageous transport, triumph in his misery. A multitude of blood-thirsty throats, joined with the sonorous horn, ring his funeral knell. The tears, till this fatal instant unknown, gush from his languishing eyes, and roll down his reeking cheeks. He casts one more look on the woods, the lawns, the pleasing scenes of his former delights; and, determined to die, prepares to sell his life as dear as possible.

At this most critical juncture, the royal sportsman comes up. He sees the distressed creature; and as soon as he sees, he pities! The clemency which attends the throne, accompanies even the diversions of majesty. He issues the high command. The prohibitory signal is given. The pack, though raving for blood, are checked in a moment; and not checked only, but called off from the prey. Disappointed and grumbling they retire, and leave the intended victim of their fury to enjoy his liberty, his safety, and his ease again.

I have now followed the stag, till I have tired your patience. Why did you suffer me to run on at this extravagant rate? You know I am, on these favourite topics, an everlasting talker.

Asp. Why this apology, Theron? I am sure you did not see my mouth yawn, or my head nod, while you was pursuing your subject. Besides, I intend to make reprisals, and put your attention to the same trial.

Thus the strictness of the law pursues the soul; dislodges it from every refuge of lies; and never remits its terrifying menaces, till the poor delinquent ceases from self-confidence, and fixes on Christ for his whole salvation.

The man, perhaps, is awakened into a serious concern for his eternal state. In consequence of which, he relinquishes his profane and iniquitous practices; breaks the Sabbath, and defrauds his neighbour no more. But the law quickly represents, and in a glaring light, that a negative obedience is by no means sufficient.

Upon this he betakes himself to a course of positive holiness; gets acquainted with religious people, and performs religious duties; prays in secret, and attends public ordinances; conscientiously observes the Lord's day, and regulates his behaviour by the rule of God's commandments. Now, he is ready to congratulate himself on his remarkable and hopeful reformation.

Soon he perceives, that all his proficiency is but skin-deep, a mere outside varnish, which has not penetrated the inner man. He begins therefore, to watch over the motions, and bewail the evils of his heart. He labours to subdue pride, and curb passion; to purge out filthy lusts, and to banish spiritual wickedness. Notwithstanding all his vigilance, conscience flies in his face, either for the neglect of some virtue, or the commission of some sin. The law rings in his ear that dreadful denunciation, "Cursed is he that performeth not all things."

Struck by this conviction, his wounds bleed afresh. He is obliged to seek some new balm for his sore. In order to appease an offended God, and atone for his sinful relapses, he makes many sorrowful confessions, possibly submits to voluntary sufferings. He denies himself, and bestows liberally on the poor: He sighs deeply, and mourns bitterly.—But can waters that are muddy cleanse the garment that is filthy? Wilt thou satisfy, O vain man, wilt thou satisfy for one sin by committing another? In these penitential exercises were thy thoughts steadily devout? In those acts of beneficence, was thy heart warmly affectionate? If not, such fancied reparations of past faults, only aggravate the heavy score.

What shall he do? He cannot pay: to beg he is ashamed. Fain would he enter into life, yet not be too much indebted to grace. He attempts, therefore, to com-

pound with heaven. He binds himself by solemn, perhaps by sacramental engagements, to use greater circumspection for the future; then turns his eye to the divine Mediator not with a view of relying wholly on his righteousness, but only to obtain such a supply as may make up the deficiencies of his own. Somewhat like this was the mistake of the Galatian converts, against which St. Paul, in his epistle to that people, so solidly disputes, and so sharply inveighs.—For a while he holds fast his purposed integrity. At length, falling notoriously short in executing his part, a startling voice sounds in his ear that dreadful alarm, "Cursed is he that continueth not." His heart sinks with discouragement, and all his resolutions hang their enfeebled heads. He has tried every method that he can devise, and has found every method ineffectual. All his expedients are a spider's web, and his hope is as the giving up of the ghost.

His soul, pursued by the law, and haunted by terror, is brought to the gates of death, or the very brink of despair. And now the King of kings, now the Lord our righteousness, appears for his rescue. Now is accomplished that gracious declaration, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." Hos. xiii. 9. Driven from every false refuge, and drawn by the blessed Spirit, he comes weary and heavy laden to Christ. Convinced of the sin of his nature, the sin of his life, and the sin of his best duties, he renounces himself in every view. This is all his salvation, and all his desire, that he may win Christ, and be found in him. Did that poor afflicted woman say, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole?" With equal ardour does this enlightened sinner cry, "If I may but have fellowship with the glorious Immanuel, in his merits, and in his benefits, I am alive from the dead, I am happy for ever."

Having seen a glimpse of the transcendent excellency of the Redeemer's person; having received a taste from the inexhaustible fulness of his grace; O how he longs for brighter manifestations! how he thirsts after more plentiful draughts!—None that come to Christ are cast out. He that awakens these ardent desires, in his due time gives the desired blessings. After various conflicts a comfortable and established faith is wrought in the penitent's soul. He believes, that the Son of the Most High died in his stead, and was obedient for his justification; believes, that all the unsearchable riches of the adored Mediator's life and death are his portion.*

By this faith, his heart is purified; his heart is quickened, he is fitted for every good work. Though temptations assault him, he derives strength from his Saviour; "resists the devil and is faithful, unto death." Though corruptions defile him, he flies to the "fountain opened for uncleanness." Zech. xiii. 1; makes daily, hourly application of the blood of sprinkling, and goes on his way, rejoicing in God his Saviour.

Ther. Your discourse puts me in mind of Absalom's procedure when Joab refused to make him a visit. The Prince ordered his servants to set on fire the General's corn. 2 Sam. xiv. 30. This stratagem had its intended effect. The apprehension of danger drove him, when the respectful invitation would not lead him, to a personal interview. You seem to suppose that the law was delivered with such a design—to lay us under a necessity of flying to the atonement of Christ.

Asp. I do, Theron. And for this opinion I have a far better authority than my own supposition. We are assured by unerring wisdom, that "Christ is the end of the law." Rom. x. 4. It points invariably to him; it terminates wholly in him; and then obtains its first, its principal purpose, when sinners are brought to their divine Redeemer for righteousness and strength; for that righteousness which entitles to heaven, that strength which capacitates for obedience.

"The law hath concluded all mankind under sin," Gal. iii. 10; yet not with an intention that any should be discouraged now or perish for ever; but that every one may see his inexpressible need of a Saviour's death, and a Saviour's obedience; that, being thus prepared both to value and receive so precious a blessing, the promise of justification "by faith in Jesus Christ, may be given to them that believe."

Let us advert to this grand aim of the law. Then we shall see goodness, unquestionable and sovereign goodness, in forming its constitution so sublimely perfect, and making its threatenings so inflexibly severe. Exclusive of this wholesome severity, we should supinely disesteem, perhaps wantonly reject, the grace of the gospel. The prodigal son would never have returned to his father, in that humble, submissive, supplicating posture, if he had not found his circumstances utterly ruined, and felt himself

* See this work of grace, and procedure of conversion, more copiously displayed, in a valuable little piece, entitled, "Human Nature in its Fourfold state," by Mr. Thomas Boston, page 227, which, in my opinion, is one of our best books for common readers. The sentences are short, and the comparisons striking. The language is easy, and the doctrine evangelical. The method proper, the plan comprehensive; the manner searching, yet consolatory. If another celebrated treatise is styled, "The whole duty of Man," I would call this the whole of Man; as it comprises—what he was originally—what he is by transgresson—what he should be through grace—and then what he will be in glory.

perishing with hunger. No more would the conceited sons of Adam, disclaiming all pretence to any merit of their own, and with nothing but the halter* of self-condemnation about their necks, fall down at the feet of a merciful Redeemer, if they were not instigated by the sharp goad, or rather driven by the flaming sword of the law.

Ther. Has the law, then, nothing to do with our temper and conversation? Is it no longer to be considered as a system of duties? no longer to be regarded as a rule of life?

Asp. When it has forced the lines of self-righteousness, and driven us to Jesus Christ, that only citadel of safety, for acceptance and salvation, then it serves as a rule for our conduct; then it shows us, like a friend and a guide, how to order our conversation, and adorn our profession; how to glorify God, and express our gratitude to Christ. But till it has accomplished the fore-mentioned end, it thunders vengeance, it flashes terror; it is, as Moses speaks, a "fiery law."†

And is it, my dear Theron, a fiery law? Then let it constrain us to take shelter in that meritorious obedience, which will be, to our guilty souls, "as the cold of snow in the time of harvest." Prov. xxv. 13. Is it a law which "worketh wrath?" Let it endear to our affections that inestimably precious gospel, which "preacheth peace by Jesus Christ." Acts x. 36. Is it "the ministration of condemnation?" 2 Cor. iii. 19. O let it quicken our flight to that all-gracious Surety, who was condemned at Pilate's bar, that we may be acquitted at God's tribunal!

To all this agrees our celebrated Milton, whose divinity is as faultless as his poetry is matchless. You will give me leave to quote a few of his beautiful lines, which recapitulate, as it were, the whole preceding conversation; and while they recapitulate the conversation, confirm the doctrine. This will make you some amends for my late tedious harangue, this will tip the lead with gold.

> So law appears imperfect; and but giv'n
> With purpose to resign them, in full time,
> Up to a better cov'nant; disciplin'd
> From shadowy types to truth; from flesh to spirit;
> From imposition of strict laws, to free
> Acceptance of large grace; from servile fear
> To filial; works of law to works of faith."
>
> *Book* xii. l. 300.

* Alluding to those remarkable words of Benhadad's servants; "Let us put sackcloth upon our loins and ropes upon our heads, and go out to meet the king of Israel; peradventure he will save thy life." 1 Kings xx. 31.

† Fiery law, Deut. xxxiii. 2. I dare not affirm that this is the exact import of the original, nor do I presume to determine the precise signification of a phrase so remarkably difficult. But as this is our received version; as it suggests a very useful truth, and a truth, which, in the present age, is peculiarly needful to be inculcated, I am inclined to acquiesce in the common rendering.

DIALOGUE X.

Asp. AGAIN, Theron! must we never lay aside the weapons of controversy?—You put me in mind of the resolute Athenian, who, having fought with distinguished bravery on the field of Marathon, pursued the vanquished Persians to their fleet. At that very instant, a galley full of the enemy's troops was putting off to sea. Determined, if possible, to prevent their escape, he laid hold of the vessel with his right hand, which was no sooner fixed, than chopped off by the sailors. The warrior, not at all discouraged, seized it with his left. When that also was cut away, he fastened his teeth in its side; and never quitted his gripe, till he resigned his breath.*

Ther. I have been considering the case of imputed righteousness, and am by no means satisfied as to the propriety of the phrase, or the truth of the doctrine, especially in the sense which you espouse. Objections arise, more substantial and weighty than any that have hitherto been urged; and which, if I mistake not, you will find it a more difficult task to answer.

Asp. I must do my best. And if my best attempts prove unsuccessful, I shall say, with the gallant Iphicrates, when overpowered by the eloquence of his antagonist, "My adversary is the better actor, but mine is the better play."

I say better; for to you, Theron, I will freely own, what to another person I should not be so willing to disclose,—That I receive no comfort, but from the habitual belief, and daily application, of this precious doctrine. Whenever I read the most correct and beautiful writings that proceed in the contrary strain, I feel my spirits heavy, I find my prospects gloomy, and not one ray of consolation gleams upon my mind. Whereas, much meaner compositions, which breathe the savour of this evangelical unction, seldom fail to quicken my hopes, to brighten my views, and put into my mouth that piously-alert profession of the Psalmist, "I will run the way of thy commandments, now thou hast set my heart at liberty." Psalm cxix. 32. Though I am far from laying any considerable stress upon this observation, farther still from advancing it into the place of an argument, yet I may be permitted to mention it in the confidence and familiarity of friendship.

* The Athenian's name was Cynægyrus. The author who relates this extraordinary story, is Justin. If the reader should think it a rhodomontade, I believe he will not judge amiss. And I promise myself, the same good sense will enable him to distinguish between what is hinted by way of pleasantry, and what is urged by way of argument.

Ther. An opinion proposed with so much modesty, and so nearly connected with my Aspasio's comfort, has doubtless a claim to my serious attention. Otherwise, it might possibly provoke my raillery. For you must know I am no great admirer of inward feelings. I cannot think them a very solid method of demonstrating your point. It must be enforced by better reasons, if you would gain it access to my heart.

We must place, you say, a dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, in all that he has done and suffered. What he has done and suffered, you add, is our only justifying righteousness; and to place our dependence on it, is the only method to obtain pardon of our sins, and life eternal.

Asp. I have said it, Theron, and I abide by it. This being the righteousness of God, is——

Ther. Give me leave, before you proceed farther, to propose a query. Does the righteousness of God signify the active and passive obedience of Christ?

Asp. Righteousness is a conformity to the law, in heart and in life. As the Son of God voluntarily made himself subject to the law, perfectly fulfilled its precepts, and suffered to the utmost its penalty; this, I should imagine, furnishes us with the truest and noblest signification of the phrase.

Ther. What if I or others should imagine quite the reverse?

Asp. I thank my friend for his admonition. It is indeed unreasonable that my bare imagination should pass for orthodoxy and truth. Let us then inquire after better proof.

When the divine name, in the sacred phraseology, is added to a substantive, it expresses some very extraordinary property. "The trees of the Lord," Psal. civ. 16, denote those stately and magnificent forests, which the hand of the Most High planted. "The mountains of God,*" are those prodigiously large elevations of the earth, which none but an almighty arm could establish. The righteousness of God likewise means a righteousness of the most supereminent dignity; such as is worthy to be called by his name, and may justly challenge his acceptance. And where shall we find this, but in the conduct and person of his blessed Son? This has a most unexceptionable claim to the exalted title; being, as a masterly critic explains the phrase, "a righteousness devised by God the Father, from all eternity; wrought out by God the Son, in the person of Jesus Christ; applied by God the Holy Ghost to the sinner's soul."

Ther. This doctrine of yours, if I rightly understand it, would make remission of sins but one half of our justification, and something else necessary in order to obtain eternal life; which is just as rational as to suppose, that though one cause may expel darkness, another must supervene in order to introduce light.

Asp. The nature of justification, and the nature of condemnation, are two opposites, which will mutually illustrate each other. What is implied in the condemnation of a sinner? He forfeits eternal life, and is doomed to eternal death. What is included in the justification of a sinner? It supersedes his obligation to punishment, and invests him with a title to happiness. In order to the first, there must be a remission of sins; in order to the second, an imputation of righteousness. Both which are derived from Christ's mediation in our behalf; and both take place when we are united to that divine head: So that we do not derive them from two different sources, but ascribe them to one and the same great all-sufficient Cause.

Your comparison, though intended to overthrow, I think fully establishes the sentiment. When yonder bright orb makes his first appearance in the east, what effects are produced? The shades of night are dispersed, and the light of day is diffused. To what are they owing—Each to a separate, or both to the same origin?—Every one's experience will answer the question. Thus, when the "Sun of righteousness" arises in the soul, he brings at once pardon and acceptance. Remission and salvation are under his wings. Both which constitute the "healing of the nations," Mal. iv. 2.; and both owe their being to Christ's obedience, embraced as active, and not rejected as passive.

Ther. This, I know, is the fine-spun theory of your systematic divines. But where is their warrant from scripture? By what authority do they introduce such subtle distinctions?

Asp. I cannot think the distinction so subtle, or the theory so finely spun. To be released from the damnatory sentence, is one thing; to be treated as a righteous person, is evidently another. Absalom was pardoned, when he received a permission to remove from Geshur and dwell at Jerusalem; but this was very different from the recommencement of filial duty and parental endearment. 2 Sam. xiv. 24. A rebel may be exempted from the capital punishment which his traitorous practices deserve, without being restored to the dignity of his former state, or the rights of a loyal subject. In Christianity likewise, to be freed from the charge of guilt, and to be regarded as a righteous person, are two several blessings, really distinct in themselves, and often distinguished in scripture.

Ther. Where are they distinguished? in

* This is the import of the original אלהים חדרי, Psalm xxxvi. verse 7, *Hebrew*; verse 6, *English*.

what texts of scripture? This is what I called for—your scriptural warrant.

Asp. What think you of Job's reply to his censorious friends? "God forbid that I should justify you." Job. xxvii. 5. That he forgave them, there is no doubt. Yet he could not justify them; could not allow their reflections to be equitable, or their behaviour charitable.

What think you of Solomon's supplication? "Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants; condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness." 1 Kings viii. 32. To condemn, in this passage, evidently signifies, to pronounce guilty, and obnoxious to punishment. By parity of reason, to justify, must denote, to pronounce righteous, and entitle to happiness.

What says Solomon's father? "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord! for, in thy sight, shall no man living be justified!" Psalm cxliii. 2. A man might be pardoned, if judged according to the tenor of his own obedience. But no man could be declared righteous, in consequence of such a trial: this were absolutely and universally impossible.

From all which passages I conclude, that to be justified is different from, is superior to, the bare remission of sin.

Ther. All these instances are derived from the Old Testament; the New, if I mistake not, speaks another language. Consider the case of the penitent publican. What does he request? "God be merciful to me a sinner!" What does he obtain? "He went down to his house justified." Luke xviii. 13,14. If, then, the petition and the grant may be deemed correspondent, pardon and justification must be reckoned equivalent.

Asp. The Old and the New Testament are, in their style and contents, exactly correspondent. Echo, in yonder cloisters, does not more punctually reverberate the speaker's voice, than those divine books harmonize with each other.

Yet it will not follow, from the publican's request and the publican's blessing, that pardon and justification are the same: Only that God's bounty frequently exceeds our prayers, and is larger than our expectations; or that the blessing which was implored, and the blessing which was vouchsafed, are inseparably connected, and always accompany each other.

St. Paul mentions "a justification of life;" not barely an exemption from the sentence of death, but such a justification, as gives a title (Rom. i. 18,) to the reward of life. The words are very emphatical. We shall injure the dignity of their meaning, if we understand them in a more contracted sense. Towards the close of the same chapter, we have another passage rich with consolation and full to our purpose: "Grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life." Rom. v. 21. Here is pointed out the prime source of all our blessings—infinitely free and triumphant grace: the meritorious cause—not any works of man, not any qualifications of our own, but the perfect righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ: the effect or end of all—which is not barely an absolution from guilt, but an instatement in life; a life of holy communion with God in this world, to be crowned with an eternal fruition of him in another.*

Let me produce one text more, which just at this instant occurs to my memory. You will find it in the apostle's defence of himself before Festus and Agrippa. He opens, as it were, his apostolical commission, and repeats the words of his royal Master: "I send thee" to ignorant and enslaved, guilty and ruined creatures "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts. xxvi. 18. The great preacher of the Gentiles, or rather the supreme Lord of all preachers, has distinguished between remission of sins and the inheritance of saints; between the pardon that delivers from hell, and the justification that entitles to heaven. So that the former does by no means constitute the latter; but is connected with it, as a link in the same sacred chain; or included in it, as part of the same glorious whole.

Ther. Admitting your distinction to be proper, is not the satisfaction made by the death of Christ sufficient of itself to obtain both our full pardon, and our final happiness?

Asp. Since my friend has started the question, I may venture, with all reverence to the divine counsels, to answer in the negative; it being necessary that the Redeemer of men should obey, as well as suffer in their stead. For this we have the testimony of our Lord himself. "This commandment," says he, "have I received of my Father, that I should lay down my life," (John x. 18.) "Thus it becometh us," adds he in another place, "to fulfil all righteousness." (Matth. iii. 15.) To which his apostle subjoins, that, if we reign in life, it must be not only through those sufferings which expiate, but also through that righteousness which merits. (Rom. v. 17.)

Ther. Our Lord's testimony relates only to a positive institution, and is quite foreign to our purpose. I have often been disgusted at such strained applications of scripture. The partizans of a system wrest the

* Accordingly, eternal life is called the hope, not of forgiveness but of righteousness, Gal. v. 5. And it is bestowed, not barely because of absolution, but because of righteousness, Rom. viii. 10.

sacred book. They deal with divine truth, as the tyrant Procustes served those unhappy creatures who fell into his merciless hands. Is a text too short to suit their design? Our Procustean expositors can stretch it on the rack, and lengthen its sense. Is it too full to consist with their scheme? They can lop off a limb, secrete a sentence, or contract the meaning. Is this to reverence the great God? Is this to treat respectfully his holy word?

Asp. I have been grieved, I assure you, and disgusted at this practice, as well as yourself; a practice not only very irreverent, but very injudicious also. It really prejudices the cause it would unfairly recommend. Such a support is like "a broken tooth, or a foot out of joint," (Prov. xxv. 19.) not only unserviceable, but hurtful; an obstruction, rather than a furtherance. However, I am not conscious of committing any violence on this passage, or of forcing it into my service. The circumstance you object, rather strengthens than invalidates the conclusion. If it was so requisite for our blessed Mediator to observe a positive institution, how much more necessary to fulfil those moral precepts, whose obligation is unalterable and everlasting?

Besides, it should be considered whether Christ's sufferings were a complete satisfaction to the law. Complete they were with regard to the penalty, not with regard to the precept. A distinction obvious and important. From whence arises the following argument, which, for once, you will allow me to propose in the logical form.

By what alone the law was not satisfied, by that alone sinners could not be justified:

By Christ's sufferings alone, the law was not satisfied.

Therefore, by Christ's sufferings alone, sinners could not be justified.

But when we join the active with the passive obedience of our Lord, the efficacy of the one, with the perfection of the other, how does our justification stand firm, in the fullest sense of the word. We have all that the law demands, both for our exemption from the curse, and as a title to the blessing.

Ther. Does not the scripture ascribe the whole of our salvation to the death of Christ? delivering it as a never-to-be-forgotten maxim in Christianity, That "we have redemption through his blood, (Eph. i. 7.) "are brought near through the blood of Christ," (Eph. ii. 13.) nay, that "we are justified," (the very point under debate) "through his blood," (Rom. v. 9.) Would the inspired writer have assigned these various blessings to this one cause, if it had been a price inadequate to the purchase, or a means insufficient to accomplish the end?

Asp. This part of our Lord's meritorious humiliation is, by a very usual figure, put for the whole. The death of Christ includes, not only his sufferings, but his obedience. The shedding of his precious blood was at once the grand instance of his suffering, and the finishing act of his obedience. In this view it is considered, and thus it is interpreted, by his own ambassador, who, speaking of his divine Master, says, "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 8.)

By the same figure, faith is sometimes said to be a lively, influential persuasion, "that Christ died for our sins," (1 Cor. xv. 3.) At other times, it is represented as a firm practical belief, that "God hath raised him from the dead," (Rom. x. 9.) Neither of which can, without the utmost contrariety to the analogy of Scripture, be taken in the exclusive sense. Each act must be understood, not separately, but jointly; each as implying both, or reciprocally inferring one another.

In like manner, when the scripture ascribes our justification to the death of Christ, we are not to think that it would set aside, but imply his obedience. It is not because his active obedience has no concern in procuring the blessing, but because his bitter passion was the most conspicuous, and the completing stage of his ever-glorious undertaking. Then, and not till then, he could truly say, "Father, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4.)

Ther. According to your account, then, it should be possible for a man to have all his sins done away, yet not attain to complete justification. Which is as contrary to sound sense and true divinity, as to imagine that crookedness may be removed and the object not become straight.

Asp. No, Theron. According to my account, it is impossible that the active and passive obedience of our Redeemer should be disjoined. To whomsoever the one is imputed, from him the other is not withheld. They were undivided in Christ the illustrious head, and they are undivided in their application to his mystical body. As Christ in suffering obeyed, and, in obeying, suffered; so, whoever receives Christ as an atonement, receives him also as a righteousness.

This has been observed before; and if this be real fact, what an inestimably precious gift is the gift of Christ! Never was the most Sovereign remedy so admirably suited to any malady, as this is adapted to all our wants. In him may we be found, living and dying! How safe, how happy then!—Let me not weary your patience, if I repeat a passage from our excellent Dr. Lightfoot, which, though artless and remarkably simple, has very much affected

my mind, and, I hope will leave some valuable impression on my friend's. "Justification," says that judicious divine, "is a man's being interested in all Christ's righteousnes. And if any thing is to be longed for, sure that is to be interested in all Christ's righteousness."

Ther. You do not weary my patience, neither do you satisfy my doubts. For you take no notice of the absurdity objected, and the comparison that enforces it.

Asp. Your comparison, my dear friend, is not founded on a parallel case. Neither sense nor philosophy find a medium between the removal of crookedness, and the succession of straightness. But reason discerns an apparent, and revelation maintains an important difference, between the pardon of guilt and a title to life. This has already been proved from scripture, and is, to me at least, evident from the very nature of things. For if a king, in favour of some condemned malefactor, revoke the sentence of death, this is one very considerable act of clemency. But if he pleases to make the pardoned criminal a partaker of his kingdom, or an heir of his crown, this surely is new, and a much higher instance of royal bounty.

If you insist upon a similitude, the word of God, which always speaks with consummate propriety, will furnish us with one. Zechariah illustrates the doctrine of justification. He represents the sinner by a person arrayed in filthy garments. His pardon is described by taking away this sordid apparel. By which benefit, he ceases to be defiled, yet is he not hereby clothed, yet is he not hereby justified: This is an additional blessing, signified by putting on "change of raiment," (Zech. iii. 4, 5,) and wearing beautiful robes. Here the circumstances tally. The two constituent parts of justification are severally displayed, and strongly marked. Here we have the removal of filth, and the robe of righteousness; that which frees us from being abhorred, and that which renders us accepted; which, though distinguishable in themselves, and distinguished by the sacred writer, are always united in the divine donation.

Ther. This notion is founded on a chimerical covenant, that Christ would take upon him the obedience due from man, of which there is not the least intimation in holy scripture.

Asp. That Christ undertook every thing necessary to redeem lost sinners from guilt and condemnation, every thing necessary to procure for attainted rebels a fresh title to life and glory; this cannot be reckoned chimerical. This must be as real, as that lost sinners are redeemed, or attainted rebels restored; every proof of the one proves and establishes the other. This is what we call a covenant, and, from its benign nature, the covenant of grace.

Without undertaking this, I see not how our Lord could sustain the character of a surety; nor without fulfilling it, how he could execute the office of a Redeemer. And I believe you yourself will be at a loss to show, with what kind of justice the eternal Father could "lay our iniquities," (Isa. liii. 6,) on the innocent Jesus, unless he had consented to be answerable for our guilt.

Ther. This is no answer to my objection. I said, and it has been asserted by a very eminent and able pen, that there is no intimation of any such covenant in the whole scriptures.

Asp. What then can be the meaning of those remarkable words in the prophecy of Zechariah? "The counsel of peace shall be between them both."* Here, I think, the covenant is mentioned, and the parties are specified. "The council of peace," if I mistake not, signifies the mysterious and unsearchable contrivance, formed for the recovery of ruined man—formed and carried into execution by the Lord Almighty, or God the Father, and that illustrious person who is to "build the temple and bear the glory." A character which none can claim, a task to which none is equal, but the blessed Jesus only.

In the 40th psalm, the conditions of the covenant are circumstantially recorded, which were, the incarnation and obedience of the eternal Son: "A body hast thou

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* Zech. vi. 12, 13. These two verses contain a brief, but very fine description of the Redeemer: of his person, his office, and his glory; together with the all-gracious cause, and ever-blessed fruit of our redemption.

His person: He is the man; or, as the Hebrew imports, the "real," but at the same time, the "illustrious man;" whose name is the branch, being the new origin of a new race: the father of a spiritual seed, who are children, not of the flesh, but of the promise. A branch that shall spring, not from a common root, not from any human planting, but "from under himself," being born of a pure virgin, and by the power of his own Spirit, he shall be both stock and stem to himself.

His office: it is to build the temple, the church of the elect which is the house of the living God, in which he dwells, and by whom he is worshipped, laying the foundation of this spiritual edifice in his cross, and cementing it with his blood. Which he shall rule as a king after having redeemed it as a priest: uniting the sacerdotal censer with the regal diadem, and being a priest upon his throne. Hence proceeds his glory; for he stands not, like other priests, offering daily the same oblations; but having, by one sacrifice, obtained eternal redemption for us, is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

What is the cause of these great events? What, but that most sacred and august convention, the counsel of peace? which was settled between them both; between the Lord Jehovah on one hand, and the man whose name is the Branch on the other. Called a council, from the entire consent which actuated each party, and the transcendent wisdom displayed in the whole scheme. "The council of peace," because of its sovereign efficacy to make peace with an offended God, peace in the accusing conscience, peace among people of jarring tempers and discordant principles.

prepared me. Lo! I come to do thy will." (Heb. x. 5, 7.) The accomplishment of these conditions is alleged and pleaded by our great Mediator, in the introduction to his last solemn prayer. (John xvii.) What he implores, in the process of his supplications, may be looked upon as the recompense* decreed him by the Father, and stipulated in this magnificent treaty. Implores, did I say? It is very observable, that our Lord makes a demand, rather than a request. The expression is not ἐρωτω but θελω,† a word of authority, not of supplication. He claims what by the Father's engagement, and by his own obedience, was become his unquestionable right.

Here are the parties of the covenant, the conditions of the covenant, the performance of the covenant, and the reward, which, by virtue of such performance, is merited, is claimable, is due. All this, I should imagine, amounts to an intimation, and somewhat more than an intimation of the covenant.

Ther. This you call the covenant of grace; but if we are justified by Christ's fulfilling of the law, we are justified by works. So that, before you can strike out such a way of salvation, you must contradict yourself; and, what is more adventurous, you must abolish that fundamental principle of the gospel, "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Asp. We are, I grant it, justified by works. But whose? The works of Christ, not our own. This is very far from contradicting ourselves, equally far is it from abolishing what you call the gospel-principle, which, though an undeniable truth, is not an evangelical doctrine; because it only shows us our miserable state, and the utter impossibility of relieving ourselves. Whereas, nothing is genuine gospel, but what speaks comfort, and administers recovery.

Between the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, this, I apprehend, is the difference:—By the former, man was indispensably bound to obey, in his own person: By the latter, the obedience of his surety is accepted, instead of his own. The righteousness required by both, is not sincere, but complete; not proportioned to the abilities of fallen man, but to the purity of the law, and the majesty of the Lawgiver. By this means, the glory of God, as an awful sovereign, and the glory of his law, as an inviolable system, are entirely preserved and illustriously displayed. The salvation of sinners neither clashes with the truth, nor interferes with the justice of the Supreme Legislator. On the contrary, it becomes a faithful and just procedure of the most high God, to justify "him that believeth on Jesus." (1 John i. 9.)

Ther. When you make this difference between the two covenants, where is your authority from scripture? Which of the sacred writers have taught us, that though one demanded personal, the other is content with vicarious obedience?

Asp. Which? The first three. The most eminent historian, the most enraptured poet, and the most zealous preacher. I need not inform you, that I mean Moses, David, and Paul.

The testimony of David has been already recited. Moses gives us a concise, but very instructive account of the second covenant. With whom, according to his representation, was it made? Not with Adam, or any of his posterity, but with the Lord Jesus Christ, in the room and stead of both. None of the articles are proposed to a poor, impotent, ruined creature; but the whole is consigned over to the interposing Saviour, significantly described by "the seed of the woman." It is not said, "Thy best endeavours, O Adam! thy true repentance and sincere obedience, shall retrieve this fatal miscarriage; but, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15; the Son of the Most High, by taking thy nature, submitting to thy obligations, and suffering death for thy sins, shall fully repair thy loss.

Christ, we see, undertook to execute the conditions. Christ was our representative in this great transaction. For which reason he is styled by St. Paul, "the second man," 1 Cor. xv. 48; and "the surety of a better covenant," Heb. vii. 22. Our help being laid upon one that is so mighty, upon one that is so faithful, the covenant is said to be "in all things well ordered and sure," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; admirably well ordered indeed, for the comfort of the Christian, and the security of his salvation. "It is true," may he argue, "I cannot fulfil the conditions, and it is equally true, that this is not required at my hands. The Lord Jesus Christ, of his adorably rich goodness, has performed all that was conditionary; and has established for me and for his people a valid title to the promises, the privileges, and"——

Ther. "Has thereby released me from all obligation to duty." Farewell then to our own obedience: No more occasion for any holiness of life. Nay, the sluice is opened for an inundation of ungodliness. Fine divinity truly! Should I not rather say, downright Antinomianism!

Asp. No, my friend, "Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil;" Matth. v.

* This recompense is specified and promised in another authentic copy of the same grand treaty, recorded. Isaiah xlix. 1—6.

† Not *I beg*, but *I will*. John xvii. 24. *Sic volo, sic jubeo.*

17. He has fulfilled it to the very uttermost in his own person. He has also merited for us those supplies of the Spirit, which alone can enable weak corrupt creatures to yield faithful and acceptable obedience. Though our Lord Jesus died, and was obedient "for the ungodly;" though he finds us ungodly when he justifies us; yet he never leaves his people in this abominable state. "On the contrary, he "teaches them to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts," Tit. ii. 12.

Pray, let us consider the tenor of this covenant, since you are so very apprehensive of its consequences. "I will put my laws into their minds, and on their hearts will I write them," Heb. viii. 10. "They shall discern such a beauty and glory in my precepts, as will engage their desires, and win their affections; so that it shall be no longer their burden, but their delight, even their meat and drink, to do the will of their Father in heaven."—This, this is one of the privileges purchased by our great Mediator. And it seems wondrous strange, that the purchase of an estate for you or me, should be reckoned the sure means to deprive us of the possession, or debar us from the enjoyment.

How often is this weak surmise urged as an argument? all whose plausibility is owing to a palpable mistake, or an egregious fallacy; to a supposed separation of things which are absolutely inseparable—I mean our justification and our sanctification.* You are a philosopher, Theron. Try, if you can separate gravity from the stone, or heat from the fire. If these bodies and their essential properties are indissolubly connected, so are a genuine faith and a conscientious obedience. To suppose them disunited, is as contrary to sound divinity, as it would be contrary to true philosophy if you should talk of a burning substance that has no warmth, or of a solid substance that has no weight. Never therefore, my dear friend, repeat this stale objection; never propagate this ungrounded† clamour; nor adopt a cavil which is altogether as unphilosophical as it is anti-evangelical.

Ther. We digress from the point. My principal objection is not satisfied. I was observing, that, according to your manner of stating the affair, salvation is no longer free, but founded upon works. They are the works of the law, though Christ performs them. To maintain that we are justified by these works, is to confound the difference between the law and the gospel.

Asp. Though we should admit your premises, we cannot acquiesce in your conclusion. The same righteousness by which we are justified, is both legal and evangelical: Legal, in respect to Christ, who was made under the law, that he might obey all its commands: Evangelical, in respect to us, who work not ourselves, but believe in the great Fulfiller of all righteousness. This is much of the same nature with that other momentous distinction in divinity—salvation is freely given, yet dearly bought: Freely given with regard to us; dearly bought with regard to Christ. So we are justified by works, if you look forward to our Surety; we are justified without works, if you cast a retrospective view on ourselves.

Theron was silent.—Aspasio, after a short interval, renewed the discourse. I know not whether my friend is yielding to my arguments, or searching after objections; deliberating upon a capitulation, or mustering his forces for a fresh sally. However, let me take this opportunity of dropping a hint, and suggesting a caution.

The grand reason which inclines some people to reject this comfortable doctrine lies concealed, if not in an absolute disbelief of our Lord's eternal glory and Godhead, yet in unsettled apprehensions of it, or an habitual inattention to it. If our Saviour was not really God, as some writers, unhappily mistaking themselves, endeavour to persuade the world, it would be a reasonable practice, and entirely consistent with their scheme, to disavow the imputation of his righteousness: Because, upon such a supposition, his obedience was no more than bounden duty; in which there could not be the least pretence to merit, and which could be profitable to none but himself. Whereas, if we verily believe him to be the incarnate God, his submission to the law becomes an act of voluntary humi-

* See Isa. xlv. 24; 1 Cor. i. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 11; where these blessings walk hand in hand, and never were, never will, never can be parted.

† This puts me in mind of what Theodorus replied to Philocles; who was often insinuating, that he preached licentious doctrine, because he enlarged with peculiar assiduity upon faith in Jesus Christ; and frequently chose such texts as, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."

"I preach salvation by Jesus Christ; and give me leave to ask, whether you know what salvation by Christ means?"———Philocles paused. He began to blush; would have eluded the question, and declined an answer. "No, said Theodorus, "you must permit me to insist upon a reply. Because, if it be a right one, it will justify me and my conduct; if it be a wrong one, it will prove that you blame you know not what; and have more reason to inform yourself, than to censure others."

This disconcerted him still more, upon which Theodorus proceeded; Salvation by Christ means, not only a deliverance from the guilt, but also from the power of sin. "He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity; redeem us from our vain conversation," as well as deliver us from the wrath to come. Go now, Philocles, and tell the world, that by teaching these doctrines, I promote the cause of licentiousness. And you will be just as rational, just as candid, just as true, as if you should affirm, that the firemen, by playing the engine, and pouring in water, burnt your house to the ground and laid your furniture in ashes.

liation. Which circumstance, together with the transcendent dignity of his person, render his obedience, not meritorious only, but inexpressibly and infinitely meritorious.

As the blood of Christ is called God's "own blood," (Acts xx. 28.) so the obedience of Christ was performed in the person of that adorable Mediator, "who is God over all," (Rom. ix. 5.) He acted through the whole course of his life, and suffered death at the last, not merely as a man, but as God-man; as Jehovah Jesus; Emmanuel. Let me entreat you to remember, nay let me entreat you never to forget this all-important article of our faith. And may the Spirit of wisdom give us an understanding to know the weighty, the extensive influence, of so glorious a truth!

Ther. Far be it from me to derogate from the dignity of our Saviour's person, or to depreciate the merits of his mediatorial office. Place them as high as words can reach, exalt them as far as thought can soar, I stedfastly believe you will still fall short, immeasurably short, of their real worth. But this consideration seems to increase the absurdity of your notion: For if Christ's righteousness, his very righteousness be imputed, then the true believers are altogether as righteous as Christ himself; whereas, if you maintain that his righteousness is imputed only as to its effects, you will keep clear of this rock.

Asp. This, I apprehend, will be like keeping clear of Scylla only to fall foul upon Charybdis. What are the effects of the Mediator's righteousness? Pardon of sin, justification of our persons, and the sanctification of our nature. Shall we say, these effects, these benefits are imputed? To talk of their imputation, I think, is an affront to sound sense; as, I am sure, to be put off with their imputation, would be a fatal disappointment of our hopes. All these benefits are, not imputed but imparted; they are not reckoned to us, but are really enjoyed by us: ours they are, not barely in the divine estimation, but by proper and personal possession.

Yet it does by no means follow, that believers are altogether as righteous as Christ himself, unless you can prove, that to be the receiver is, in all respects, the same as to be the author and finisher. (Heb. xii. 2.) The righteousness of Christ arises wholly from himself, the source of ours subsists in another. Christ's righteousness is originally and absolutely his own; whereas it is made ours in a way of favour and gracious imputation. Circumstances these, which create a material difference, which yield room for a vast pre-eminence.

Ther. But if Christ's perfect obedience be accounted ours, methinks we should have no more need of pardoning mercy than Christ himself.

Asp. Yes; because, before this imputation, we were sunk in guilt, and dead in sins; because, after it, we are defective in our duty, and in many things offend.

Ther. Does not this doctrine render the intercession of our Saviour superfluous? What occasion have they for an advocate with the Father, whose righteousness has neither blemish nor imperfection?

Asp. They stand in need of an advocate, first, that they may be brought home to "the Repairer of their breaches," (Isaiah lviii. 12,) and made partakers of his righteousness by a living faith: next, that their faith may be preserved, notwithstanding all opposition, stedfast and immoveable; or rather, may be carried on victorious and triumphant, even to the end.

Ther. You say, "Christ performed all that was conditionary;" then he repented for us, and believed for us. This must be admitted in pursuance of your principles: But this is so wild a notion, so contrary to reason and scripture, that to mention it is to refute it.

Asp. Christ performed whatever was required by the covenant of works, both before it was violated, and after it had been transgressed. But neither repentance nor faith were comprehended in this institution. It knew nothing of the one, and it would not admit of the other. It was not therefore necessary, neither indeed was it possible, for our spotless and divine Lord to repent of sin or believe in a Saviour. But he did unspeakably more, "He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. ix. 26.) He is himself the Saviour of all the ends of the earth: and he has power to bestow that blessed Spirit, which worketh faith, and produceth repentance.

Ther. However, from what you have advanced, this will unavoidably follow.—That a man is to be justified under the character of a notorious transgressor of the law, and justified under the character of a sinless observer of the law. And what is this but a glaring inconsistency?

Asp. Not at all inconsistent, but absolutely needful, if we consider those distinct branches of the divine law, the perceptive and the penal; both which, in case of guilt already contracted, must necessarily be satisfied. Not at all inconsistent, but perfectly harmonious, if we take in the two constituent parts of justification—the acquittance from guilt and a title to life. The former supposes us to be transgressors of the law; and such the highest saints in the world are. The latter requires us to be observers of the law; and such must the inheritors of heaven be. Much less is this inconsistent, if we consider believers in

their personal and relative capacity; as they are in themselves, and as they are in their Surety. Notorious transgressors in themselves, they have a sinless obedience in Christ. The consciousness of that will be an everlasting motive to humility; the belief of this, an inexhaustible source of joy.

All this is no more inconsistent than the union of a gloomy contexture and a lightsome splendour, in those detached clouds which float amidst the firmament. In themselves, they are a louring and dark collection of vapours; by the impression of the sun-beams, they are fair and bright as the polished silver.

Ther. After all, the imputation taught in scripture is not the imputation of Christ's righteousness, but of our own faith. Agreeably to the apostle's express declaration, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 3.)

Asp. This objection admits the thing in dispute, though it controverts the way and manner of obtaining it; admits the necessity of some active, positive righteousness, in order to our justification. In this particular, I am glad to agree with my Theron; and in this particular, I believe the generality of serious people agree with us both. Whenever their consciences are awakened, and seek to establish the hope of eternal life, they constantly turn their eyes to some righteousness, which they apprehend may, either in whole or in part, answer the demands of the law. Some look to their own sincere obedience; others call in to their succour works of supererogation. My friend would assign this office to his faith.

Ther. Is this a proper answer to my objection, Aspasio? The text is point-blank against your tenet. You do wisely therefore not to confront, but to elude the evidence.

Asp. I did not intend it for an answer; only as an occasional observation, which nevertheless has a pretty close connexion with the subject. Neither would I use so mean a subterfuge, as to elude an argument which I could not confute. If my friend had allowed me leisure to explain myself, this should have been my reply.

That a man is not justified by works, is a position most clearly demonstrated, and a doctrine most zealously inculcated by St. Paul. That faith is a work * exerted by the human mind, is equally certain. Unless, therefore, we would render the apostle inconsistent with himself, we must understand the passage in a qualified sense. Why should we not suffer him to be his own interpreter? why should we not take the narrative of his experience for a comment on his doctrine? He declares, that the ground of his own comfort, the cause of his own justification, was not the grace of faith, but the "righteousness which is of God by faith;" Phil. iii. 9; not the act of believing, but that grand and glorious object of a sinner's belief, "the Lord our righteousness."

Besides, what was that faith of Abraham to which the apostle refers, and which he proposes as the invariable model of our justification? It was faith in the promised seed—in Jesus Christ the righteous.* It was a firm persuasion, that this illustrious person should spring from his loins, and be the author of forgiveness, acceptance, and salvation to himself, and to a multitude of believers numberless as the stars of heaven. Let us tread in these steps of the holy patriarch, and we shall ascribe little, ascribe nothing to our faith, but all to the infinitely excellent obedience of our Redeemer.

Ther. Sure, Aspasio, you will not presume to correct inspiration! The inspired writer makes no mention of a Redeemer's obedience. He says expressly and positively, "It," that is, Abraham's faith, and not any thing else, "was counted unto him for righteousness."

Asp. True, Theron; as those windows are reckoned, are counted the lights of your house. Why? Because they illuminate? No; but because they afford a passage to the illuminating rays. Through them, the first and best of elements is diffused into all your habitation. So "we are saved by grace through faith," by grace imputing, through faith accepting, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Grace is the magnificent source of this nobler light, faith is the means of transmitting it into all the faculties of the soul.

When our Lord declares to the diseased woman, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," Matth. ix. 22, how are we to understand his words? That the patient's belief, and not the agency of Christ, wrought the cure? To suppose this, would be extremely derogatory to the power of our great Physician. And if we ascribe justification to the act of believing, this will be equally derogatory to the obedience of our great Mediator. In the former case, Christ and his omnipotent operation were all in all. In the latter case, Christ and his infinite merit are all in all. In both cases, faith is the only eye to discern, or the hand to receive, the sovereign good.

I would farther observe, that faith is very particularly distinguished from the righte-

* So it is called by Him, who knew what was in man, and what were the differences of things; "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," John vi. 29.

* Compare Gen. xv. 5, 6, with Gal. iii. 16.

ousness which justifies. We read of the righteousness which is by faith, which is of faith. Rom. ix. 30. Phil. iii. 9. This form of expression puts an apparent difference between the evangelical faith and the evangelical righteousness; since whatever is by another, and of another, cannot, without the greatest violence to reason and language, be reckoned that other.—If faith was the cause of our acceptance with God, then we should be justified by a righteousness which is confessedly imperfect: For who has ever attained to the highest degree of this virtue? or whose faith is not mixed with an alloy of unbelief? If faith itself was the matter of our justification, I see not how boasting could be excluded; how the law could be magnified; or what reason the apostle could have to account all things, but the righteousness of Christ, meaner than dross. Phil. iii. 8.

Say not, that we presume to correct inspiration: we only interpret the inspired word in an harmonious consistency with itself. This sense is agreeable to the prevailing doctrine, and to the current language of scripture. To the prevailing doctrine; which is "a believing in him who justifieth the ungodly." Sift and examine this expression, "him who justifieth." You will find that the work is Christ's; Christ's and no other's. The Holy Ghost assigns not the least share, not so much as a co-efficiency, to any other cause. Faith, therefore, if it presumes to arrogate this exalted prerogative, or if it pretends to the least part in this important business, is a sacrilegious usurper. To the current language; as when God is called our fear; Gen. xxxi. 42, 53; our hope; Psalm lxxi. 5. Jer. xiv. 8; our joy. Psalm xliii. 4. In these places, the act is undoubtedly put for the object: So, in the passage before us, the act must denote the object of faith. It is to be understood, not absolutely, but as some divines speak, objectively, instrumentally, relatively.

Ther. In the name of wonder, what can you mean by this heap of harsh and obscure expressions? Let me entreat you, Aspasio, to speak in your own style, not in the dialect of Aquinas. I have an irreconcilable aversion to these scholastic terms: They are the barbarisms of divinity: I know but one use they are fitted to serve; that is, to perplex and puzzle a cause you cannot maintain: Somewhat like the liquor which a certain fish, when closely pursued, is said to emit, by which the water is darkened, and the foe eluded.

Asp. This, Theron, is the meaning of our uncouth phrases: It is not faith itself which justifies; but that righteousness which faith continually views, which faith delightfully apprehends, and on which it finally terminates.

To be plainer still; we are justified by faith, in the same manner as we are fed by the hand, or as we are said to drink of a cup. Neither the hand nor the cup are the cause of our sustenance, but the instruments; one of conveying it, the other of receiving it.* If an apostle affirms, "We are justified by faith;" faith itself declares, "in the Lord I have righteousness." Put these passages together, and you will have the true sense of our doctrine, and the true doctrine of the gospel.

When Themistocles fled from the malice of his own countrymen, what recommended him to the protection of king Admetus?—Not his name; that was obnoxious.—Not his actions; they had been hostile.—But the person of the young prince, whom the distressed refugee caught up in his arms; and charged with these credentials, presented himself to the royal parent.† So faith recommends to God, and justifies the soul, not for itself or its own worth; but on account of what it presents, and what it pleads.

Ther. Is not this a fanciful distinction, and an excessive refinement? Has it any foundation in scripture?

Asp. It is implied in almost all the representations of Christ, and all the descriptions of faith, which occur in the sacred writings.

Christ is likened to clothing; and believers are said to "have put on Christ," Gal. iii. 27. Now it cannot be the act of putting on, that covers our bodies, or keeps them warm; but the commodious garment which is wore.—He is compared to bread: "I am the bread of life." John vi. 35. Shall we say, it is the act of eating which strengthens the constitution, and recruits our spirits? No surely; but the food eaten and digested. Christ was typified by the "cities of refuge," Num. xxxv. 13, and sinners, by the obnoxious manslayer; who, if he fled to one of those privileged abodes,

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* Though I am entirely of Theron's mind, and can by no means admire our scholastic divines, or their logical terms, yet, a remark from Paræus, couched in this style, is so pertinent to the purpose, and so full an explication of the point, that it would be an injury to the cause, not to make it a part of my notes. And some readers, I apprehend, not much acquainted with this old-fashioned dialect, may be well enough pleased to view a specimen; may like it, as they do the rust of a medal, merely for its uncouthness and antiquity.

"Faith justifies," says my author, "not effectively, as working an habitual righteousness in us, not materially, as though it were itself the constituent cause of our justification; but it justifieth objectively, as it apprehendeth Christ; and instrumentally, as it applieth his righteousness."

† This, saith Plutarch, was a custom peculiar to that country; was reckoned the most solemn method of supplicating favour: and seldom met with a repulse. To which I may add, it is a custom that Christians should imitate, in all their addresses to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. When thus used, thus improved, it will never fail of success.

and there remained, was safe. No prosecution against him could be valid. He had nothing to fear from the avenger of blood. In this case, was it the bare act of flying that screened the criminal? By no means. This conveyed him to a place of security. But the place itself was his sanctuary, his asylum, his safeguard.

Faith is styled a receiving of Christ: "As many as received him, to them gave he power," or granted the privilege, "to become the sons of God." (John i. 12.) The office of faith is, according to this definition, not to contribute its quota, much less to deposit the whole sum, but to take and use the inestimable gift.—Faith is called "a looking unto Jesus, Heb. xii. 2. in allusion, I suppose, to the famous expedient provided for the wounded Israelites. Num. xxi. 8. Our crucified Lord was prefigured by the brazen serpent; our guilt by the stings of the fiery serpents; and our faith by looking to the miraculous remedy. Did the healing power, I would ask, reside in the mere act of viewing? No; but in the emblem of a dying Saviour, elevated on the pole, and ordained for the recovery of the people. Here all the efficacy was lodged. From hence it was all derived. The action of the eye, like the office of faith, was only to fetch home, and apply the sanative virtue.

Once more: faith is represented, as "laying hold" on God our Saviour; Isa. xxvii. 5; "leaning" upon our Beloved, Cant. viii. 5; "cleaving" to the Lord, Acts xi. 23. Please to take notice of yonder vine. Its shoots are weak, and its branches are flimsy. Being absolutely unable to support themselves, they are furnished with a very remarkable set of claspers; which, like so many fingers, lay hold on the pegs of the wall, or fasten themselves to the poles within their reach. Without such a provision, the boughs must lie prostrate on the ground, and be exposed to the insults of every foot; whereas, by this kind contrivance of nature, so creeping a plant will climb into the air and enjoy the breeze; so feeble a plant will stand out the winter, and defy the storms.—An instructive admonition to sinners; and no contemptible illustration of faith, especially in its principal and most distinguishing employ. Thus let us apprehend the blessed Jesus, hold us fast by our adored Redeemer, cleave to his ineffable worthiness, as those twining tendrils, by repeated circumvolutions, adhere to their substantial supporters; then shall we rise, by "merits not our own," from the most abject and miserable condition, to a state of everlasting honour and joy.

Ther. Some people, I believe, would hardly forbear smiling at the peculiarity of your diction, and might be inclined to call your discourse canting, rather than reasoning. For my own part, I must acknowledge, that as all your peculiar phrases are derived from the scriptures, I hear them with reverence, rather than any disposition to sneer. Was my friend delivering a Latin oration, it would be a sufficient warrant for any of his expressions to prove that they came from the Ciceronian mint: And will it not be, at least, an equally sufficient authority for any modes of speech used in a theological essay, to allege that they bear the stamp of the Bible?

Though I make no objection to your language, I have yet another scruple with regard to your doctrine.—Do the ancient fathers adopt or inculcate this imputed righteousness? If it was so important an article of our faith, surely it could not be unknown in those early ages which were so near the apostolical fountain. It would not have been omitted by those zealous preachers, who chose to endure all the rigours of persecution rather than renounce their holy profession.

Asp. I think it were sufficient to answer this question by asking another. Do the apostles, does the holy Spirit of God speaking in scripture, inculcate this doctrine, or display this privilege? If so, we need not be very solicitous for any farther authority. "To the law and to the testimony," (Isa. viii. 20.) is our grand, our final appeal. Amidst all the darkness and uncertainty, which evidently run through the writings of the best of men, this is our unspeakable happiness, that "we have a more sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed." (2 Pet. i. 19.)

However, to be a little more particular: It cannot be expected that we should find many passages in those pious authors, very strong and very explicit upon the point; because in their days it was not so professedly opposed, and therefore could not be so exactly discussed as in the latter ages. Nevertheless, they have left enough behind them to avouch the substance of what we assert, "That a man is not justified by any works, duties, or righteousness of his own, but only by faith in Jesus Christ." I cannot say that I have charged my memory with their very words, and for that reason must not attempt at present to make any citation. But, when a proper opportunity offers, and their works are before me, I may possibly produce a few of their testimonies.

In the mean time, I can mention a set of writers, whose attestation will, I imagine, carry as much weight with my friend, as the united voice of the Greek and Latin fathers.

Ther. Who are they?

Asp. Our venerable reformers. The homilies composed by those excellent divines, are as express to my purpose as they are

unexceptionable in their evidence. This is their language: "The true understanding of this doctrine, We be justified freely by faith without works, is not, that this our act to believe, or this our faith in Christ, doth justify us, for that were to count ourselves to be justified by some act or virtue that is within ourselves. But the true meaning thereof is, that although we hear God's word, and believe it; although we have hope and faith, charity and repentance, and do never so many good works; yet we must renounce the merit of all our virtues and good deeds, as things that be far too weak and insufficient to deserve remission of sin, and our justification. We must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offered for us upon the cross."

The homily subjoins a very opposite illustration, which may conclude our discourse with perfect propriety, and I hope with equal efficacy. "So that as St. John Baptist, although he were never so virtuous and godly a man, yet in the matter of forgiving sin, he did put the people from him, and appoint them unto Christ, saying thus unto them, "Behold!" yonder is the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," even so, as great and as godly a virtue as the lively faith is, yet it putteth us from itself, and remitteth us unto Christ, for to have only by him remission of sins, or justification. So that our faith in Christ, as it were, saith unto us thus, It is not that I take away your sins, but it is Christ only? and to him only I send you for that purpose, forsaking therein all your good words, thoughts, and works. And only putting your trust in Christ."*

Ther. If there be any tolerable sense of the notion under debate, I think it must be understood as follows:—Christ's performance of the law of his mediation, or, in other words, his unsinning obedience to the moral law, and the spotless sacrifice of himself to the vindictive justice of God; these are the only valuable considerations on account of which the gracious God restores guilty creatures to a state of acceptance with his divine majesty.

Asp. I am far from denying your proposition: I rejoice in the propriety of my Theron's sentiments. May his faith, which is thus far advanced, be carried on by grace, till it is completed in glory! That unsinning obedience, and that spotless sacrifice, are indeed the only valuable, they are also the truly, or rather the infinitely valuable consideration, which has fully merited for us the remission of sins, and the enjoyment of life; and this not only from the gracious, but even from the just, the faithful, the righteous God.

But then, they must be imputed, in order to furnish us with a claim, and invest us with a right to the purchased privileges. Suppose them not imputed, and what becomes of our interest in them? They are like a medicine prepared but not applied. Suppose them imputed, and they lay a firm, an apparent, a rational foundation, for every pleasing hope, and for every heavenly blessing.

Ther. I fear I have acknowledged too much.—My thoughts fluctuate. My mind is unsettled. I would not withstand the truth, I would not disbelieve any doctrine of the gospel. Yet, what shall I say? While I listen to your reasoning, I am half a convert. When I recollect the objections, I revert to my first opinion.

Of this, however, I am convinced, that human righteousness is insufficient for our justification. Here your arguments have carried their point. I shall henceforth place my hopes of everlasting happiness, not upon any works of my own, but upon the free-goodness and unbounded beneficence of the Supreme Being, pursuant to that maxim of Scripture, "The gift of God is eternal life."

Asp. You do right, Theron, to expect eternal life, as the gift of God, not as the wages of your own obediential service. But be pleased to remember, that all the gifts of grace, though perfectly free to sinners, are founded upon a grand and inestimable price paid by their Saviour. Are they entirely absolved from guilt? It is because Christ gave his life for their ransom? Are they heard with acceptance when they pray? It is because their exalted High Priest intercedes in their behalf.—Are they completely justified, and instated in endless bliss? It is because their Redeemer's consummate obedience is the glorious equivalent for this and every other blessing.—Therefore, when you mention eternal life as the gift of God, you should not forget to add with the holy apostle, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi. 20.) Well, my Theron, what say you farther? Is your quiver emptied? Are your scruples satisfied? May I interpret this silence as an act of assent?

Ther. Observe how the ranunculuses on yonder gay parterre have contracted their spreading tufts, and the tulips have closed their expanded cups, while all the neighbouring flowers have shut their ivory doors, or drawn their velvet curtains. Such is the state of my thoughts. They are all bent inwards, collected in themselves, and pondering upon your discourse, which has inclined me, before I was aware, to contemplate rather than talk. You will excuse my thoughtfulness, Aspasio; or, if it wants

* See the second part of the Homily on Salvation.

an apology, you must blame yourself, for, had your reasons been less cogent, my attention had been more disengaged.

Asp. My dear Theron, I shall only wish, in allusion to your own simile, and in the language of the best of books, that these truths may "distil as the dew," upon your mind, (Deut. xxxii. 2,) and "lie all night upon your branches." (Job xxix. 19.) This, I am persuaded, is the only way to have all your comforts "green before the sun," and all your virtues "flourish as an herb:" whereas, under the influence of any other faith, I am afraid they will be as the garden that is visited with a drought, or as the leaves that are smitten with a blast.

Ther. I shall attentively consider, both your doctrine, and your arguments; which, that I may execute with more ease, and to better purpose, be pleased to sum up, in a few words, the substance of what has passed. This done, it will be time to withdraw. The flowers, you see, are our monitors. They have folded up their robes, and veiled their beauties: A custom which they seldom use till the rising damps render it unsafe for their master to be among them, and the surrounding gloom renders it difficult for his eye to distinguish them.

Asp. You could not oblige me more, than by giving me such a command. We trust for salvation,

Not on our own external duties. This were to build our house upon the sand; which, when the rains descend, when the torrents pour, when the winds blow with tempestuous violence, will certainly fall, and bury the builder, with all his vain hopes, in irretrievable ruin.

Not on the sincerity of our hearts. This, if opposed to Christ, and made the rival of his merits, will be a "despised broken idol." Despised by the infinitely sublime and majestic Ruler of the world. Broken, with regard to the stress we lay, or the confidence we repose, on so deceitful a prop. No more able to stand in the judgment of the great day, than Dagon was able to maintain his station before the ark of the Lord God of Hosts. (1 Sam. v. 3, 4.)

Not upon our faith. This is often weak, as the rickety child: sometimes quite faint, like a person in a deep swoon; always imperfect, like every other performance of ours. Alas! to what afflicting fears, to what grievous despondency should I, for my part, be perpetually liable, if my own faith was the ground of my justification? Blessed be the Father of mercies! we have a surer support. Not upon faith, not upon faith, but upon its gracious Author, and glorious object, is the hope of Israel founded. Yet,

Not upon our Lord's righteousness, considered only as passive; but upon his active and passive obedience united: all that he did in conformity to the commands of the law, and all that he suffered, in submission to its penalty. Both which, immensely dignified by his divine nature, are a basis for our faith which nothing can shake, are a foundation for our affiance, which can never be removed. Nothing else, in any creature, or in all worlds, could expiate the least sin. This not only expiates all sin, but gives a title to every blessing—to the blessings of grace and of glory, of evangelical holiness and everlasting happiness.

DIALOGUE XI.

Asp. I HAVE often purposed, and as often forgot, to ask my Theron what picture he was so attentively surveying, when I stole unperceived upon him in this favourite arbour.*

Ther. I was indulging a pensive pleasure, in viewing the ruins and contemplating the fate of Babylon—that renowned and opulent city! once the residence of the Assyrian monarchs, and capital of one of the greatest empires in the world. The draught I held in my hand represented some of its remains. And indeed this was the very last subject which employed my thoughts. In the morning my son brought me his observations upon the scene, which I have just now been revising.

For I frequently set him to exercise his judgment or display his fancy on remarkable passages which occur in history He was lately commissioned to determine a controversy between the illustrious Leonidas and the less celebrated Pædaretus. This was the point in debate.—Which of them discovered the truest generosity of spirit, and the most heroic love of their country? The former, who willingly sacrificed his life in its defence? or the latter, who, when he was candidate for a seat among the three hundred, and lost his election, instead of being chagrined or dissatisfied, went home, unfeignedly rejoicing, "that there were found in Sparta, three hundred men, more worthy than himself?" The task of this day was, to give a descriptive picture of those wonderful ruins.

Asp. Pray let me have the pleasure of hearing the young gentleman's performance.

Ther. It will be too long, and too puerile; tire your patience, and offend your taste.

Asp. I do not use to make either of these complaints, when I am entertained with Theron's compositions; and, as the son has so much of his father's genius, I

* See Dialogue V.

am not at all apprehensive of any such disappointment. We have a most agreeable situation, and more than an hour's leisure: I must therefore repeat my request.

Ther. It is true, I have retouched the sketch, which may render it somewhat more tolerable. And since you persist in your demand, I will read the paper. Only desiring some allowance for a little luxuriancy of imagination, which, in young writers it may be advisable to indulge rather than repress, as age and judgment will probably come with the pruning knife, and make the proper retrenchments. I must farther observe, that contrary to the custom which prevails in our schools, I generally choose to have him express his sentiments in English; because it is in this language he must communicate his own, and become acquainted with the ideas of others; because, to acquire some good degree of propriety and fluency in this his native tongue, will be incomparably more serviceable, than to speak Latin with the Tarentine elegance, or to write it with the Ciceronian copiousness.

Is this Babylon? the glory of kingdoms! the beauty of the Chaldean excellency!

Where once the gorgeous east, with richest hand,
Shower'd on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.

How is she fallen! fallen from the height of magnificence into the abyss of confusion! What was once the object of universal admiration, is now a spectacle of astonishment and horror.

The palace, where majesty sat enthroned, like some terrestrial deity, is a heap of rubbish; no longer distinguished by an air of superior elegance, but by stronger and more melancholy marks of departed dignity.* Where the nobles of that sumptuous court trailed along the marble pavement their robes of purple and embroidery, there the crested snake hisses, or the fierce envenomed adder glides.

How changed is the hospitable hall, and how disgraced the room of state! The first afforded a constant and cordial reception to the welcome guests; in the last the great king gave audience to his cringing, his adoring vassals. Now thorns overrun the circumference, and "desolation sits in the threshold of them both!" Where are the roofs of ivory, painted with vermillion and adorned with sculpture? the radiant roofs, whose lamps of burnished silver, pendent in many a blazing row, yielded light as from another sky? Swept from their foundations, they lie clotted with defiling dirt, or clasped with tangling briers. Music no longer pours her harmony through the spacious and extended apartment; but the night-owl, nestling in some cleft of the ruins, screams her harsh and portentous dissonance. Joy no longer leads up the sprightly dance amidst the lustre of that artificial day; but the solitary bat flits in silent circles, or flaps her sooty wings. All those gay delights, let the sons of sensuality hear the tale, and take warning from the catastrophe!—all those gay delights are extinguished, like one of their feeblest tapers, which, having illuminated for a while the festive assembly, shone itself to the edges of the exhausted socket, and, in a moment flashed into stench and darkness.

The walls, though cemented with bitumen,* and consolidated into the firmness of a flint, are become like the broken bubble. There was a time when the inhabitants, confiding in the strength of their bulwarks and the multitude of their towers, looked down with fearless disdain on the army of besiegers. But now the prophet's threatening is most terribly fulfilled: "The fortress of the high fort of thy walls hath he brought down, laid low, and brought to the ground, even to the dust," Isa. xxv. 12. —Where are the gates, the grand and glittering gates,† which admitted the triumphant hosts, or poured forth their numerous legions against the day of battle? Not one trace remains to tell the inquisitive stranger, "Here the spacious avenues opened; here the massy portals rose. Commodious walks, in which the clustering merchants raised the busy hum, and planned the schemes of commerce; ample streets, in which industry drove the toiling car, or smote the sounding anvil, are shrouded with matted grass, or buried beneath the rankest weeds. Silence, in both places, a sullen silence reigns; and inactivity, a death-like inactivity slumbers.

What is become of those hanging gardens, which, for curious contrivance and stupendous workmanship were never equalled in any nation under heaven? Terraces that overlooked the tallest houses! Parterres exalted to the clouds, and opening their flowery beauties in that strange region! Groves, whose very roots were higher than

* Benjamin, a Jew of Tudela, in his Itinerary, written about the year of our Lord 1170, tells us, "That he was upon the place where this city formerly stood, and found it wholly desolated and destroyed. Only some ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's palace were still remaining, but men were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many serpents and scorpions that were then in the place."

* The walls were built of brick, and cemented with a glutinous kind of slime, which binds more firmly than any mortar, and soon grows harder than the bricks or stones themselves.

† There were no less than an hundred gates, all of solid brass. Hence it is, that when Jehovah promises to make Cyrus master of Babylon, he speaks in this very remarkable and particularizing manner, "I will break in pieces before thee the gates of brass," Isa. xlv. 2.

the tops of the loftiest trees!—they are now smitten by a dreadful blast. Their beauty is decayed, like a withered leaf. Their very being is gone, "like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, which the wind carrieth away, and its place is nowhere found." Dan. ii. 35. What was once the favourite retreat of a queen, and the admiration of the whole world, is now a nest for poisonous reptiles, and a kennel for ravenous beasts.—The traveller, instead of expatiating with delight where this pensile paradise flourished, is struck with horror, keeps at a trembling distance, and, surveying the rueful spot, cries out, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true are thy judgments!"

Here stands an obelisk, maimed by the stroke of revolving years, like a mountain-oak shattered by the flaming bolt. Another, all unhinged and quite disjointed, seems to tremble before every blast that blows. There the pyramid,* firm as the solid rock, and stable, one would have thought, as the everlasting hills, wrenched from its mighty base, is tumbled headlong in enormous ruin, and has crushed many a structure by its fall.—See yonder the triumphal arch, which exhibited through its extensive and beautiful bend an advantageous view of the firmament. It was once the graceful memorial of some celebrated victory; it is now converted into a trophy of a very different kind. Just retaining two uneven, battered, ragged stumps, it serves to recognise the destructive ravages of time. Spires that pierced the clouds, and shot into the skies, are levelled with the trodden soil. On pinnacles, to which the strong-winged bird could hardly soar, the grovelling worm crawls, and the sordid snail leaves her slimy tract. Baths that contained the translucent wave, and were so often perfumed with odoriferous unguents, are choaked with filth: the grand colonnade that surrounded them is shivered to pieces, and the elevated dome that covered them is dashed to the ground. The public aqueducts, which conveyed cleanliness and health along their crystal currents, are degenerated into a stagnating lake, while croaking vermin swarm among the weeds, and noisome exhalations steam from the mire.

August and stately temples that seemed to affect the neighbourhood of heaven,† are sunk to the very dust.—Who can point the spot where the consecrated victim bled, or the sacred fire glowed? where the sceptered image lifted its majestic head, or the venerating crowds bowed the suppliant knee?* Degrading are those splendid vanities, and cast (according to the denunciation of the sacred oracles) "to the bats and to the moles." Isa. ii. 20. All is low; low as the spurious dignity of the idols they complimented; low "as the straw that is trodden down for the dunghill," Isa. xxv. 10.

Sepulchres, the once venerable repositories of the dead, awful mansions destined to everlasting concealment, are cleft and rent asunder. They disclose the horrid secrets of the pit, and frightfully yawn upon the blasted day. Possibly some ravenous creature lurks within, that has already rifled the tomb of its hero, given the putrid bones a new grave, and waits only for the approach of night to repeat his funeral dirge in yells. Inscriptions, designed to perpetuate some illustrious character, or eternize some heroic deed, are blended in the promiscuous mass. In vain would the prying antiquary search for a legible or consistent sentence; in vain attempt to find the memorable names of a Nebuchadnezzar or a Nimrod. These, though engraven on plates of brass, or cut in blocks of marble, are lost amidst the stupendous lumber, as prints on the unsteady sand are effaced when returning tides smooth the furrowed beach.

Here and there a straggling cypress rises, as it were, with funereal solemnity amidst the waste.† Somewhat like the black plumes nodding over the mournful hearse, they augment the sadness of the scene, and throw a deeper horror on all below. No human voice is heard, nor human face seen, amidst these desolated heaps; too dreary even for the roam of hoary hermit, or the cell of gloomy monk. Abandoned they are, totally abandoned, to the dominion of solitude, or else to the unmolested resort of shaggy monsters, and feathered hags, which stun the midnight hours; these with their importunate shrieks; those with their execrable howls.

See to what a despicable, what an abhorred state, the proudest monuments of earthly grandeur, and the most costly apparatus for earthly felicity, may be reduced!

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* Strabo calls the temple of Belus a pyramid, lib. 15.

† A tower in the temple of Belus, and dedicated to his worship, was very high. It consisted of eight piles of building erected one above another. It arose to the elevation of six hundred feet perpendicular, and is thought, by the learned Bochart, to have been part of that superb work which was begun when the whole earth was of one language; but miscarried, or rather was providentially defeated, by the confusion of tongues. In this structure, there were doubtless very strong traces of that arrogant boast, "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven." Gen. xi. 4.

* Alluding to that prodigious instance of profuseness, ostentation and idolatrous madness, "The golden image set up in the plain of Dura, whose height (that is the height of the statue and pedestal taken together) was threescore cubits," Dan. iii. 1.

† Rauwolf, a German traveller, who passed that way in the year of our Lord 1574, says, "This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare, that I should have doubted whether the potent Babylon did stand there, if I had not known it by several ancient and delicate antiquities that are still standing hereabout in great desolation."

A pregnant and alarming proof, that, for lasting honour, or real happiness,

"They build too low, who build beneath the skies."

Asp. I very much approve the choice of your subject. The ruins of Persepolis would have given us a view of magnificence in abasement: The ruins of Palmyra might have showed us elegance in the dust: But the ruins of Babylon display, at once, magnificence and elegance under an eclipse, Scripture and revelation in their glory.—The utter destruction of this city, which was absolutely unequalled in every instance of dignity, and seemingly invincible by any enemy, must certainly have been looked upon as the most improbable of events. Nevertheless, its utter destruction was decreed by Jehovah, and denounced by his prophet, several ages before the execution took place. The awful sentence was not only denounced, but recorded, and is still remaining, in the public archives of our religion.

Ther. Where is this sentence recorded, and remaining?

Asp. In the prophecy of Isaiah; and not only recorded, but in the most circumstantial manner, and with a minute detail of the horrible desolations. These are the words of the inspired writer: "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces." Isa. xiii. 19—22.

In the two first sentences is comprised the most finished picture of prosperity and grandeur. "The glory of kingdoms;" beyond every other royal seat, spacious, ornamented, and wealthy; revered by many conquered and tributary dominions as their mistress and their sovereign. The beauty of the Chaldees' excellency:" the Chaldeans, who excelled all the nations of the earth in riches, in splendour, and in power, even they gloried in this wonderful city. This was the highest honour of the most illustrious, and chief strength of the most victorious people: fairest, where all was conspicuously fair; noblest, where all was supereminently noble. Yet this distinguished, this crowning city, shall, at the blasting of the breath of Jehovah, be totally, totally destroyed, even "as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

In describing the overthrow, the prophet is equally admirable, and rises, by a most judicious gradation, into all the pomp of horror: *q. d.* "Now, indeed, it is thronged with citizens; but the hour is coming, when it shall be entirely depopulated, and not so much as a single inhabitant left. Lest you should think that, in process of time, it may be re-edified, and again abound with joyful multitudes, it shall never be inhabited more; no, never be dwelt in any more, from generation to generation, but shall continue a dismal waste through all succeeding ages: A waste so dismal, that none of the neighbouring shepherds shall make their fold, or find so much as an occasional shelter for their flocks, where kings, grandees, and crowds of affluent citizens, reposed themselves in profound tranquillity. Even the rude and roving Arabian shall not venture to pitch his tent, nor be able to procure for himself the poor accommodation of a night's lodging, where millions of polite people basked in the sunshine of profuse prosperity. In short, it shall neither be habitable nor accessible but "a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and a hissing." (Jer. li. 37.) What was once the golden city, (Isaiah xiv. 4,) and the metropolis of the world, shall be an everlasting scene of desolation and horror; a fearful monument of divine vengeance, and an awful admonition to human pride."

All this is foretold in Scripture; and though to human appearance impossible, though to human apprehension incredible, was, in the appointed time, most minutely accomplished. The memorials and evidences of the accomplishment remain to this very day. They are so authentic, that the most inquisitive curiosity cannot doubt; and so incontestible, that the most bigoted incredulity will not deny. And should not this teach us to reverence the authority, to admire the wisdom, and confide in the promises, of that heavenly volume?

I know you are not fond of compliments, Theron. Therefore, instead of speaking my opinion of your son's performance, I will endeavour to return your favour. You have entertained me with an account of the most memorable ruins extant in the material world. Let me present my friend with a picture of ruins no less remarkable, far more deplorable, and unspeakably interesting to us all. I shall give it in the colouring of a great master, whose works this very day I happened to be perusing.

The passage displays a doctrine of the utmost importance in the Christian scheme, and by one of the finest pieces of imagery to be met with in elegant writing. I think it may be looked upon as a practical improvement of Eugenio's declamation. It pleased me so much that I transcribed it; and I make no apology for reading it, because I

shall expect your thanks. Only let me hint, that it considers the human soul as originally a habitation of God through the Spirit, and then, speaking of its fallen condition, proceeds:

"That he hath withdrawn himself, and left this his temple desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, that bear in their front (yet extant) that doleful inscription—HERE GOD ONCE DWELT. Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man, to show the divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity to proclaim he is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which made the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour. The golden candlestick' is displaced, and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness. The sacred incense, which sent, rolling up in clouds, its rich perfumes, is exchanged for a poisonous, hellish vapour; and here is, 'instead of a sweet savour, a stench.' The comely order of this house is turned all into confusion; the 'beauties of holiness' into 'noisome impurities;' the 'house of prayer to a den of thieves,' and that of the worst and most horrid kind; for every lust is a thief, and every theft is sacrilege. Continual rapine and robbery is committed upon holy things. The noble powers which were designed and dedicated to divine contemplation and delight, are alienated to the service of the most despicable idols, and employed into the vilest intuitions and embraces, to behold and admire lying vanities; to indulge and cherish lust and wickedness.

"There is not now a system, an entire table of coherent truths to be found, or a frame of holiness, but some shivered parcels. How many attempts have been made since that fearful fall and ruin of this fabric, to compose again the truths of so many several kinds into their distinct orders, and make up frames of science or useful knowledge! and, after so many ages, nothing is finished in any kind. Sometimes truths are misplaced, and what belongs to one kind is transferred to another, where it will not fitly match; sometimes falsehood inserted, which shatters or disturbs the whole frame. And what with much fruitless pains is done by one hand, is dashed in pieces by another; and it is the work of a following age to sweep away the fine-spun cobwebs of a former. And those truths which are of greatest use, are least regarded; their tendency and design are overlooked, or, they are loosened and torn off, that they cannot be wrought in, so as to take hold of the soul; but hover, as faint ineffectual notions, that signify nothing. Its very fundamental powers are shaken and disjointed, and their order towards one another confounded and broken: So that what is judged considerable, is not considered; what is recommended as eligible and lovely, is not loved and chosen. Yea, the truth which is after godliness, is not so much disbelieved, as hated, held in unrighteousness; and shines as too feeble a 'light,' in that malignant darkness, which 'comprehends it not.' You come amidst all this confusion, as into the ruined palace of some great prince, in which you see here the fragments of a noble pillar, there the shattered pieces of some curious imagery; and all lying neglected and useless amongst heaps of dirt.—He that invites you to take a view of the soul of man, gives you but such another prospect, and doth but say to you, 'Behold the desolation,' all things rude and waste. So that, should there be any pretence to the divine presence, it might be said, 'If God be here, why is it thus? The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this temple, too plainly show, 'The great inhabitant is gone.'"*

Ther. Your painter, I must own, is a master in his profession; and seems to have a peculiar talent for a night-piece.—But why, I beseech you, so much of his shadows and solemnity? Has he no colours but the dark? no lineaments but the sour? Could he not allow us one bright tint, one smiling feature, when he was copying the noblest being in this sublunary world?—Is it for the honour of the great Creator to give such a deformed draught of his most finished workmanship?

Asp. It reflects no kind of dishonour upon the architect of Babylon, that its palaces are fallen, its edifices demolished, and its walls levelled with the ground. They might have been built with the exactest symmetry, and once embellished with every graceful ornament, notwithstanding the stroke of violence, or the sap of years, have now reduced them to heaps of rubbish. The human soul, when recent from the inspiration of the Almighty, was bright with knowledge, amiable with virtue, and, in every respect excellent. But how—to speak in the language of the mourning prophet, a language never more pertinent than on the present occasion—"how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"

Ther. Man's soul is rational and eternal; is the offspring of the Deity, and capable of resembling its Maker.

Asp. What Milton allows to the fallen

* See Mr. Howe's treatise entitled The living temple.

archangel, I can readily allow to fallen man:

> ——————He had not lost
> All his original brightness.

The grand and distinguishing faculties of the soul remain. Just as when a fountain is poisoned, the waters continue to flow; but flow no longer with health, flow rather with death in the stream. These very faculties, unless renewed and regulated by the influence of religion, must be our present misery, and will prove our everlasting curse. "The soul," you say, "is rational, is eternal." And do not even the devils possess the powers of reason? Is not their existence also of an endless duration? Yet are they, of all creatures, the most execrable and the most miserable.

You call the human soul the offspring of the Deity; and you call it properly. Must we not then adopt the prophet's exclamation, "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isa. xiv. 12.) How art thou degenerated, O man, son of the Most High! Thy glorious original serves only to set forth, with more glaring evidence, thy deplorable apostacy."

Capable, you add, of resembling its Maker. This, I acknowledge is a valuable prerogative: In this the infernal spirits have no share. But this capacity will always lie dormant, will never awaken into act, never be established in habit, unless Almighty grace intervene.

Ther. The most celebrated philosophers of antiquity frequently exhort their readers to follow nature as a certain guide to true excellence. Many eloquent writers of our own country enlarge upon the dignity of human nature, and from this topic derive very forcible arguments for a correspondent dignity both of sentiment and behaviour. Upon what can those principles of the ancient sages, and of our later moralists, be founded?

Asp. Indeed, Theron, I am at a loss to tell. If they have any foundation, it is merely imaginary; not laid on truth, nor confirmed by experience. According to my apprehension, they invert the order of things; they take that for a *postulatum* which ought to be ranked among the *desiderata*, and make an axiom of a mere figment.

Had man continued as he was created, to act according to nature and according to the law of God, would have been one and the same thing. For which reason we find no precepts of religion, no delineation of morality, given to Adam in paradise; because religion and morality were engraven on his heart; or rather, they resulted from the very bent and tendency of his perfect frame. But since the fall it is quite otherwise.

Ther. Have not many of the ancient worthies been living confutations of your opinion? wise philosophers, judicious lawgivers, and steady ministers of justice? their desires refined, their affections benevolent, their whole conduct upright.

Asp. I cannot forbear wondering, that you should instance in lawgivers and ministers of justice; since the very institution of their office presupposes the depravity of mankind. Was human nature agitated by no irregular or vicious inclinations, the barrier of laws would be as needless in civil societies, as the vast banks of Holland are needless in our upland counties.

But this, you will say, is a digressive observation;—your question requires a positive answer. And it is easy to answer—that the painting is beyond the life. If my author has been too free with the dark, my friend has been too lavish of the glittering colours. Those famous men might aim, perhaps, at the excellency you describe. Not one of them came up to the mark; or, suppose they did, this would not invalidate my tenet.

Ther. This would not invalidate your tenet! Then demonstration carries no conviction.

Asp. Pray, who is your greatest favourite among all the renowned persons of antiquity?

Ther. Socrates.—He stands at the head of the class; and was, indisputably, the wisest and the best of the heathen world.

Asp. I think so too. Be pleased, however, to recollect the story of the physiognomist, who pretended to discover the disposition of the mind by the cast of the countenance. The professor of this occult science undertook, you know, to exercise his skill upon Socrates; and pronounced him, after an examination of his features, lascivious, passionate and morose. This judgment, so extravagantly wide of the truth, was bringing a storm of ridicule and resentment upon the poor fortune-teller; when the ingenuous philosopher interposed, and owned the description to be exactly true; that such was his natural temper; and if his conversation had been of a different turn, it was owing to the aids of philosophy. So that, even in your most finished character, there was no innate dignity. All was adventitious.

Ther. If corruption was derived unto all men, from their forefather Adam, methinks all should be equally corrupt. But this is contrary to known fact. Some we see naturally loving and lovely, gentle in their manners, and subject to no inordinate appetites.

Asp. Some persons may be of more composed, or, if you please, of less dissolute manners, than the generality of other peo-

ple. Thanks to a better temperature of their constitution, or a more watchful care in their education. But show me the unregenerate man, who is subject to no inordinate appetites. One vile affection may check another, or a sense of decency may hold the curb upon all. But it is one thing to have the wild beast in the heart chained; another, to have him expelled, or the lion transformed into a lamb.

Ther. Have we not often observed heroic courage, and a generosity of spirit, where the education has been none of the strictest? To what can we ascribe these laudable qualities, but to the innate virtue and nobleness of the temper, working without any auxiliary succours?

Asp. Virtue, Theron, is a complete assemblage, not some disjointed shreds, of laudable qualities. Those you mention, if not accompanied with the whole circle of amiable accomplishments, are no more to be called virtue, than two or three scattered fragments of an edifice are to be honoured with the appellation of a house. How often are those very persons, with all their fortitude, slaves to ignoble pleasures, or in bondage to the basest lusts? A most infallible indication that they have no uniform generosity nor any real courage. Desire of fame may prompt to many such acts as dazzle the superficial eye, which yet are far, very far from genuine virtue.

Ther. Do you then attribute the Grecian politeness, and the high Roman spirit, all the gallant actions of their heroes and generals, to a desire of fame?

Asp. There is reason to suspect, that they derived their origin from some improper motive: And no motive was more artfully instilled, or more assiduously cherished, than the spirit of ambition. View their crowns, their statues, their triumphal solemnities; read their orators, their historians, their poets. The former were the school, the latter were the masters, to inculcate this grand lesson.

Let us consider the Romans a little more attentively; and not amidst the dregs of their community, but in their very best ages, when their republic subsisted, and their Scipios flourished. Many great and shining deeds were undoubtedly performed; but did they spring from a reverential regard to the Supreme Being, from obedience to his will or zeal for his honour?

If this principle should be thought too refined, did they proceed from a love to their fellow-creatures? In case neither of these motives* actuated their conduct, it can never be placed to the account of virtue.—Had benevolence been their leading principle, why such inhumanity to Carthage? why must that opulent city be laid in ashes, and her numerous citizens be put to the sword? Were they enemies to mankind, or a nuisance in the world? You well know, that they were only too industrious, and too powerful; by which means, they would be in a condition to eclipse the magnificence of the Roman name, and dispute the prize of sovereignty with the Roman state. For this crime—a crime in Ambition's eye absolutely inexcusable—even Cato's upright soul shall doom them to utter destruction, and Scipio's gentle hand shall execute the horrid decree.

Is this virtue? Does virtue ravage countries, from the mere wantonness of pride or lust of pre-eminence? Does virtue destroy millions of lives, only to aggrandize a particular people, or extend the dominon of some favourite empire? If this were virtue, Brutus thought too honourably of her character when he termed her an empty name. I am sure my Theron has juster notions of things. He need not be informed that true virtue, far from personating the rapacious harpy, acts as a father to others, as a father to all; and like him who is both its pattern and its author, "goes about doing good."

Ther. The most elegant cane, if plunged into yonder basin while the waters are curled by the breeze, will appear both crooked and coarse. I cannot but think the accusers of human nature examine her state with a prejudiced understanding, which has the same perverse effect upon their judgment as those ruffled waves have upon the sight. Or else they contemplate her condition with a melancholy mind; which, like a jaundiced eye, gives every object a distempered aspect, darkens the cheerful, discolours the beautiful, and hangs even the sun in mourning.

Asp. Rather let this be the comparison to illustrate our point, view the meanest piece of earth through the prismatic glass, and it will appear, not beautiful only, but perfectly splendid. Remove the delusory medium, and all the sophisticated finery vanishes. The indigo, the orange, the violet are gone, and leave nothing to be seen, but a rude unornamented lump of clay. So, if we consider human nature according to the partial representations of self-love, or contemplate it in the flattering mirror of some popular writings, it may seem re-

* A zeal for the honour of God, and a concern for the good of our fellow-creatures, are the true sources of virtue. 1 Cor. x. 24, 31. When our actions flow not from these principles, reason will put a query upon them, and revelation will expunge them from the list of virtues. They may be specious in themselves; they may be costly to the performer; they may even be serviceable to others; but can no more deserve the title of virtue, than the activity of our firemen, in extinguishing the flames on some insured house, can merit the name of charity.

gular, holy, excellent: But, if we behold it under the light, the unerring light of revelation, its fancied charms disappear; it stands clothed with deformity, and is a spectacle of commiseration, if not of horror.

Ther. What reason have you to father such a notion upon the sacred writings? The sacred writings inform us, that man was made "after the image of God." This, sure, could not be so dishonourable and depraved a pattern as your discourse would insinuate.

Asp. Far, very far from a dishonourable pattern! The image of God is the consummate standard of all perfection. In conformity to this admirable exemplar, our first parents were created; and in this admirable condition they continued, till, by transgression, they fell—fell from the most holy and happy state, into guilt, condemnation, and ruin. Therefore when this fatal catastrophe had taken place, the sacred historian varies his syle, and with a remarkable peculiarity, as well as propriety of speech, says "Adam begat a son in his own* (not in the divine) likeness." That every reader may advert to this melancholy, but important truth, it is marked more strongly still, it is enforced by a very emphatical repetition: "After his own image," Moses adds (Gen. v. 3.); as contradistinguished to the image of God, mentioned in a preceding verse. Which expressions are evidently intended to denote the difference between the state in which Adam was created and Seth was begotten.

Ther. Pray let me have a succinct, but full account of this tragical story, since all your orthodox divines lay such a mighty stress upon the doctrine of the fall.

Asp. God, having formed the human body out of the ground, animated the structure with a living soul; and transcribed upon this soul the image of his blessed Self. All was light in the understanding, all was rectitude in the will, and nothing but harmony in the affections.—Man, thus endowed, was placed in the delightful garden of Eden, and furnished with every accommodation which was necessary to support his being, or desirable to gratify his senses. He was constituted lord of this lower creation; and, amidst numberless indulgences, received only one—easy—negative command, "not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." From this he was to abstain, as a pledge of his subjection, and as an exercise of his obedience. Bliss and immortality were to be the reward of duty; misery and death the punishment of disobedience: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," (Gen. ii. 17,) was the sanction of the divine law.

How equitable! how gracious the terms! Yet neither the goodness of God could induce him to keep them, nor the authority of God deter him from breaking them. Unreasonably discontented, even with such advantageous circumstances, and presumptuously aspiring to be like the Most High, he hearkened to the suggestions of the evil spirit. In a word, he violated the precept, and incurred the penalty. God was just, and man was undone. He lost his uprightness,* became subject to mortality, and, as the nervous original expresses it, "died the death."

Ther. True, he became subject to many bodily infirmities, and to the necessity of final dissolution. But what has this sentence, or what have these sufferings to do with your notion of universal depravity in the mind? The death which the Almighty Legislator threatened, can be opposed only to the life which the Almighty Creator gave.

Asp. Be it so.—The Creator gave, and man possessed, a life incomparably more excellent than that which the pulse imparts, or the beasts enjoy. He possessed a divine life, which, according to the definition of the apostle, consisted "in knowledge, in righteousness, and true holiness." (Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10.) This, which was the distinguishing glory, and the supreme felicity of his nature—this, alas! was extinct.

His understanding, originally enlightened with wisdom, was clouded and overwhelmed with ignorance.—His heart, once filled with religious veneration, and warmed with heavenly love, became alienated from God his Maker. His passions and appetites, instead of moving on in orderly array, according to the beauteous measures of truth and duty, grew mutinous, shook off the government of reason, and ran wild into the most lawless extravagancies.—In a word, the whole moral frame was unhinged, disjointed, broken.

Ther. What cause have you to suppose, that all this misery was either included in the threatening, or introduced by the fall?

Asp. The ignorance of fallen Adam was palpable: witness that absurd attempt to hide himself from the eye of Omniscience among the trees of the garden.—His aversion to the all-gracious God was equally plain; otherwise he would never have fled from his Maker, but rather have hasted,

* This is affirmed, not of Cain, but of Seth, the most excellent of Adam's children, and father of the holy seed.

* ———innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill was done,
Just confidence, and native righteousness.
Milton, b. 9. l. 1054.

and on the wings of desire, into the place of the divine manifestation.

A strange variety of disorderly passions* were evidently predominant in his breast. —Pride, for he refuses to acknowledge his guilt, though he cannot but own the fact. —Ingratitude, for he obliquely upbraids the Creator with his gift, as though it had been a snare rather than a blessing: "The woman whom thou gavest me."—Want of natural affection; for he endeavours to cast all the blame upon the weaker vessel, and to acquit his obnoxious self, by impeaching the wife of his bosom.—The female criminal acts the same unhumbled part; neither takes shame to herself, nor gives glory to God, nor puts up a single petition for pardon.

As all these disasters ensued upon the breach of the commandment, they furnish us, I think, with the best key to open the meaning of the prohibitory sanction. They prove, beyond any argument, that spiritual death, and all its consequences, were comprehended in the extent of the threatening.

Ther. How could one act of disobedience produce such destructive effects? erase the fair image of the Godhead, and stamp the monster, stamp the very devil in its stead?—and so small an act of disobedience too!

Asp. The prohibition, if you please, was small, not so the transgression. It was committed against the clearest knowledge of duty, and the strongest obligations to obedience. It argued ingratitude for the richest favours, and unbelief of the most solemn declarations. It was an act of the most horrid presumption in the creature, and of the most impious rebellion against the Creator.

As to the smallness, or rather the gentle and benign import of the command, this aggravates beyond measure the crime of disobedience. Alluding to the words once addressed to the Syrian general, we may justly expostulate, "O thou Adam, if thy Lord had bid thee do some great thing, (2 Kings v. 13,) in submission to his high authority, and out of gratitude for his unspeakable goodness, oughtest thou not to have done it? How much more, when he says to thee—Freely eat of all except this single tree. Thousands, thousands of honours, privileges, and gifts be thine, only one acknowledgment of thy subjection mine; and that the easiest which thy heart can wish, or even thy fancy conceive."

You ask, how could one act of disobedience produce such destructive effects?—I answer, the reality of the fact, in numberless instances of material nature, is plain to a demonstration, while the manner of operation remains an impenetrable secret. Every child perceives the former, Newton himself is at a loss for the latter. For which reason, I have always thought it better to believe what God has taught, than attempt to explain what God has concealed. Let us forego this curious, perhaps fruitless inquiry, and substitute a remark, which naturally arises from the subject, and may considerably edify our minds.

Ther. Edify! Is it possible to render this dishonourable and afflictive notion edifying? Can any generous fruit spring from such a penurious soil?

Asp. Sampson, I believe, had no expectation of finding any thing valuable in the relics of his slain lion; but, to his agreeable disappointment, "there was honey in the carcase." (Judg. xiv. 8.) If our doctrine appear ghastly as the one, it may yield a benefit sweet as the other.

From hence we may learn, (what, when rightly learned, is more serviceable than all the sciences) the extreme malignity of sin. When volcanos open their tremendous jaws, and disgorge a fiery inundation, they confine their fury to a single territory. When famine lifts her mildewed hand, and destroys the supports of animal life, she is content with ruining a kingdom or a nation. When war drenches his sword in blood, or the pestilence impregnates the air with poison, they also, even they observe some limits, and never make the whole compass of nature the scene of their ravages. But sin levelled its blow at the whole human race. Sin poured contagion, and spread destruction through all countries and all ages. One single act of sin brought confusion and a curse upon the material, and miseries, infinite millions of miseries on the rational world. How then should we fear this most pernicious of all evils! with what carefulness guard against its insidious allurements! with what resolution fly from its killing caresses!

Ther. I must observe, that you take for granted what remains to be proved. For, supposing your account true with regard to Adam, yet how does this affect his children? Why must all his posterity be contaminated because their forefather has played the prodigal? Such a heavy charge against the whole body of mankind will not be admitted without very cogent proofs.

* Milton, speaking of the unhappy pair, and describing the consequences of their fall, says,

——— Nor only tears
Rain'd at their eyes; but high winds within
Began to rise; high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
Their inward state of mind; calm region once,
And full of peace; now tossed and turbulent!
For, understanding rul'd not, and the will
Heard not her lore! but in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sovereign reason claim'd
Superior sway.—*Book* 9, l. 1121,

Asp. The proofs are cogent; perhaps irrefragable.—Reason offers to turn evidence in the case. Reason, in concurrence with revelation, demands, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job. xiv. 4.) If the fountain be polluted, how can the streams be pure? and if the root is corrupt, it is impossible to conceive how the branches should be sound, or the fruit good.*

The scriptural testimonies are almost innumerable. They pour their evidence from every quarter, and constitute not two or three only, but a whole cloud of witnesses. "God made man upright," says the royal preacher; the human nature, in its primitive state, was without any wrong bias; but at and ever since the first transgression, they have found out and followed many perverse inventions, (Eccl. vii. 29.)

Ther. I do not deny but multitudes of people, seduced by bad example, or betrayed by their own inadvertency, have departed from the rule of duty; have, as the wise man affirms, tried many foolish experiments to acquire happiness, and devised as many idle excuses for their folly. But this is no such irrefragable proof that they were originally bad: It only implies, that, not taking proper head to their ways, they warped from their native uprightness. As yonder tulips, though perfectly beautiful at present, if not attended with the necessary cultivation, will degenerate into homely flowers, and at length be no better than tawdry weeds.

Asp. No, my friend. Iniquity is not an adventitious thing, caught from example, or contracted by carelessness. These may increase, but these do not occasion the moral malady. A sinful disposition is as early as our being, the very mould in which all our faculties are cast. David bears very express testimony to this humbling truth: "Behold!" (He sets his N. B. upon the passage. It is a sad but certain fact; such as should never depart from my memory, nor ever be omitted in my confessions: and is much to be regarded by every reader:) "I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me," (Psal. li. 5.) As though he had said, "Alas, Lord, this crime, though extremely horrid, is but a little part of my guilt. I have not only sinned in practice, but I am totally and universally corrupt in my very nature."

This he acknowledges, not to extenuate his offence, but to lay open his excessive vileness. And indeed it is not possible to form a right judgment of ourselves, or to be duly humbled before God, unless we add the depravation of our nature to the transgressions of our life. Just as it is impossible to discern what monstrous and voracious animals lie hid in the ocean, if we only glance an eye upon the surface of the waters.

Ther. This, you know, was written by the royal penitent under the pangs of severe remorse. Does not a sense of his enormous iniquity, together with the apprehension of divine wrath, make his hand shake, and lead him to aggravate features? Or, suppose it were true of the adulterous king, is it equally applicable to others, who have escaped such gross pollutions.

Asp. It is no exaggerating draught, but a faithful delineation, and exactly represents every child of Adam. It was written with the utmost deliberation; and therefore is introduced with that call for peculiar attention, "Behold!" And though David was scandalously criminal in his intrigue with the wife of Uriah, yet, the general tenor of his life was not only irreproachable, but exemplary. Who so zealous for the house of his God, or so devoted an admirer of the divine word? His heart was an altar, ever flaming with heavenly love; and his tongue a trumpet, to sound the praises of Jehovah through all generations. And if he had reason to make his abasing confession, who is the person that can think himself aggrieved by sharing in the imputation?

One of our most eminent martyrs,* when he heard of any malefactor condemned to suffer an ignominious death, used to lay his hand upon his breast and say, "the seeds of all those villanies which brought that unhappy wretch to the gibbet were sown here. And, if they have not sprung up into the same detestable deeds, unto divine grace, unto divine grace alone be all the glory!"

Ther. Your martyrs had honest hearts, but not always the clearest heads. I admire their zeal, and reverence their memories; but I can no more receive their opinion as an oracle, than I can be persuaded to worship their relics.

Asp. I have no intention to palm Popery on my friend, nor any desire to calumniate the human species. If it be disingenuous and sinful to asperse a particular character, how much more unjustifiable to traduce our nature in general.

My account, dark and disgustful as it is, stands confirmed by a higher authority than any private opinion. It is confirmed from

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* Milton has anticipated Theron's objection; and in Adam's soliloquy, very judiciously solved it.

——Ah! why should all mankind,
For one man's fault thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless but from me what can proceed
But all corrupt, both body and mind deprav'd:
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me? How can they acquitted stand
In sight of God?—*Book* 10. l. 821.

* Mr. Bradford.

an universal survey of mankind, taken by the eye of the Creator himself, and left upon record in the books of revelation. "The Lord looked down from heaven, upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after God." What is the result of this grand inquiry? It must, without all peradventure, be infallibly true; because God's inspection is too keen to be eluded, and his judgment too impartial to be biassed. This is the report, made by the infinitely wise Observer—"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy* there is none that doeth good, no not one." (Psal. xiv. 2, 3.)

Ther. This, I apprehend, is the character of those besotted creatures, those most egregious of all fools, who say, "There is no God." To them the psalm relates, and to them the abandoned character is appropriated. They have it, if I may so speak, *cum privilegio.*

Asp. It is meant, rather of practical than of speculative Atheists, who say, not explicitly with their mouths, but implicitly in their hearts, "There is no God," who live as if there was no all-seeing Eye to take cognizance of their present conduct, no Supreme Judge to call them to a future reckoning. And I dare appeal to yourself, though perhaps the fondest of fathers, whether this instance of "foolishness is not bound up in the hearts of our children?"† nay, whether it be not natural to us all, both in youth and manhood, to forget our Creator?

In this case, Theron, there is no monopoly. Your right and mine are too strongly established by experience, and too clearly expressed in the preceding scripture, to admit of any controversy. If there were any that understood—they are all gone out of the way—There is none that doeth good—no not one. Could any conveyancer in Europe have contrived a form of words more fully to ascertain our unhappy title?

Ther. There may be some texts in scripture which seem to countenance your assertion, but these refer to the worst of men, in the worst of times. And can you, with any justice, ascribe the properties of a few reprobates to the whole species?

Asp. This very passage, and others of a like import, are adopted by St. Paul, and applied both to Jews and Gentiles, with this professed design, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be found guilty before God." Rom. iii. 19. Which evinces, I should think, beyond all doubt, the universality of its extent.

If, to the universality, we add the antiquity of this fact, it will bear the two grand characteristics of truth. Far from being a novel opinion, it was received as a maxim, in the early age of Job: "What is man, that he should pretend to be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should presume to be righteous? Righteous before the infinitely just and holy One! "Behold! he putteth no trust in his saints," though the most exalted of all intelligent beings. "Yea, the heavens," those brightest parts of the material creation, "are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man?"* who drinketh iniquity, Job xv. 14—16. though loathsome to God, and worse than poison to his own soul; yet drinketh it like water, without any hesitation or the least fear, with an eager and profuse delight.

This, you will observe, was alleged in a dispute, carried on with no small vehemency, yet is admitted on all hands as unexceptionably true. Be pleased also to take notice, that the charge is not confined to some very notorious sinners, but is laid against the whole body of mankind. Whatever figure they make, each in his own conceit; they are all described in the words of God, as beings insatiably athirst after evil, from objects that we cannot endure to behold, or cannot behold without abhorrence.† Such is man by nature! People must have eyes very different from mine, to discern any dignity in this draught.

Ther. As to innate dignity, we will let it pass. But this I must insist upon—and several writers of the first repute are on my side—That we enter the stage of life in a state of indifference either to good or evil; That the affections are like a balance nicely poised, and preponderating neither one way nor the other: The whole soul, like a sheet of fair paper, is equally susceptible of straight or crooked lines, and will as readily receive the amiable features of an angel, as the hideous deformity of a devil.

Asp. With regard to your first illustra-

* The two original words are metaphorical expressions taken from wines that are become sour, and meats that are in a state of putrefaction. I believe it is impossible to find images more strongly expressive of a total depravity, and of the utmost degeneracy.

† Prov. xxii. 15. Let none think, that by foolishness the sacred writer means only those silly tricks, which discover a weakness of understanding in children. Solomon's fool is not the idiot, but the sinner; and the folly stigmatized throughout the Proverbs, denotes, not a failure in the intellectual, but in the religious and moral character.

The words in this passage are peculiarly forcible. "Foolishness is in the heart," implanted in the very nature;—sunk deep into the inmost faculties: and not only sunk deep, but adheres almost inseparably—is wrapt, tied, and bound, twines like the ivy, and is rooted like the oak.

* The immaculate purity of the blessed God, and the utter depravity of fallen man, are points of so great importance in the scriptural system of divinity, that they are inculcated no less than three times within the compass of this single book, and by much the same noble contrast of striking images; chap. iv. 17, 18; xv. 14—16; xxv. 4—6.

† The original words have two significations; one is used to signify that abominable practice which the Egyptians could not bear to see, Exod. viii. 22. Heb. Bib. ver. 26. Eng. Bib. The other denotes an object too squalid to be viewed without loathing.

tion, the simile I think, confutes the sentiment. For to be in suspense whether we shall love the Lord our God, the giver of all good and the source of all perfection, this surely must be condemned as an irreligious temper.—This is a criminal halting between God and Baal; a neutrality, which is no better than hostility.

I fear the writers you mention pay but little deference to the inspired volume. Our escutcheon is very differently blazoned in that office of spiritual heraldry. "A transgressor from the womb,"* is one of our hereditary titles. Transgressors we are by strong internal propensity, even before we transgress in outward act.

Observe the young hawthorn plants, which have unfolded their green leaves, in yonder nursery, but have scarce learned to spread the gay blossom. Is there in those an equal aptitude to produce the luscious juicy grape, or their own coarse and husky berry? By no means. They will (unless grafted with some generous cyon) certainly, universally, constantly bear the same harsh fruit with their parent tree: So certainly will the human mind, if not renewed by the spirit of Christ, branch out into ungodly tempers, and bring forth wicked practices.

Ther. The nobleman mentioned by Xenophon,† when overcome by an alluring temptation, devised, for his excuse, the notion of two souls, one that inclined him to vice, another that prompted him to virtue. This was a moderate caricature,‡ compared with my friend's. He will allow nothing regular or graceful in the human heart. You have metamorphosed the master-piece of the creation into such a deformed object, as may justly render him a terror to himself. Can there be a grosser libel upon the Creator, or a greater discouragement to our fellow-creatures?

Asp. If this be a distorted piece, what will you call the following description? "God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. This, perhaps, may be reckoned a more monstrous drawing still: Yet it came from that hand which painted the canopy of the skies, and touched all the pictures of nature into such inimitable perfection.

Pray let us examine the most distinguishing features in this draught. Not barely the works of his hand, or the words of his tongue, but the "imaginations of his heart," are evil. The contagion has spread itself through the inner man. It has tainted the seat of his principles, and the source of his actions.* Is there not, you will say, some mixture of good? No, they are only evil: There is no hopeful tendency: Not so much as a little leaven of piety, that may have a chance to diffuse itself, and meliorate the whole lump. But are there no lucid intervals? No happy moments, when virtue gains the ascendency? None; he is only evil continually. The usurpation of sin is total, and its tyranny perpetual.

What I have advanced, therefore, is no libel upon the Creator's benignity; because it is the very echo of his own determination. Neither is it so properly discouraging, as humbling and alarming to our fellow-creatures: Humbling, to make us sensible of our ruin; alarming, to make us desirous of a recovery.

Ther. Is not the description which you have produced peculiar to the men of that wicked generation, whose guilt was as unparalleled as their punishment?

Asp. It is applicable both to them and their successors. The wisdom of God repeats the charge, and fixes it upon the race which survived the flood.† The depravity of human nature continued, nor could the waters of an universal deluge purge it away. So deep, alas! is the stain, and so incorrigible the virulency of original corruption, that it will yield to nothing; to nothing will it yield, but to the "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii. 5. Till this takes place, every heart of man must wear the prophet's stigmatizing motto, "Deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Ther. This passage, I am informed, is not rightly translated, especially in the last expression. The Hebrew original does not bear so hard upon the human character as the English version.

Asp. You allow then that the heart is deceitful. And of this we have a glaring

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* Isa. xlviii. 8. A truth so apparent and undeniable, that Seneca could not but discern it, though he was an unenlightened heathen; could not but acknowledge it, though he was one of the proud Stoic sect. "Hac conditione nati sumus, animalia obnoxia non paucioribus animi quam corporis morbis." *De Ira*, lib. 2. c. 9.

† Cyropæd. lib. 6.

‡ A term used by the Italian painters, to signify a resemblance horrid or ridiculous.

* The original is very nice in its structure, and no less emphatical in its meaning. The heart, or grand principle—the thoughts of the heart, or the various actings of that principle—the imagination of the thoughts, or the produce and result of those actings; namely, desires and affections, counsels and purposes. Not one, a few only, or the greatest part, but all these are evil.

† Gen. viii. 21. Where, I think, the particle is used in the adversative, not the casual signification; and should be rendered though, rather than for—Where it seems likewise, that the forbearance of the righteous God is ascribed to the great atonement; typified by Noah's burnt-offerings, and expressed by St. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians; who probably alludes to this passage, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the earth any more for man's sake, though the imagination of man's heart be evil from his youth, Eph. v. 2.

proof in the conduct of Hazael. He thought it impossible that he should ever perpetrate such horrid barbarities as the prophet foresaw. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" 2 Kings viii. 13. Yes, Hazael; however thou mayest imagine thyself gentle as a lamb, thou art fierce as a dog, and savage as a tiger: Which was most terribly demonstrated by the event.

Suppose we translate the other word somewhat more accurately, the little alteration will be of less service to your cause. Instead of "desperately wicked," you may, if you please, read, "deplorably disordered," Jer. xvii. 3. This is the exact import of the phrase. It is a metaphor derived from a very distempered body, in which the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: "From the crown of whose head to the sole of whose feet," there is nothing but consuming disease and enfeebling languors.* The rules of civility may set a specious varnish on the conversation, but until grace, sanctifying grace, administers the remedy, the most civilized heart will be like the pale emaciated cheek, that is poorly enlivened with paint.

Ther. What say the writers of the New Testament? Is not their way of thinking more liberal and benign? If human nature wore so hideous an aspect under the legal dispensation, since the coming of our Lord, and the publishing of his gospel, one may expect an improved and more pleasing face of things.

Asp. Human nature, in every period of time, and under every dispensation of religion, is still the same. It was the Spirit of Christ who indited the Old Testament; and he cannot vary from himself in the declarations of the New.

I am very much inclined to believe that all the bodily diseases which our divine Physician healed, during his abode on earth, were so many emblematical representations of spiritual disorders, which, like certain family distempers, may be said to run in the blood of all mankind. Will you give me leave, Theron, to explain myself? I do not like to engross the discourse. Yet I would willingly enlarge upon this subject.

Ther. By all means. The laws of argument, separate from the indulgences of friendship, give you a warrant to urge whatever may support your cause. Besides, I will be glad to hear your sentiments upon a point so curious.

Asp. The poor leper, covered with noisome sores, is the very picture of a polluted sinner. Was the one, for his contagious impurities, separated from the society of his fellow-citizens? So shall the other, for his abominable uncleanness, be banished from the beatific presence, unless he be cleansed by the blood, and justified by the righteousness of Jesus.

You pity the condition of that unhappy creature who was born blind. His eyes rolled, but rolled in vain, to find the dawning ray. Such is the benighted state of the human mind, till Almighty goodness command the scales of ignorance to fall off, and pour heavenly day through all the intellectual faculties. Then, and not till then, we begin to know the holiness, the justice, the adorable excellencies of God. We see the sublime purity of his law, and the extreme depravity of our own hearts. We are brought acquainted with the transcendent glories of our Redeemer's person, and apprehend that most comfortable mystery of his substitution in our stead. We discern the ineffable perfection of his merits, and the divinely rich freeness of his grace.* Truths incomparably more delightful to the soul, than all the delectable scenes of creation are to the sight.

The paralytic's enervated limbs too truly represent the impotence of our nature. Was he unable to grind at a mill, to run in a race, or to turn himself on his bed? So unable are we to "fight the good fight of faith," to exercise the graces of Christianity, or even to turn ourselves unto God. Do not you, my friend, experience something of this inability? For my part, I must lay my hand on my breast, and daily, hourly confess, "The palsy is here." Though not altogether dead in sin, (blessed be Christ Jesus, and his quickening Spirit!) yet how languid is my zeal, how enfeebled my industry, in the great affair of everlasting salvation!—I would fain believe, and with a full assurance of faith, the promises of the unchangeable Jehovah. But how often do I stagger through unbelief!—I would fain love, and with the warmest gratitude, my ever-merciful and most beneficent God. But, oh! what coldness benumbs my affections! I wish to be humble in every thought, heavenly in all my desires, and wholly resigned to the divine will. But, alas! my sufficiency for these things is like the flaccid sinew, or the withered arm."

It would be endless to particularize all the maladies, which were emblems of our misery, and the triumphs of our Lord's power. Let me only remark, that their bodies were afflicted with a single disorder, our souls labour under a complication of

* Isa. i. 6. Agreeable to this doctrine, and consonant to this metaphor, is the confession of our Liturgy, "There is no health in us."

* This, and the preceding particulars, are lessons of the last importance in the Christian school. The knowledge of them deserves to be most solicitously sought, both by attentive contemplation, and by earnest prayer. For to know them is to be truly wise; to be influenced by them, is to be substantially happy.

evils. They felt their affliction, and were desirous, importunately desirous of relief. We are, till awakened from above, insensible of our calamitous case. We add, to all our other indispositions, a stupifying lethargy, or an extravagant delirium.

Ther. Such allegorical expositions of Scripture are pretty enough; but, I presume, you yourself cannot reckon them demonstrative. For my own part, I must appeal from the surmises of fancy to the verdict of reason.

Asp. I cannot think that the allegorical sense, when soberly introduced, is unworthy of our regard, or without its weight. However, I have no design to preclude your appeal. Will the avowed, will the reiterated decision of an apostle, satisfy my friend, and be admitted as the verdict of reason? St. Paul has declared of himself, "In me, that is, in my flesh," or unrenewed nature, "dwelleth no good," (Rom. vii. 18,) no good temper, not so much as any good desire. Elsewhere he affirms, that the "carnal mind," or unregenerate soul, "is not subject to the law of God," nay, is an enemy, or rather enmity itself. (Rom. viii. 7.) Against what?—Against sin? That were a noble antipathy.—Against the world? That were a laudable disaffection.—No! but against God and his law. Amazing perverseness! to be enmity against God, who is boundless benignity and consummate goodness; enmity against his law, which is the transcript of his amiable perfections, and the faultless model of all virtue.

Ther. This, I suppose, is the character of Saul the Pharisee, not of Paul the apostle; descriptive of his condition when he was "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious."

Asp. It relates not to himself alone, but is applicable to all who continue in a state of nature. The blessed author of our being, speaking of mankind in general, says, that "he is even flesh," mere flesh, altogether flesh;* his very soul and all its powers are wholly enslaved to fleshly appetites. The beneficent Restorer of our happiness pronounces the same sentence in the very same words: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." (John iii. 6.) The faculties which men receive by their natural birth have a carnal bias, incline to nothing but sordid pleasures and ignoble pursuits. Our Saviour reinculcates the admonition, and illustrates it by a very remarkable allusion. You cannot forget his answer to a procrastinating disciple, "Let the dead bury their dead," (Matt. viii. 22,) intimating, that as many as are unsanctified by the Holy Ghost, though possessed of an animal, are destitute of the divine life; are no more fit for the kingdom of heaven, for its converse or its joys, than a pale corpse in the coffin, or dry bones in the charnel-house, are qualified to transact any secular business.

St. Paul sets the seal of heaven to this momentous truth, in various passages of his epistles. From a multitude let me select one, and recommend it to your serious consideration: "You that were sometime alienated, and enemies." The Colossians, and all mankind, were alienated from the living God; had no true knowledge of him; and, what is worse, had no sincere desire after him. Nay, they were not only strangers, but enemies; in a state of hostility to his holy nature and heavenly will. What can express a greater degeneracy? Nothing, unless it be the following clause: "By a mind intent upon wicked works;* a mind, not only averse to all good, but passionately prone to all evil.

Ther. A few picked passages, of a figurative import, and artfully clogged by some dexterous interpretation, may seem to support your cause.

Asp. Ah! Theron, there is no need to use slight of hand. He that runs may read this doctrine in the sacred authors. It is interwoven with the whole series of their historical, and makes a professed part of their practical writings.

What is more common with the inspired penmen, than to express a profligate course of life by "following our own imaginations, and walking in our own ways?" When immorality and licentiousness were predominant in Israel, knew no restraints, and kept no bounds, how does the unerring historian describe this horrible state of things? "Every one did that which was right in his own eyes."† Nothing can more strongly imply the extreme depravity of mankind than such a phraseology, which makes it one and the same thing to pursue our natural inclinations, and to act the abandoned sinner.

* Gen. vi. 3. The word flesh, by which the all-wise Creator characterises man, signifies, in the sacred writings, whatever is dishonourable in itself, provoking to God, or introductory to the ruin of man. The works of the flesh are a compendium of all iniquity. Gal. v. 19—21. To walk after the flesh, is the very reverse of walking in the Spirit, diametrically opposite to the divine law and true holiness. Rom. viii. 4. To be carnally minded, or to have the influence, the savour, the relish of the flesh (φρονημα σαρκος) predominant in our minds, is the spiritual death of the soul, and a presage of eternal death, both in body and soul. Rom. viii. 6.

* Col. i. 21. Τη διανοια εν τοις εργοις τοις πονηροις "mente, malis operibus intenta." An eminent critic would thus point, and thus translate the words; and assigns, for his alteration, the following reason; "Mens enim dicitur esse in ea re quam semper cogitat, ad quam cupidine fertur et inclinator." DAVENANT *in loc.* Let the words be pointed and translated, either in this or the received manner, they speak the language, and confirm the sentiments of this whole Dialogue.

† Judg. xviii. 6.—See also Psalm lxxxi. 12. Eccl. xi 9. Acts xiv. 16.

St. Jude cannot write a few lines but he must touch upon this subject, must teach this humbling lesson: "Sensual," he says, "not having the spirit," (Jude 19.) According to his estimate, not to be actuated by the power of especial grace, is to remain under the dominion of sensuality. If we may credit this servant of Christ, every man, while unrenewed by the divine Spirit, is governed by flesh and sense. Can any man then pretend to be originally free from the influence of corruption?

St. Paul exempts not himself, no, nor any of the highest saints, from the opprobrious charge: "We all walked according to the desires of the flesh, and of the mind."—Which desires in us, as well as in the idolatrous heathens, were base, sordid, and contaminating. Insomuch that we who are Jews by birth, who are sons of God by our new birth, even we were "by nature the children of wrath." (Eph. ii. 3.) And if liable to wrath, then doubtless subject to depravity, and chargeable with sin.

Ther. What says St. James? You have suppressed, and I had almost forgot his testimony, though it is so very pertinent to my purpose, and so very explicit in my favour: "Men, who are made after the similitude of God." The similitude of God signifies, in the sacred books, those moral endowments which distinguish the possessor both from the brute and the devil. And if men are made after this image, if they are created with these endowments, where is your doctrine of original sin?

Asp. I began to flatter myself that your objections were exhausted. But since I am mistaken in this particular, surely it must be as great a mistake to imagine that our apostle would maintain an opinion so repugnant to the afore-mentioned texts, and so contrary to universal observation. Do not you perceive the very reverse true with regard to your own children? Why do you address them with such tender entreaties, such warm exhortations, such repeated arguments? Why do you allure them to duty by promises, and deter them from transgression by threatenings? Is all this regimen, all this discipline, necessary for creatures that bear the holy image of God?

They "made after the similitude of God?" Then they have no need of the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost, in case they live; and no need of the atonement of Christ's blood, in case they die. Would James, the Lord's brother, assert such an egregious error, as not only opposes a single article, but undermines the whole constitution of Christianity? sets aside the sanctification of the divine Spirit, and the propitiation of the Redeemer's death? Impossible for him to assert! Impossible, I should think, for us to suppose!

St. James speaks of a fact that is past; speaks of men collectively as they were all included in their first parent. The passage, I apprehend, should be translated, not men that "are," but men that "were"* created, &c. The scripture considers Adam as the common parent of us all; nay more, considers us all as existing in our great progenitor; which is so far from overthrowing, that it establishes the point in debate. For if we were all created after the similitude of God, in and with Adam; it must follow, that we all fell from our conformity to God in and with Adam. And if so—let me for once retort my friend's interrogatory,—Where is not original sin?

I am very sure it runs through our Liturgy; is an essential part of our Articles; and most strongly delineated in our Homilies. Shall I produce some of those testimonies, which are as clear as they are copious?

Ther. No more of your testimonies, good Aspasio. Inform me rather what advantages can accrue from your inculcating, or my adopting, such a doctrine. Suppose it were undeniably true, disagreeable truths, like disagreeable objects, should be consigned over to obscurity, not obtruded upon our view. On such an occasion, the reply of Themistocles should be mine. One of the literati of Greece offered to communicate an elaborate and curious invention, by means of which his memory should be so wonderfully strengthened, as to retain whatever he read or heard. "My friend," replied the hero, "you quite mistake the way to serve me. I want to learn the art not of remembering, but of forgetting."

Asp. If to forget our disease, were a likely method to restore our health, I should readily concur in your hero's way of thinking. As this will hardly be allowed, I cannot but judge it more advisable to remember our disease, that we may inquire after a remedy.

Ther. Where is this remedy to be had?

Asp. Not on earth, but from heaven. The schools of science cannot discover it. The courts of kings are unable to procure it. The college of physicians know not how to prescribe it. But the gospel of our salvation prescribes, prepares and dispenses it. The language of Christ in his holy word is, "I will bring her health and cure,"

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* Jam. iii. 9. That this is the precise signification of the participle γεγονοτας, may be gathered from 1 Tim. v. 9. where γεγονυια is translated *having been*; and must necessarily refer, not to the present, but to the past condition of the widow.

(Jer. xxxiii. 6.) And the beginning of our cure is, to be sensible of our disorder.

Hence we are taught to be humble. To review the catalogue of our actual transgressions, is a mortifying employ. But that which lays the soul in the lowest abasement, is the conviction of inbred iniquity. This strikes at the root of human vanity, and cuts asunder the very sinews of self-conceit. Blindness in the understanding, impotency in the will, disorder in the affections,—these are not visitants, but inhabitants;* congenial with our frame, and ingrained in our constitution. How then, O! how can we be vain of our moral beauty, who have an hereditary defilement cleaving to all our faculties? Surely this must banish the Pharisee from our breast, and inspire us with the sentiments of that sincere penitent, "Behold, I am vile! (Job. xl. 4.); must teach us the language of the abashed leper, "Unclean! unclean!" (Lev. xiii. 45.)

Ther. I should think it would make us melancholy rather than humble; serve no other purpose than to introduce an afflictive sense of extreme wretchedness.

Asp. Did we intend to rest here, your apprehensions would be just; but we urge the doctrine of original corruption as a preparative for the Redemption of Christ.

It is observable, that very few applied to the blessed Jesus in the days of his flesh but the sons and daughters of affliction. The levee of that Prince of Peace was crowded by the lame, the blind, the diseased. These being sensible of distress, and longing for relief, fell as humble supplicants at his feet, while others, who were firm in their health, and gay in their spirits, rejected him with contemptuous scorn. When we perceive "the plague of our heart," and feel those worse than ulcerous sores which overspread our nature, we also shall ardently seek to "the Lord our healer." When we find ourselves subject to the curse of the law, in bondage to the tyranny of Satan, and liable to everlasting damnation, then the divine Physician, and the divine Redeemer will be precious indeed: whereas, if we remain insensible of our misery, the gospel, which is saving health to the contrite soul, will be an unaffecting story to our ears; We may hear it, we may read it, as an amusing narrative; but shall not receive it as a sovereign remedy.

Ther. Not receive the gospel, Aspasio! I hardly understand what you mean. I often study the gospel; I believe it to be a divine revelation, and endeavour to follow its directions. I look upon it as containing the most refined system of morality; as enforcing every virtue, by the strongest motives, and recommending all by the most perfect example.

Asp. To which you should add—as revealing that great Mediator, who has fulfilled all righteousness, to effect our justification; who has also the fulness of the Spirit, to accomplish our regeneration. Otherwise, what you mention is infinitely short of the gospel. It brings no glad tidings to fallen creatures. It administers no succour to ruined sinners. It is like writing a copy for the blind, or setting a task to the disabled; which would rather be an insult on their impotence, than a relief of their distress.

The first particular I wave at present. Only let me ask your opinion of the last; which is a grand doctrine, and a very distinguishing privilege of the gospel: I mean the doctrine and the privilege of spiritual regeneration; exclusive of which, all your endeavours to possess virtue, and practise morality, will be no better than endeavours to fly without wings, or to run without feet.

While unimpressed with a sense of our original depravity, we shall probably sit down contented with some superficial reformation, and not aspire after a renewal of the heart. Civility will pass for sanctity, and a temperate disposition for a gracious habit. Why is the new birth, why are all the saving operations of the blessed Spirit, disregarded by some, derided by others? Because these persons are insensible of their utter inability to all good and of their abject slavery to all evil. Therefore they see no reason for this divine agency, or for that universal change.

You also, my dear friend, while unacquainted with your natural corruption, cannot apprehend either the reasonableness or the necessity of being "renewed in the spirit of your mind," (Eph. iv. 23) But when experience has taught you the former, you will want no arguments to convince you of the latter. Can creatures who are blind in their understandings, discern the things which belong to their eternal peace? Can creatures who are dead in sin, exercise the graces or discharge the duties of a Christian life? Can creatures whose hearts are enmity against God, either delight to do his will here, or be meet for his beatific presence hereafter?

Under the influence of such convictions, that new birth which the gospel of Christ promises, which the Spirit of God produces, will appear as necessary for your state, and be as welcome to your soul, as these gentle dews are necessary for the languishing herbs, and welcome to the thirsty soil.

Ther. The dews, though refreshing to the flowers, may be too chilly for our constitutions. And see! the star of evening,

* Called therefore η οικουσα εν εμοι αμαρτια, "sin that dwelleth in me," Rom. vii. 17

by proclaiming the approach of night, has given us a warning to quit our arbour. Some other time we must resume this inquiry; for I am by no means satisfied that your theory agrees with experience.

Asp. I fear I have already kept you out too long. Let me just observe as we go in, that the doctrine, however disagreeable in itself, is conducted to an advantageous issue. It is productive of a much more substantial consolation, than history assigns to the great but exiled Marius. When he fled with his ruined circumstances, to linger out the poor remains of life among the ruins of Carthage, what was his chief support? "Contemplating," says the historian, "that famous city in the dust, he was the less afflicted with his own downfall."

We have not been put off with such cold comforts, such negative benefits. The belief of original sin has a tendency to make us humble, to show us our need of Christ, to create in us a hunger and thirst after the renewing influences of his Spirit, and the justifying merit of his righteousness. So that it must be owing to our own perverseness, or our own negligence, if we do not levy a tax upon our loss, and rise even by our fall.

DIALOGUE XII.

THE sun was fiercely bright, and the sky without a cloud. Not a breath fanned the woods, nor a gale curled the stream. The fields, exposed to all the fiery beams, were like a glowing hearth. The little birds, overcome by the potent influence, lost, for a while, their tuneful notes. Nothing was heard in the garden but the drowsy hum of bees, and the moan-like buz of winged insects. All nature seemed to languish: The flourishing meads looked sickly: the gayest blossoms began to fade; the sprightliest animals, if not reposed under some cooling shelter, panted for breath, and hung their drooping heads, amidst the all-surrounding blaze and the unsufferable heat. Aspasio disappeared ever since dinner, and none could tell whither he was gone. Theron, as soon as the tea equipage was removed, took his way to the wood. Desirous of the thickest shade, he hastened to the centre. A serpentine walk composed the avenue; which, after several windings, delivered him into a large circular area, not covered with a Grecian or Roman temple, unmeaning imitation of pagan idolatry, but surrounded with aged and princely oaks; the coalition of whose branches threw over the grassy plat a majestic, rural dome, and their unpierced foliage "imbrowned the noontide hours."

In the midst, and elevated on a square base, was a statue representing the venerable Elijah on his bended knees, with hands stretched out, and eyes lifted up to heaven. His attitude, his air, his every feature, were a most lively comment on those strong energetic expressions of scripture, "take hold on God," (Isa. lxiv. 7.) "Wrestle with the Almighty;* Pour out your hearts before him." (Psalm lxii. 8.) On one side of the pedestal were engraven the priests of Baal, in frantic emotions calling upon their senseless deity, and gashing themselves with unavailing wounds. On the other was exhibited, in basso-relievo, the adoring Tishbite's altar; his victim burning with fire from the Lord, even while the water ran from every limb, and overflowed the trench below.

A remote cascade tumbled from a craggy rock. The stream, after having wasted its silver foam in a winding progress, straggled into this grand arbour. Here it just appeared gliding down a gentle slope, with a flaunting air, and a prattling noise. Impressed, as it were, with the unexpected solemnity of the scene, it seemed to check its wanton waves, and turned aside into a more sequestered path. As some heedless trifler, who bolts unawares into the royal presence, stands struck with reverence and awe, or retires with precipitance and confusion.

The deep gloom, shedding a kind of night even while the sun glared in the sky; not a whisper stirring among so many millions of leaves; and all their warbling natives hushed in silence,—the sonorous toll of the distant cascade, and the tinkling chime of the nearer rill,—the profound adoration, and fervent devotion, which lived in the lineaments of the impassioned stone: all these circumstances rendered the place prodigiously august and striking. Not much unlike the ancient oratories, where holy people retired from the giddy ring, and the bustling crowd, to ennoble their minds, with sublime contemplation, where they bid a temporary adieu to the tumultuous world, its gay impertinence and solemn dulness, in order to maintain a more uninterrupted communion with that mighty Being, who "sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers before him.†

* Col. iv. 12. Αγωνιζομενος εν ταις προσευχαις.

† Isa. xl. 22. What a noble image is here, and what an exquisitely fine contrast! God, the great God, sitteth on those lofty and immense heavens, which, at an inconceivable distance, surround this pensile globe. From that most sublime and magnificent throne, he looks down upon the inhabitants of the earth, who, in all their pomp and splendour, amidst all their admired works and boasted acquisitions, are mean and impotent in his sight,—mean and impotent as the poor insects which wander over the parched heath for sustenance,—which spend all the day in idle insignificant chirpings; and at night take up their contemptible habitation on a blade of grass.

Welcome to Theron was the shady bower; welcome the cool aspect and the musical flow of the water; but more welcome than all was the sight of his friend, who lay reclined at the foot of an oak, with a book half open in his hand, and his eye fixed upon the statue.

Ther. I know not, Aspasio, whether I must make an apology for breaking in upon your retirement; or call you to an account, for depriving the ladies of your company at the tea-table.

Asp. Indeed, Theron, I have been so much delighted with the place, with the companion in my hand, and the noble object before me, that I scarce observed how the time stole away. And I flatter myself, if you will take a seat by my side, and share my entertainment, you will be more inclined to excuse than to aggravate my fault.

Ther. Is Tully then (for I observe his name on the volume) your companion? And can such a devoted admirer of the Bible be so highly charmed with a Heathen classic? St. Augustine somewhere declares, that though passionately fond, before his conversion, of Tully's writings, yet after that memorable change he could no longer relish those admired compositions; because they were not sweetened, as he expresses himself, with the melifluous name of Jesus.

Asp. I am far from pretending to such an exalted pitch of devotion as that seraphic father attained. I can spend a vacant minute on the delicate odes of Horace, and taste a refined entertainment in Virgil's beautiful poem. But when I hear a sermon, or peruse a religious treatise, which borrows neither dignity nor charms from that amiable and glorious name, I own myself extremely disappointed. Without the offices, the merits or the grace of Christ, the sermon and the treatise appear as defective, as a body that is neither adorned with the head nor enlivened with the heart.

Ther. I suppose then you cultivate an acquaintance with the Grecian and Roman authors, in order to improve your taste, and polish your style.

Asp. These, and, I am apt to think, more considerable advantages than these, may be derived from an occasional application to their works. They may serve as so many shades, to set off with heightened lustre the beauty and glory of the sacred oracles.

While I peruse Plato's ornamented page, or listen to Cicero's flowing periods, I am somewhat like the person who amuses himself in a gallery of painted flowers. He is pleased with the curious creation of the pencil; but finds none of that delicious fragrance, none of those breathing sweets, which meet him in the garden, and regale his sense, from the blooming parterre. So here are brilliant sentiments and a florid diction; delicate touches of wit, and bold strokes of description: But no discovery of Christ Jesus, no displays of his ineffable love, no overtures of reconciliation with the blessed God; nothing to yield us solid comfort in our present state, or any joyful expectations with regard to the approaching eternity.

Besides, when I converse with those celebrated geniuses of antiquity, who were at once the most erroneous and the most judicious—the most judicious in their taste of polite literature the most erroneous in their apprehensions of invisible things—they show me, what they never intended, the inexpressible need of revelation. They teach me to set a higher value on that inestimable gift. I bless the distinguishing goodness of providence, which has cast my lot,* not at Athens, but in Emmanuel's land. I say, with wonder and gratitude, "Why did not my existence commence in those eras of religious dotage? Why was not my portion confined to those regions of barbarism and delusion? Why am not I burning incense to idols, paying senseless adoration to sculptured stone, or worshipping, with detestable ceremonies, a set of lascivious, debauched, and scandalous† deities?"—Surely, Theron, from every perusal of those volumes, attended with such a reflection, we shall see the utmost reason to magnify "the tender mercies of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us;" (Luke i. 78.) and brought us out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel.

Permit me to mention another benefit which may result from a correspondence with those masterly writers. The streams may lead us to the inexhaustible fountain; lead us to admire the only wise God our Saviour, who has given such a shining vein of ingenuity to his rational creatures. As I read their works, and am charmed with their beauties, I would frequently reflect—"If the essays of a finite mind, and the compositions of a mortal pen, yield such high satisfaction, what rapturous, what unknown delight must arise from an uninterrupted communion with Infinite Wisdom! To stand, not at the feet of Homer, and attend the flights of his elevated imagination; not in the presence of Socrates, and

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* Alluding to the story of the philosopher, who used to bless the gods for three privileges;—That he was made not a brute, but a rational creature—That he was born not in barbarous climes, but in Greece—That he lived not in the more uncultivated ages, but in the time, and under the tuition of Socrates.

† This, I think, gives us the most deplorable and horrid idea of the blindness of our fallen nature. The Heathens, even amidst all the politeness of their taste, and notwithstanding their superior advancement in the sciences, where haters of the true God, and robbed him of his honour; nay, what is unspeakably worse, they paid it to monsters—monsters of lewdness and treachery, vice and immorality. Egregious, sottish, almost incredible stupidity! to worship those beings, which deserved universal abhorrence! to defy those characters, which could never be sufficiently detested.

hear the dictates of his sagacious soul; but to stand in the courts of the Lord, and before the throne of the Lamb, there to contemplate, without any interposing veil, the counsels of his unerring providence; to have the mysteries of his redeeming love laid fully open to our view; and receive the brightest manifestations of all his amiable, his adorable, his unspeakable attributes?"

Ther. These are advantages truly desirable, and equally obvious. Methinks, it surprises me that I should never so much as propose them, and grieves me, that I should so long be deprived of them. A view to such very superior improvements will, I hope, render my future intercourse with those favourite authors still more agreeable, and abundantly more beneficial.—But let me ask, what passage was engaging your attention this afternoon?

Asp. The great orator's treatise concerning the "Nature of the divine Being;"* that part especially which proves his existence and perfections from the formation of the human body.

Ther. And do you not perceive, that he is almost as deficient in the knowledge of his subject, as he is mistaken in his ideas of the Supreme Cause? The exquisite contrivance and inimitable workmanship of the human frame were, in those early ages, but dimly discerned. It was the infancy of anatomy, when the very professors had scarcely the qualifications of a modern pupil. Many of the received notions were childish, almost all of them superficial.

Asp. Will my Theron then entertain me with a more accurate description of this wonderful structure?

Ther. How could you take occasion, Aspasio, from the hint I dropped, to conceive any such expectation? It is one thing to discover, another to correct, what is amiss. Many spectators can point out an accidental defect in some celebrated statue, or a small indelicacy in some valuable piece of painting, who are absolutely incapable of retouching the one or supplying the other.

Asp. Since we are fallen upon this point, you must give me leave to renew and urge my request. I shall be extremely glad to hear your remarks upon the subject, especially as you have made this branch of science a part of your amusement, and not without the advantage of anatomical dissections; whereas I have very seldom applied my thoughts to the former, and never had an opportunity of being present at the latter.

Let me also observe, that our very situation favours, or rather suggests, such a topic of conversation. All the fine prospects of the country are excluded. We have scarce any thing left but ourselves to contemplate. And shall this be the only theme we neglect?

Ther. It is somewhat preposterous, I must confess, to pry into the archives of colleges, to ransack the cabinets of the *virtuosi*, to carry our search through the whole compass of external nature, and at the same time overlook the far more surprising curiosities which abound in the composition of our own bodies.—Since you insist upon it, my observations, crude and extemporaneous as they are, shall submit themselves to your judgment, provided you will be content to receive only a few of the outlines, and nothing like a finished draught.

Asp. Let me just hint, that the more circumstantial your account is, so much the more welcome will it be to your friend, and so much the more honourable to our common Creator. For I really think, that Galen's declaration upon this head is perfectly just; which I have read in my favourite commentator Beza, and which speaks to the following effect:*—"Such treatises as display the excellencies of the great Creator, compose one of the noblest and most acceptable hymns. To acquaint ourselves with his sublime perfections, and point out to others his infinite power, his unerring wisdom, and his boundless benignity; this is a more substantial act of devotion than to slay hecatombs of victims at his altar, or kindle mountains of spices into incense."—Theron, after pausing a few minutes, thus resumed the discourse.

Ther. When some master builder undertakes to erect a magnificent edifice, he begins with the less decorated, but more solid parts—those which are to support, or those which are to contain the rest. This order, if you please, we will follow in considering "the earthly house of our tabernacle." 2 Cor. v. i.

First, you have a system of bones, cast into a variety of moulds, enlarged or contracted into a variety of sizes. All strong, that they may commodiously bear up the fleshy machine; yet light, that they may not depress the animal with an encumbering load. Bored with an internal cavity, to contain the moistening marrow, and perforated with exceedingly fine ducts, to admit the nourishing vessels. Insensible themselves, they are covered with a membrane† of exquisite sensibility, which warns them of the approach, and secures them from the annoyance, of any injurious friction; and at the same time preserves the muscular parts from being fretted in their action by the hard and rough substance of the bones. Their figures are always most precisely fitted to their uses. They are generally larger at the extremities than in the middle, that they

* De Natura Deorum.

* *Vide* Bez. Annot ad Rom. i. 20.

† The periosteum.

may be joined more firmly, and not so easily dislocated. The manner of their articulation is truly admirable, and remarkably various; yet never varied without demonstrating some wise design, and answering some valuable end. Frequently, when two are united, the one is nicely rounded and caped with a smooth substance; the other is scooped into a hollow of the same dimensions, to receive the polished knob; and both are lubricated with an unctuous fluid, to yield the readiest rotation in the socket.

The feet compose the firmest and neatest pedestal, infinitely beyond all that statuary or architecture can accomplish; capable of altering its form, and extending its size, as different circumstances require. Besides performing the office of a pedestal, they contain a set of the nicest springs, which help to place the body in a variety of graceful attitudes, and qualify it for a multiplicity of advantageous motions. The undermost part of the heel, and the extremity of the sole, are shod with a tough, insensible, sinewy substance. This we may call a kind of natural sandal: It never wears out, never wants repair, and always prevents that undue compression of the vessels which the weight of the body, in walking or standing, might otherwise occasion. The legs and thighs are like substantial and stately columns;* articulated in such a manner, that they administer most commodiously to the act of walking, yet obstruct not the easy posture of sitting. The legs swell out towards the top, with a gentle projection; and are wrought off towards the bottom with neat diminutions; which variation lessens their bulk, at the same time that it increases their beauty.

The ribs, turned into a regular arch, are gently moveable, for the act of respiration. They form a secure lodgment for the lungs and the heart, which being some of the most distinguished and important organs of life, have their residence fortified by this strong semicircular rampart.† The backbone is intended, not only to strengthen the body, and sustain its most capacious storerooms, but also to bring down that communication of the brain, which is usually termed the spinal marrow. As an open channel, it conveys—as a well-closed case, it guards—this vital silver;‡ and, by several commodious outlets, transmits the animating treasure into all the inferior parts. Had it only been large, straight and hollow, it might have served these several purposes, but then the loins must have been inflexible, and every man impaled (not by the executioner, but by nature) on a stake coeval with his existence. To avoid which, it consists of very short bones, closely knit together by intervening cartilages. This peculiarity of structure prevents dislocation, and gives the main pillar of our frame the pliancy of an osier, even while it retains the firmness of an oak. By this means, it is a kind of continued joint, capable of various inflections, without bruising the soft medullary substance which fills its cavity, without intercepting the nervous fluid which is to be detached from this grand reservoir, or diminishing that strength which is necessary to support all the upper stories. A formation so very peculiar in any other of the solids, must have been attended with great inconveniences: here it is unspeakably serviceable—is, both for workmanship and situation, a master-piece of creating skill never enough to be admired.

The arms, pendent on either side, are exactly proportioned to each other, that the equilibrium of the structure may not be disconcerted. These being the guards which defend,* and the ministers which serve the whole body, are fitted for the most diversified and extensive operations; firm with bone, yet not weighty with flesh, and capable of performing, with singular expedition and ease, all manner of useful motions. They bend inwards, and turn outwards; they rise upwards, and stoop downwards; they wheel about, and throw themselves into whatever direction we please. To these are annexed the hands, and all terminated by the fingers; which are not, like the arms, of the same length, and of an equal bigness, but in both respects different, which gives them a more graceful appearance, and a much greater degree of usefulness. Were they all flesh, they would be comparatively impotent; were they one entire bone, they would be utterly inflexible; but consisting of various little bones, and a multitude of muscles, what shape can they not assume? what service can they not perform? Being placed at the end of the arm, the sphere of their action is exceedingly enlarged. This advantageous situation realizes the fable of Briareus, and renders a pair of hands as serviceable as an hundred. The extremities of the fingers are an assemblage of fine tendinous fibres, most acutely sensible,† which,

* Styled therefore by the sacred philosopher, "the strong men," Eccl. xii. 3, and compared by the same beautiful writer to pillars of marble. Cant. v. 15.

† "Thou hast fenced me," secured my inward and vital parts, "with bones and sinews." Job x. 11. "Crates pectoris," is Virgil's expression.

‡ This is supposed to be the part which Solomon describes by the silver cord, and is indeed like a cord, on account of its shape; like silver, on account of its colour. Eccl. xii. 6.

* Called in Solomon's figurative but elegant sketch of anatomy, "the keepers of the house." Eccl. xii. 3.

† So very acute is the sensibility of these parts, that I am informed it furnishes the tribunal of the Inquisition with one of the most refined expedients in the art of torture. A strong quill, sharpened by the penknife, and dipped in some inflammable liquor, is thrust deep between the nail and the finger

notwithstanding the delicacy of their texture, are destined to almost incessant employ, and frequently exercised among rugged objects. For this reason, they are overlaid with the nails, a sort of horny expansion, which, like a ferule, hinders the flesh from being ungracefully flattened; and like a sheath preserves the tender parts from injurious impressions.

In the ministry of the hands and activity of the fingers, we possess a case of the finest instruments, or a collection of the noblest utensils qualifying us for the execution of every work which the projecting genius can devise, or the lavish fancy crave. To these we are obliged for the beautiful statues, which have often entertained our eyes in yonder solitary walks; and even for that melodious trumpet, which now addresses our ears from the summer-house on the fish-pond. These raise the lofty column, and turn the spacious arch. These swell the majestic dome, and adjust the commodious apartment. Architecture, with all her striking beauties, and all her rich benefits, is the creation of the human hand. Yielding to the strength of the hand, the tallest firs fall to the ground, and the largest oaks descend from the mountains. Fashioned by the dexterity of the hand, they accommodate the sailor with a floating warehouse; and circulate, from Britain to Japan, the productions of nature and the improvements of art. Obedient to the human hand, metals ascend from their subterranean beds, and compose the most substantial parts of that curious machine,* which transmits far and near, to the monarch's palace, and to the peasant's hut, such treasures of wisdom and knowledge, "as the gold and crystal cannot equal." Job xxviii. 17.

Among the Egyptians, the hand was the symbol of strength; among the Romans it was an emblem of fidelity; and I think it may, among all nations, be looked upon as the ensign of authority. It is the original and the universal sceptre; that which not only represents, but ascertains, our dominion over all the elements, and over every creature. Though providence has not given us the strength of the horse, the swiftness of the grey-hound, or the sagacious scent of the spaniel, yet, directed by the understanding, and enabled by the hand, we can subject them to our will, turn them to our advantage, and, in this sense, make them all our own. These hands, (surprising to relate!) these short hands, have found out a way, whereby they can dive to the bottom of the ocean, can penetrate the bowels of the earth, and reach from shore to shore. These feeble hands can manage the wings of the wind, can arm themselves with the rage of the fire, and press into their service the forcible impetuosity of the waters. How eminent is the dignity, how extensive the agency of the hand! It would require more eloquence than your orator possessed to display the former, and more pages than your book contains, to describe the latter. How greatly then are we indebted to our indulgent Creator for accommodating us with this noble, this distinguishing, this invaluable member!

Above all is the head, a majestic dome, designed for the residence of the brain. It is framed in exact conformity to this important purpose; ample, to receive it, strong to uphold it, and firm to defend it. As the head resembles the general's tent in an army, or the monarch's palace in a city, it has a communication established with all, even the most inferior and remote parts of the system; has outlets and avenues, for the ready dispatch of couriers to all quarters, and for the reception of speedy intelligence on every interesting occasion. It is furnished with lodgments, wherein to post centinels of various characters, and appointed for various offices. To expedite their operations, whether they are employed in reconnoitring what passes without, or examining what claims admittance within, the whole turns upon a curious pivot, most nicely contrived to afford the largest and freest circumvolutions.

This stately capital is screened from heat, defended from cold, and, at the same time, very much beautified, by a copious growth of hair, which flows down from the parted forelock in decent curls, and hangs mantling on the cheeks, clustering on the shoulders. A decoration incomparably more delicate than any or all the orders of architecture can supply, and so perfectly light, that it no way encumbers or incommodes the wearer.

While many animals creep on the ground, while all of them are prone in their posture or their aspect, the attitude of man is erect, which is by far the most graceful, has an air of dignity, and bespeaks superiority. It is by far the most commodious; fits us for the prosecution of every grand scheme, and facilitates the success of all our extensive designs. It is likewise attended with the greatest safety, being, if not less than any other position exposed to dangers, yet more happily contrived to repel or avoid them.

Asp. May it not likewise be intended to remind us of our exalted original, and our sublime end: Our original, which was the breath of the Almighty, and the spirit of

When the quill has cut its way through the shivering nerves, and stands planted like a dagger, amidst the gushing blood, some barbarous hand sets fire to the extremity. The keen point, the slow flame, and both in the seat of the most lively sensation, put the miserable sufferer to the most excruciating pain.

* The printing-press.

the Most High; our end, which is not the soil we tread on, or any of its low productions, but the heaven of heavens, and the "things that are above."

But not to divert from our subject, which, in my friend's manner of handling it, is as entertaining as it is instructive:—The bones (to carry on your own allusion) are only the rafters, the beams, the shell of the living edifice. You have raised the walls, and laid the floors; you have made the proper divisions, and left the necessary apertures. But in every finished house the roof is covered, and the rooms are wainscotted. The sashes are hung, and the doors turn upon their hinges. The grates are fixed and the stairs ascend. Within, the lodgings are furnished; without, the front is ornamented. All is rendered commodious for domestic use, and graceful to the external view.

Ther. This likewise is executed by the great, the divine Artificer. Here are ligaments; a tough and strong arrangement of fibres, to unite the several limbs, and render what would otherwise be a disjointed unwieldy jumble, a well-compacted and self-manageable system. Membranes, or thin and flexible tunicles appointed to inwrap the fleshy parts, to form a connexion between some, and make a separation between others.*

Arteries, the rivers of our little world,† or the aqueducts of the organized metropolis, some of which ascend to the head, others spread themselves over the shoulders; some extend to the arms, some descend to the feet, and striking out, as they go, into numberless smaller canals, visit the streets, the alleys, and every individual apartment of the vital city: These being wide at their origin, and lessening as they branch themselves, check the rapid impetus of the blood. To sustain this shock, they are endued with uncommon strength; by performing this service, they oblige the crimson current to pass into the narrowest defiles, and distribute itself into all quarters. The blood thrown from the heart dilates the arteries, and their own elastic force contracts them. By which means, they vibrate in proper places, very perceivably against the finger; bring advices of the utmost importance to the physician; and very much assist him, both in discovering the nature of diseases, and prescribing for their respective cures. The larger arteries, wherever the body is formed for incurvation, are situate on the bending side; lest being stretched to an improper length by the inflection, their dimensions should be lessened, and the circulating fluid retarded. They are not, like several of the considerable veins, laid so near the surface, as to be protrusive of the skin, but are deposited to a proper depth in the flesh. This situation renders them more secure from external injuries. It conceals likewise those starts and resilitions of the pulse, which, if apparent, would discompose the most sedate, and disfigure the most comely countenance. Could we cast our eye upon the river which runs through the neighbouring meadow, we might observe several mills intersecting the stream. The waters, at those places, if not entirely stopped, drain away very slowly. In consequence of this obstruction, the lower channels would be sunk dry, and the upper ones swelled into a flood. To obviate both these inconveniences, low-shots are provided, which carrying off the surcharge, prevent a glut above, and supply the banks below. In those parts of the body, which are most liable to pressure, much the same expedient takes place. The arteries inosculate, or, breaking into a new track, they fetch a little circuit, in order to return and communicate again with the main road. So that, if any obstacle blocks up or straitens the direct passage, the current, by diverting to this new channel, eludes the impediment, maintains an uninterrupted flow, and soon regains its wonted course.

Veins are appointed to receive the blood from the arteries, and re-convey it to the heart. Small at their rise, and enlarging as they advance, they are void of any pulsation. In these, the pressure of the circulating fluid is not near so forcible as in the arterial tubes; for which reason, their texture is considerably slighter. Such an exact economist is nature, even amidst all her liberality!* In many of these canals, the current, though winding continually and acquiring a proportionable increase of gravity, is obliged to push its way against the perpendicular. By which circumstance it is exposed to the hazard of falling back, and overloading the vessels, if not of supressing the animal motion. For a security against this danger, valves are interposed at proper distances, which are no hinderance to the regular passage, but prevent the reflux, sustain the augmented weight, and facilitate a progress to the grand receptacle. This auxiliary contrivance comes in, where the blood is constrained to climb; but is dismissed where the steep ascent ceases, and such a precaution would be needless.

* The intestines are fastened to each other by the mesentery. The breast is divided into two cavities by the "mediastinum." Both which are reckoned among the membranes.

† A human body was called by the ancients the "microcosm," that is, a little world, or the world in miniature.

* A parallel instance of frugality is observable in the arteries, whose coats are spun thinner, as the diameter of the vessels becomes smaller, and the pressure of the blood weaker

Here are glands, whose office it is to filtrate the passing fluid. Each of these glands is an assemblage of vessels, complicated and intervolved with seeming confusion, but with perfect regularity. As some kind of sieves transmit the dust, and retain the corn; others bolt out the meal, and hold back the bran; so some of these glandulous strainers draw off the finest, others the grossest parts of the blood. Some, like the distiller's alembic, sublimate;* others, like the common sewers, defecate.† Each forms a secretion far more curious than the most admired operations of chemistry; yet all necessary for the support of life, or conducive to the comfort of the animal. Muscles wove in nature's nicest loom; composed of the slenderest fibres, yet endued with incredible strength; fashioned after a variety of patterns, but all in the highest taste for elegance, conveniency, and usefulness. These, with their tendons annexed, constitute the instruments of motion. The former, contracting their substance, operate somewhat like the pulley in mechanics. The latter, resembling the cord, are fastened to a bone, or some partition of flesh; and, following the muscular contraction, actuate the part into which they are inserted. This, and all their functions, they execute, not like a sluggish beast of burden, but quick as the lightning. Nerves, surprisingly minute tubes—derived from the brain, and permeated by an exquisitely subtile fluid, which, gliding into the muscles, sets them on work—diffuses the power of sensation through the body; or, returning upon any impression from without, gives all needful intelligence to the soul. Vesicles, distended with an unctuous matter, in some places, compose a soft cushion‡ for nature, in other places, they fill up her vacuities, and smooth the inequalities of the flesh. Inwardly, they supple the several movements of the active machine; outwardly, they render its appearance plump, well proportioned, and graceful.

The skin, like a curious surtout,§ exactly fitted, is superinduced over the whole, formed of the most delicate net-work, whose meshes* are minute, and whose threads† are multiplied even to a prodigy. The meshes so minute, that nothing passes them, which is discernible by the eye; though they discharge every moment myriads and myriads of superfluous incumbrances from the body. The steam, arising from the warm business transacted within, is carried off by these real, though imperceptible funnels,‡ which constitutes what we usually call insensible perspiration. The threads so multiplied, that neither the point of the smallest needle, nor the incomparably nicer spear of a gnat, nor even the invisible lancet of a flea, can pierce any single part, without causing an uneasy sensation, and a suffusion of blood; consequently, without wounding, even by so small a puncture, both a nerve and a vein.§

The veins, either pervading or lying parallel with this fine transparent coat, beautify the human structure; those parts especially, which are most conspicuous, and intended for public view. The pliant wrist, and the taper arm, they variegate with an inlay of living sapphire.—They spread vermilion over the lips,‖ and plant roses in the cheeks, while the eye, tinged with glossy jet, or sparkling with the blue of heaven, is fixed in an orb of polished crystal. Insomuch that the earthly tabernacle exhibits the nicest proportions and richest graces;

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* The glandulous substance of the brain, which secretes the animal spirits.

† The liver and kidneys. The former of which separates the gall, the latter drains off a fluid, which, being sufficiently known, need not be named. I could wish, it had not been so explicitly and coarsely mentioned in our translation of the best of books, but that we had rendered the original, in 1 Kings xiv. 10. "Every male;" in Isaiah, xxxvi. 12. "Eat and drink their own excrements."

‡ The calf of the leg for instance, whose large collection of muscles, intermingled with fat, is of singular service to those important bones. It flanks and fortifies them like a strong bastion. It supports and cherishes them like a soft pillow. And what is no less pleasing to observe, it accommodates and defends them on that very side, where they most frequently rest their weight, and where they are least capable of being guarded by the eye.

§ "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh," Job x. 11.

* The pores of the cuticula.

† The nervous fibres, and other vessels of the cutis. Nature is somewhat like Solomon's virtuous woman, "who is not afraid of the snow for her household, because her household are clothed in scarlet;" or, as it may be rendered, are clothed "with pairs," have two coats a-piece, Prov. xxxi. 21. (See Gen. vi. 19. 20, where the word occurs in this signification). The body also is accommodated with a double covering. The outermost is that soft whitish tegument, which rises in the pustule of a blister. The innermost is that reddish and exquisitely tender part, which appears when the blister is broke, and the dead skin taken off. The first is void of sense, and intended to screen the second, not only from the stroke of injuries, but even from the impressions of the air, which, mild as it may feel to the sheathed, would be too rough and sharp for the naked nerves.

There seems to be an allusion to this particular in that remarkable expression, "Skin for skin," Job. ii. 4. "skin even unto skin," the very inmost skin, which cannot be taken away without the greatest loss, and severest pain. Yet even this loss a man would suffer, this pain he would endure in order to preserve precious life.

‡ These are somewhere prettily styled cutaneous chimneys, and no wonder they are imperceptible, if, as Mr. Lewenhoeck affirms, a single grain of sand will cover no less than 125,000.

§ A blood-vessel at least. Compared with these vessels, the fine filmy threads, which, on some bright autumnal morning, float in the air, or hang on the stubble, must be large as a bell-rope, or bulky as a cable. Such tubes, one would think, would burst at every breath we draw, or even break with their own fineness. Yet they are the conduit-pipes, which convey the vital fluid from and to the grand reservoir. And so exquisite, so admirable is their texture, that they will outlast the strength of lead, or the heart of oak,—these wearing away, those growing stronger by use.

‖ "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet," Cant. iv. 3. Like a thread, for their delicate shape; like a thread of scarlet for their colour.

such nice proportions as afford the most correct model for statuary: such rich graces, as the canvass never bore, as painting imitates in vain.

Asp. How just in itself, and how pertinent to our purpose, is that well-known acknowledgment of the sacred and royal anatomist; "I am curiously wrought!"* "There is a variety, a regularity, and an elegance, in the texture of my body; in the formation and arrangement of these bones and muscles, these veins and arteries;—resembling, shall I say?—rather infinitely surpassing the most costly and admired pieces of embroidery."

It is one of the finest similitudes which the whole circle of polite arts could afford. Yet every comparison, fetched from the performances of mankind, must necessarily debase the noble subject. All the enrichments which the needle can give, or the most splendid silks receive, are rude, are coarse, are mere sackcloth, when set in opposition to the exquisite delicacy of the fleshly web. As, indeed, all the celebrated palaces, amphitheatres, temples, which ever adorned the most magnificent cities in the world, are but a heap of confusion, if compared with the symmetry and beauty of the bodily fabric. And, what is beyond measure marvellous, all these wonders of mechanism and decoration arose, not from the purer elements, not from the more refined parts of the creation, but from the dust of the ground.† How easily, Theron, can that stupendous Artificer renew our hearts, and transform our souls into his own image, who could raise such delicate and stately edifices from particles—despicable particles of the trodden soil!

I could not forbear interposing this remark; because it tends to manifest our Creator's glory, to encourage our hopes, and strengthen our faith; otherwise I should be angry with myself for interrupting your discourse. Pray go on with your description of the animal economy: only let me observe, that such a course of incessant action must exhaust the fluids, must waste the solids; and, unless both are supplied with proper recruits, must gradually weaken, and at length totally destroy the machine.

Ther. For this reason, it is furnished with the organs, and endued with the powers of nutrition.—Teeth, the foremost thin and sharp, fitted to bite asunder the food, or cut‡ off such a portion as the mouth can conveniently manage; the hindermost broad and strong, indented like the surface of a millstone,* with small cavities, and jagged with little asperities, which qualify them to grind in pieces whatever is transmitted to their operation. Were the teeth, like our other bones, covered with the usual membrane, the act of chewing would always occasion great uneasiness; and, when any hard substance is eaten, might even lacerate the tender tegument. Were they left without any sort of covering, they would suffer from the inclemencies of the air, and be liable to the penetration of liquors: In which case, they must soon become soft and unfit for service, or be corrupted, and entirely perish. To guard against these disadvantages, they are curiously glazed, or overlaid with a neat enamel, as white as ivory, and harder than the bone itself; which renders them an ornament to the mouth,† secures them from various injuries, and exempts them from pain in the office of mastication.

As the rims and cushions of a billiard-table keep the ball from flying off, and send it back into the green area for repeated essays of skill; so the lips prevent the food from slipping out of the mouth, and, assisted by the tongue, return it to the renewed attrition of the grinders. While the lips, in concert with the cheeks, are employed in this work, their motion compresses the circumjacent glands; and, from innumerable little orifices, a thin pellucid liquor exudes, which moistens the attenuated food, and prepares it for more easy digestion. When the mouth remains inactive, these fountains of spittle are, in a manner, closed. But when it is exercised, either in speaking or eating, their moisture then being peculiarly necessary, they never fail to give out a sufficient quantity.

When the soldier charges his carbine, the cartridge could not make its way to the bottom without the protrusion of the rammer.‡

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* The original signifies "finely wrought," or "elegantly flourished with a needle." The translation adopted by our liturgy is, in this place, flat and inexpressive. The English word fashioned has just the same inferiority to the beautiful Hebrew phrase, as the badge tacked upon some poor pensioner's coat has to the star embroidered on a nobleman's breast. Psal. cxxxix. 14.

† "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." Gen. ii. 7.

‡ Called therefore, "incisive."

* Styled accordingly, "molares."—We find neither of these kinds in the new-born babe. As milk is, for a considerable time, its appointed food, teeth would be of no service to the infant itself. As it is to press the tender nipple for this milky sustenance, teeth would be painful and prejudicial to the nurse. Therefore, nature has postponed the formation of these fine implements, till they become both necessary and beneficial.

† This ornamental furniture of the mouth is, in the grand oriental manner, described by Solomon: "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep, that are even shorn, which come up from the washing." Cant. iv. 2. Growing, not single like the nose; not in pairs like the eyes; but in rows considerably numerous, like a flock. None rising higher than the other; none standing unduly prominent beyond another; but all set as true as if they were ranged by the compass; and making as regular an appearance as the flocks that are even shorn. They are clean also as the fleeces which have no spot, and white as the colour of the purest wool, like the flocks just come up from the washing.

‡ This and the other similitudes, are undoubtedly too mean for the noble occasion. Neither do they, in every circumstance, quadrate with the functions described. The motion of the muscles, which minister to the act of deglutition, is different from the per-

Neither would the food, which we receive at the mouth, descend by the force of its own weight, through a narrow and clammy channel, into the stomach. To effectuate therefore, and expedite its passage, muscles both strait and circular are provided. The former enlarge the cavity of the throat, and afford a more easy admittance; the latter, closing behind the descending aliment, press it downwards, and finish the deglutition. Before the food enters the gullet, it must of necessity pass over the orifice of the windpipe; consequently, must be in very imminent danger of falling upon the lungs; which would, if not entirely obstruct the breath, yet occasion violent coughing,* and great inconveniences. To obviate this evil, the all-foreseeing Contriver has placed a moveable lid, or hung a cartilaginous draw-bridge,† which, when any the smallest particle of food advances to enter the stomach, is pulled down and shut close; but the very moment the morsel is swallowed, it is set loose and stands open. By this twofold artifice, the important passage is always barred and made sure against any noxious approaches, yet is always left free for the necessary accession of air, and commodious for the purposes of respiration.

When the maltster prepares his grain for the transmutations of the brew-house, he suffers it to lie several hours steeping in the cistern, before it is fit to be spread upon the floor, or dried on the kiln. The meat and drink likewise must remain a considerable time in the stomach before they are of a proper consistence and temperature, either for the tender coats, or the delicate operation of the bowels. For which purpose, that great receiver is made strong to bear, capacious to hold, and so curiously contrived as to lay a temporary embargo‡ upon its contents. Here they are lodged in the very centre of warmth, and concocted by the most kindly combination of heat and humidity. Here they are saturated with other fermenting or diluting juices, and are kneaded, as it were, by the motion of the stomach, and compression of the neighbouring parts. So that every, the minutest fragment is separated; the whole is reduced to a tenuity, abundantly finer than the exactest grinding could effect; and all is worked up into the smoothest most nicely-mixed pulp imaginable. From hence it is dislodged by a gently-acting force, and passes by a gradual transition into the cavity of the intestines.

Near the entrance, punctual as a porter in his lodge, waits the gall-bladder,* ready to transfuse its acrimonious but salutary juices, on the advancing aliment; which dissolve its remaining viscidities; scour the passage of the intestines, and keep all its fine apertures clear. This bag, as the stomach fills, is elevated by the distension; as the stomach empties, is proportionably depressed. The former posture brings on a discharge, the latter occasions a suppression of the bile. It is furnished also with a valve of a very peculiar, but most convenient form,† through which the detersive liquid cannot hastily pour, but must gently ooze. Admirable construction, which, without any care or consciousness of ours, prohibits an immoderate effusion, yet ascertains the needful supply.

Sufficiently charged with this adventitious fluid, the nutritive mass pursues its way through the intestines, whose wonderful meanders are incomparably more curious than the mazes of the Dædalean labyrinth. They are actuated with a worm-like or undulatory motion,‡ which protrudes the received aliment, and forces its fine milky particles into the lacteal vessels. These are a series of the most delicate strainers, ranged in countless multitudes all along the sides of the winding passage, each so nicely framed as to admit the neutrimental balmy juices, and reject the gross excrementitious dregs. Had the intestines been straight and short, the food might have gone through them, without resigning a sufficient quantity of its nourishing particles. Therefore, this grandest of all the vital ducts is artfully convolved, and greatly extended, to afford nature an opportunity of sifting more thoroughly whatever passes, and of detaining whatever may serve her purposes. Lest such lengths of entrails should be entangled among themselves, or be cumbrous to the wearer, they are packed into the neatest folds, and lie within a narrow compass. They are at least six times longer§ than the body which

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pendicular protrusion of the rammer; and it is mentioned only to demonstrate the necessity of some propelling force, in order to convey the aliment into the proper receptacle.

When we descant upon a subject of such extensive contrivance, and such finished perfection, as the human structure, it is scarce possible to find similitudes that will correspond in all particulars, or that can rise to the dignity of the original. Yet if they tend, in any tolerable degree, to explain its formation, to display its uses, and render its wonderful economy somewhat more intelligible, perhaps they may be allowed to take place.

I hope it will be remembered, that Theron speaks not as an adept in the science, but as one whose highest pretensions are, to admire the work, and adore the Artificer. Which acknowledgment may entitle him to some candid indulgence, in case he should offend against the precise anatomical exactness either of sentiment or expression.

* This is what we experience when, in eating or drinking, any thing goes (as it is commonly, and not improperly said) the wrong way.

† Called the "epiglottis."

‡ Which is quite contrary to the economy of the gullet, though they are not only contiguous to each other, but a continuation of the same tube.

* The gall-bladder is situate upon the lower margin of the liver; and to secrete the bilious juice, is supposed to be the principal use of that largest of glands.

† A spiral form.

‡ Styled vermicular or peristaltic.

§ According to this calculation, they must measure, in a pretty tall man, more than thirty-six feet. The substance of the bowels, though thin to a delicacy, is

contains them; yet are they lodged, not crowded, in a part, not in the whole region of the lower belly; and, amidst this small space, have sufficient room to execute the nicest and most important functions. Though the alimentary substance can never mistake its way, yet it may, through some accidental impediment, attempt to return backward. In this case a valve intervenes, and renders what would be extremely pernicious, almost always impracticable. As the whole proceeds in this serpentine course, it is perpetually sending off detachments of nutritious juices. In consequence of which, it would lose its soft temperature; might become rugged, and pain the tender parts; perhaps be hindered from sliding on to its final exit. To prevent such an obstruction, glands are posted in proper places,* and discharge a lubricating fluid, which aids the progress of the mass, and renews the secretion of the chyle, till all that remains of the one is clean drawn off, and the other—But here you must excuse me, and, for my neglect of farther particularity, your author shall make an apology: "Quemadmodum autem reliquiæ cibi depellantur, tum astringentibus se intestinis, tum relaxantibus, haud sane difficile dictu est; sed tamen prætereundem est, ne quid habeat injucunditatis oratio."†

The chyle, drawn off by all the secretory orifices, is carried along millions of the finest ducts,‡ and lodged in several commodious cells.§ As a traveller, by baiting upon the road, and taking proper refreshment, is better qualified to pursue his journey; so the chyle, diverting to those little inns, is mixed with a thin, diluting, watery substance, which renders it more apt to flow, and more fit for use. From hence it is conveyed to one common receptacle,‖ and mounts through a perpendicular tube. When provision or ammunition is transmitted to an army, it generally passes under an escort of able troops. As this is the immediate support, and principal nourishment of the whole system, its conveyance is guarded and ascertained with peculiar caution. The perpendicular tube, not having sufficient force of its own, is laid contiguous to the great artery; whose strong pulsation drives on the creeping fluid, enables it to overcome the steep ascent, and unload its precious treasure at the very door of the heart.—Here it enters the trunk of a large vein, most conveniently opened for its reception: It enters in a slanting or oblique direction. By this method of approach, it avoids thwarting, and coincides with the purple stream; which, instead of obstructing its admission, expedites its passage, and instead of being a bar to exclude it, becomes a vehicle to waft it. —Its entrance is farther secured by a valve, admirably constructed, and most happily situate; which shuts the aperture against the refluent blood, in case it should offer to obtrude itself, but opens a free, safe, and easy avenue, to introduce this milk; this manna of nature.

The blood, through every stage of its ample circuit, having sustained great expenses; being laid under contribution by every gland in the whole system, and having supplied myriads of the capillary vessels with matter for insensible perspiration, must be very much impoverished; but is most opportunely recruited by this accession of chyle.—Yet though recruited, it is not refined. In its present crude state, it is absolutely unqualified to perform the vital tour, or carry on the animal functions: Therefore, by a grand apparatus of muscular fibres it is wafted into the lungs, and pours a thousand thousand rills into either lobe.—In the cells the spongy cells of this amazing laboratory, it imbibes the influences of the external air; its heterogeneous parts are thoroughly incorporated, and its whole substance is made cool, smooth, and florid.—Thus improved, thus exalted, it is transmitted to the left ventricle of the heart; a strong, active, indefatigable* muscle, placed in the very centre of the system. Impelled by this beating engine, part shoots upward, and sweeps with a bounding impetus into the head. There it impregnates the prolific fields of the brain, and forms those subtile spirituous dews,† which impart strength to every nerve,

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strong to a wonder. The skin of an ox-gut, I am told, will endure the blows of the gold-beater's hammer for many months, nay, for several years.

* In the bowels which lie nearest the stomach, these glands are smaller or fewer; because, in those parts, the aliment is copiously furnished with moisture; whereas, in the bowels which are more remote from the stomach, and receive the food drained of a considerable quantity of its chyle, the lubricating glands are either multiplied or enlarged. A most admirable provision! apparently diversified according to the several changes of the aliment, yet exactly adapted to the exigencies of the animal.

† Cicero *de Nat. Deor.*

‡ Fine indeed! since their orifices, through which they admit the chyle, are not discoverable even by the very best microscopes. To this prodigiously-nice constructure it is owing, that nothing enters the substance of the blood, but what is smaller than the smallest arteries in the system; and thereby fitted to pass through the finest capillary vessels, without causing any obstruction.

§ The glands of the mesentery.

‖ The "receptaculum chyli;" a reservatory placed near the left kidney

* *Indefatigable.*—This is a very distinguishing, and no less amazing property of the heart. The large muscles of the arm, or the much larger of the thigh, are soon wearied. A day's labour, or a day's journey, will exhaust their strength. But the muscle which constitutes the heart works through whole weeks, whole months, whole years, and never becomes weary; is equally a stranger to intermission and fatigue.

† These are what we call the animal spirits; and it is generally supposed, that sensation is caused by the undulatory motion of this nervous fluid; though some imagine it is performed by the vibratory motion of the nerves themselves.—Others think, that neither of these opinions will comport with the texture of those fine tubes, or with the nature of the fluid they contain.—It is, I believe, one of those mysteries in the material world, which may reconcile thinking and un-

and communicate motion to every limb.—Part flows downward, rolls the reeking current through all the lower quarters, and dispenses the nutrimental stores even to the meanest member and the minutest vessel.

Observe how the stately Thames and the rapid Rhine refresh the forests and the groves, water the towns, which crowd their banks, and make the meadows they intersect laugh and sing. So, only with an incomparably richer fluid, and with infinitely more numerous streams, this human river laves the several regions of the body, transfusing vigour and propagating health through the whole.

But how shall a stream, divided into myriads of channels, and pervading innumerable tracts, how shall this be brought back again to its source? Should any portion, like your lake-waters after a land-flood, deviate from their course, or be unable to return—putrefaction would take place, a nuisance would arise, death might ensue. Therefore the all-wise Creator has connected the extremity of the arteries with the beginning of the veins: So that the same force which darts the crimson wave through the former, drives it through the latter. Thus it is reconducted, without the least extravasation, to the great salient cistern.* There, played off afresh, it renews and perpetuates the vital functions.

Where two opposite currents would be in danger of clashing, a fibrous excrescence interposes,† which, like a projecting pier, breaks the stroke of each, and throws both into their proper receptacle. When the wafture is to be speedy, the channels either forbear to wind in their course,‡ or to lessen in their dimensions.§ When the progress is to be retarded, the tubes are twined into various convolutions,‖ or their diameter is contracted into a narrower size.—Modelled by these judicious rules, guarded by these wise precautions, the living flood never discontinues its interchangeable tide; but, night and day, whether we sleep or wake, still perseveres to sally briskly through the arteries, and return softly through the veins.

Such astonishing expedients are used to elaborate the chyle, to blend it with the blood, and to distribute both through the body; by means of which the animal constitution is maintained. In youth its bulk is increased; in age its decays are repaired; and it is kept in tenantable condition for the soul during the space of seventy or eighty years.

These are a few, and but a very few, instances of that contrivance, regularity, and beauty, which are observable in the human frame. Attentive inquirers discover deeper footsteps of design, and more refined strokes of skill; discover them not only in the grand and most distinguished parts, but in every limb and in every organ; I may venture to add, in every fibre that is extended, and in every globule* that flows.

Asp. What a various, but uniform system, is the body! I see the greatest multiplicity of parts, yet the most perfect harmony subsists between them all. No one hinders, but each assists, the operation of another; and all conspire to the benefit and preservation of the whole. Most judiciously has the great apostle touched this subject, and most happily applied it, to illustrate the reasonableness and enforce the practice, both of personal and social duties, of private content and public concord. See 1 Cor. xii. 12, &c.

"The body," he observes, "is not one member, but many;" to each of which some peculiar and needful office is assigned: So that the foot, though placed in the lowest order, and destined to serve on the very ground, has no reason to reckon itself a worthless outcast; or to say, "because I am not the head, I am not of the body." Neither has the head, in its exalted station, and amidst its honourable functions, any cause to despise the inferior limbs; or to say, with contempt and self-sufficiency, "I have no need of you." If there were no feet what would become of the locomotive faculty? or how could the body convey itself from one place to another? If there were no hands, what should we do for the instruments of action? or how could the animal frame be defended and accommodated?—Nay, the parts, "which seem to be less honourable" are necessary. Even those which form the sediments, or throw off the dregs, are of the last importance to life and its comforts. Should those be obstructed in their action, the most raging torment en-

prejudiced minds to the mysteries of the Christian revelation. Why should any one wonder to find some doctrines in the Bible that surpass the reach of human understanding, when there are so many operations in the body confessedly and absolutely inexplicable by the most acute anatomist?

‡ Solomon makes use of this similitude.—"Or ever the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." Eccl. xii. 6. The two ventricles of the heart, replenished with blood, are fitly represented by a cistern; and the contractile force of their fibres acts like the water-wheel in hydraulics. The pitcher, which receives the water at the spring-head, and conveys it away for the owner's service, may probably signify the aorta, and the pulmonary artery; whose functions correspond with the uses of such a vessel.

† In the point where the streams form the *vena cava* and *vena ascendens* meet.

‡ In the great artery, that descends to the feet.

§ In every interval, between all the ramifications.

‖ In the vessels which carry the blood to the brain; which form the viscous secretions; and indeed which consctitute all the glands.

* The extreme minuteness of the globules, which form the red part of our blood, is one exemplification of this remark; if, as Mr Lewenhoeck computes every globule be 125,000 times smaller than the smallest grain of sand.

sues; should the obstruction continue, death is the inevitable consequence.—By this wise adjustment "there is no schism in the body;" no separate or interfering ends are pursued by the members; but the safety and support of each are the one undivided care of all.

Thus should it be among men, and among Christians, in the civil community, and in the Catholic church. There is in both a subordination of persons, but a concatenation of interests. For which reason, a general agreement should take place, and a mutual subserviency to each other's welfare. The meanest have no cause to be dissatisfied with their condition; but to acquiesce in the unerring disposal of Providence, and cheerfully contribute their share to the common good. The highest should condescend to men of low estate, and maintain a regard to the well-being of the poorest, as that which is intimately connected with their own. In a word, each should feel a tender concern for all; rejoicing in their happiness, and studying to establish it; sympathizing with their miseries, and endeavouring to heal them.

I am sure my Theron will be pleased with this fine comparison used by the apostle, and adapted to purposes at once so noble and so benevolent; especially as it receives additional propriety and force from his own observations. But I have one more inquiry to make.

Your system, though organized, though endued with a principal of motion, and furnished with the powers of nutrition, is still destitute of sense. The creation abounds with objects fitted to yield the most refined entertainment: The sun impurples the robes of morning, and stars bespangle the curtains of night: Flowers of silver whiteness, and of golden lustre, enamel the ground: Fruits of all radiant hues, and of every delicious taste, hang amiably dangling on the boughs.

> ——"Airs also, vernal airs,
> Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
> The trembling leaves."

But we hear of no capacities formed for the enjoyment of these various delights; without which, the breath of fields must lose its reviving fragrance, the whispering grove must degenerate into sullen silence, and nature's book of knowledge, all fair and instructive, be no better than a vast unmeaning blank.

Ther. Therefore the great Creator, profusely gracious to mankind, has made us a present, an inestimable present, of the senses, to be the inlet of innumerable pleasures, and the means of administering the most valuable advantages.

High in the head, bright and conspicuous as a star in the brow of evening, is placed the eye. In this elevated situation, like a centinel posted in his watch-tower, it commands the most enlarged prospect.—Consisting only of simple fluids, enclosed in thin tunicles, it conveys to our apprehension all the graces of blooming nature, and all the glories of the visible heavens. How prodigiously wonderful that an image of the hugest mountains, and a transcript of the most diversified landscapes, shall enter the smallest circlet of the pupil? How surprisingly artful, that the rays of light, like an inimitable pencil, should paint on the optic nerves, paint, in an instant of time, paint in their truest colours and exactest lineaments, every species of external objects?

The eye is so tender, that a slight accident, scarce perceivable by some other parts of the body, would be very injurious to its delicate frame. It is guarded therefore with remarkable circumspection, and the most solicitous care—with a care evidently proportioned to its nice texture and extensive usefulness. It is intrenched deep in the head, and barricadoed on every side with a strong fortification of bones. As the incursion of the smallest fly would incommode the polished surface, it is farther defended by two substantial curtains, hung on a most slender cartilaginous rod, which secure it not barely from blows, and from any hurtful attrition, but also from every troublesome annoyance. In sleep, when there is no occasion to exercise the sense, but an absolute necessity to protect the organ, these curtains spontaneously close, and never fail to lie shut. At any time they will fly together with a motion quick as the alarm of fear; I had almost said, quicker than thought itself. At all times they are lined with an extremely fine sponge,* wet with its own native dews, which lubricate the eyeball, oil, as it were, its wheels, and fit it for a course of unwearied activity. At the end of this skinny mantlet, (if I may use the military style,) is planted a range of bristly palisadoes,† which keep out the least mote, ward off even the straggling atom, and moderate the otherwise too potent impressions of the sunbeams.‡

‡ The glandula lachrymalis and its ducts, opening on the inner part of the eyelid, and secreting the fluid, which Theron calls its oil, because it irrigates the eyeball, and facilitates its motion.

† The hairs, which arise upon the extremities of the eyelash, grow only to a certain convenient length, and never stand in need of cutting. They are not flaccid and pendulous, like those of the head; but stiff and prominent, like bristles. The first sort would be troublesome, the last is beneficial. Add to this, that their points stand out of the way, those of the upper eyelid being bent upwards, and those of the lower downwards. So nice is nature, even in such small matters.

‡ The incessant, the more than fatherly care, which the Lord God Almighty takes of his people, is represented in scripture by this extraordinary provision made for the security of the eye: which is one of the finest images that fancy can form, and one of the most

The brows are a kind of natural penthouse, thatched and arched with curious wreaths of hair. The thatch is intended to divert the sweat from trickling into the eyes, and offending them with its brine. The arches are so finely coloured, and so elegantly turned, that they set off the whiteness of the forehead, and bestow additional grace on the whole countenance. Because, in our waking hours, there is almost an incessant call for those little orbs, they run upon a set of the finest casters, rolling upwards or downwards, to the right hand or to the left, with the utmost speed and with equal ease; which circumstance, added to the flexibility of the neck, renders our two eyes as useful, as if the whole body, like the living creatures in St. John's vision, was "full of eyes before and behind." (Rev. iv. 6.)

The ear consists of an outward porch and inner rooms, with tools of the most admirable contrivance and finished workmanship. The contrivance and the workmanship incomparably nicer than the designs of Palladio, or the architecture of Solomon's temple, though the former were drawn from the magnificent monuments of Rome, though the latter was built in the taste of heaven. Yea, so consummately nice is the structure of this organ, that God, the only wise God, is not ashamed to be called its artificer, "He that planted the ear," (Psal. xciv. 9,) is to be found among the titles of the exalted Jehovah. In one very remarkable peculiarity, this minute fabric resembles that sacred edifice, the porch being loftier* than any other part of the building.

The porch I call that semicircular lodge which stands somewhat prominent from the head, and is—not soft and sinking as flesh, lest it should absorb the sound rather than promote the repercussion; not hard and stubborn as bone, lest it should occasion painful inconveniences, when we repose ourselves on either side; but of a cartilaginous substance, covered with a tight expansion of skin, and wrought into irregular bends and hollows, which, like circling hills, or surrounding rocky shores, collect the wandering undulations of the air, and transmit them, with a vigorous impulse, to the finely stretched membrane of the tympanum.† The avenue, or narrow entry, is secured from the insinuating attempts of little insects, by a morass (shall I say?) of bitter and viscous matter; disgustful to their taste, and embarrassing to their feet. The hammer and the anvil, the stirrup and the drum, the winding labyrinths,* and the sounding galleries; these and other pieces of mechanism, all instrumental to the power of hearing, are beyond all description curious.

Amazingly nice must be the formation, and inconceivably exact the tension of the auditory nerves; since they correspond with the smallest tremors of the atmosphere, and easily distinguish their most subtile variations. With the gentle gales that fan us, or even with the ruder blasts that assault us, these delicate strings are but little affected; whereas they are perfect unisons with those fine, those significant agitations of the air, which the acutest touch is unable to discern. These living chords, tuned by an almighty hand, and diffused through the echoing isles, and sonorous cells—these receive the impressions of sound, and propagate them to the brain: These† give existence to the charms of music, and reciprocate the rational entertainments of discourse. These treat my Aspasio with the melody of the woodland choirs, and afford me the superior pleasure of my friend's conversation.

The eye perceives only the objects that are before it, whereas the ear warns us of transactions that pass above us, behind us, all around us. The eye is useless amidst the gloom of night, and cannot carry its observation through the bolted door, or the closed window-shutter; but the ear admits her intelligence through the darkest medium, and the minutest cranny. The eye is upon duty only in our waking hours; but the ear is always expanded, and always accessible; a courier which never tires, a centry ever in his box. To secure a resource, in case any misfortune should dis-

consolatory truths that faith can believe. "He kept him as the apple of his eye." Deut. xxxii. 10. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." Zech. ii. 8. The reader will easily see that the comparison, every way beautiful, is carried to the highest pitch of energy and beauty by the sacred writers. Not barely the eye, but the apple or pupil of the eye; the tenderest part even of the most tender member.

‡ Compare 1 Kings vi. 2, with 2 Chron. iii. 4.

† So called, because it resembles a drum, both in figure and use; being a fine skin, expanded upon a circle of bones, and over a polished reverberating cavity. It is affected by the vibrations of the external air, as the covering of the war-drum is by the impressions of the stick. It is also furnished with braces, which strain or relax it at pleasure, and accommodate its tension either to loud or languid sounds.

* Of this kind is the auditory tube, intended to soften and qualify the rushing sound; lest, if the incursion were direct, it might be too impetuous, and injure the delicate expanse of the tympanum. While this is designed to moderate, the concavities of the inner structure are prepared to heighten and invigorate the sound, by calling in the auxiliary force of an echo. Such intentions, so varying, nay, so opposite, concur to form this admirable organ.

† Elegantly styled "the daughters of music." For this phrase may refer as well to the organs which distinguish, as to those which form, the harmonious accents, Eccl. xii. 4. Methinks, I am always desirous to add any apposite expression, or parallel passage, from the Bible; as I find, writers of taste and politeness are studious to embellish their work with quotations from the Classics. And I persuade myself, the reader will allow me to gratify this favourite inclination: because every portion of that inestimable book, however minute, is like the filings of gold, or the sparks of a diamond; is sure, when properly applied, to add worth, and impart beauty.

able one of the hearing or seeing organs, our all-gracious Maker has given us duplicates of each.

As there are tremulous concussions impressed upon the air, discernible only by the instruments of hearing; there are also odoriferous particles, wafted by the same aereal vehicle, which are perceivable only by the smell. The nostrils are wide at the bottom, that a large quantity of effluvia may enter; narrow at the top, that, when entered they may close their ranks, and act with greater vigour. Fine beyond all imagination are the steams which exhale from the fetid or fragrant bodies. The very best microscopes, which discover thousands and thousands of animalculæ in a drop of putrefied water, cannot bring one individual among all these evanescent legions to our sight. They sail in numberless squadrons, close to our eyes, close by our ears; yet are so amazingly attenuated, that they elude the search of both. Nevertheless, so judiciously are the olfactory nets laid,* and so artfully their meshes sized, that they catch these vanishing fugitives. They catch the roaming perfumes which fly off from the opening honey-suckle; and take in the stationed sweets which hover round the expanded rose. They imbibe all the balmy fragrance of spring, all the aromatic exhalations of autumn, and enable us to banquet even on the invisible dainties of nature.

Furnished with these several organs,

> ———Not a breeze
> Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes
> The setting sun's effulgence, not a strain
> From all the tenants of the warbling shade
> Ascends, but thence our senses can partake
> Fresh pleasures.†

Another capacity for frequent pleasure our bountiful Creator has bestowed, in granting us the powers of taste. By means of which, the food that supports our body, feasts our palate; first treats us with a pleasing regale, then distributes its beneficial recruits. The razor, whetted with oil, becomes more exquisitely keen. The saliva, flowing upon the tongue, and moistening its nerves, quickens them into the liveliest acts of sensation. This sense is circumstanced in a manner peculiarly benign and wise, so as to be a standing, though silent plea for temperance. Without recurring to the vengeance of God, or the terrors of eternal judgment, it is a powerful dissuasive from irregular and excessive indulgences; because the exercise of sobriety sets the finest edge on its faculties, and adds the most poignant relish to its enjoyments: Whereas, riot and voluptuousness pall the appetite, blunt its sensibility, and render the gratifications extremely languid, if not perfectly insipid. The sight, the smell, the taste, are not only so many separate sources of delight, but a joint security to our health. They are the vigilant and accurate inspectors, which examine our food, and inquire into its properties, whether it be pleasant or disagreeable, wholesome or noxious. For the discharge of this office they are excellently qualified, and most commodiously situated; so that nothing can gain admission through the mouth, till it has undergone the scrutiny, and obtained the passport of them all.

To all these, as a most necessary and advantageous supplement, is added the sense of feeling, which renders the whole assemblage complete. While other senses have a particular place of residence, this is diffused throughout the whole body. In the palms of the hands, on the tips of the fingers, and indeed through all the extreme parts of the flesh, it is most quick and lively; as the advanced guards, or scouts upon the frontiers, are, or ought to be, peculiarly attentive and wakeful. Scouts did I say? The whole army of Xerxes, drawn out in battle array, with his millions of supernumerary attendants,* were but like a few gleaners straggling in the field, if compared, either in number or order, with those nervous detachments, which pervade the texture of the skin, and minister to the act of feeling. How happily is this sense tempered between the two extremes! Neither so acute as the membranes of the eye, nor so obtuse as the callus of the heel. The former would expose us to continual pain, render our clothes galling, and the very down oppressive: The latter would quite benumb the body, and almost annihilate the touch. Nor this alone, but all the senses are most

* The keenness and sagacity of this sense furnished the evangelical prophet with a beautiful metaphor, to display the accuracy of the Messiah's judgment in spiritual things, Isa. xi. 3.

The original implies his faculty or sense of smelling: which expression is accommodated to our language, and properly enough translated, "shall make him of quick understanding," q. d. "He shall judge, not according to external appearance, but according to the state of the inner man. Unfeigned self-abasement, affiance in a Redeemer's righteousness, and faith purifying the heart; these endowments, though not observed, or if observed not valued by the world; these shall be the test of his approbation, and the objects of his esteem. These constitute what is called in the next words, the fear of the Lord.

"In determining the reality of these qualities, he shall be unerringly exact, and infallibly true. Let hypocrisy put on every mask, and practise all her wiles, they shall avail nothing before the Root and Offspring of David. (ver. 1.) As those extremely subtle effluvia, which escape the inquisition of every other sense, are easily and perfectly distinguished by the smell; so those recesses of the breast, and those secrets of the heart which lie too deep for all human discernment; even they are naked and open, are obvious and palpable, to his divinely sagacious understanding."

† See that very elegant poem, "The Pleasures of Imagination" book 3.

* The soldiers and attendants of Xerxes amounted to five millions two hundred and eighty thousand. Another army, so large and numerous, occurs not in all the records of history.—*Vide* HERODOTUS lib. vii.

exactly adapted to their respective offices, and to the exigencies of our present state. Were they strained to a much higher tone, they would be avenues of anguish: Were they relaxed into greater insensibility, they would be so many useless incumbrances.

Asp. How admirable and gracious is this provision, which the blessed God has made, to accommodate us with delightful sensations, and instructive ideas! The taste, the touch and the smell, are somewhat straitened in the extent of their operations. The ear carries on a correspondence with a larger circle of objects; but the sight most amply supplies whatever is wanting in all the other senses. The sight spreads itself to an infinite multitude of bodies, and brings within our notice some of the remotest parts of the universe. The taste the touch, the smell perceive nothing but what is brought to their very doors; whereas the eye extends its observation as far as the orbit of Saturn; nay glances, and in an instant of time, to the inconceivable distance of the stars. The compass of the earth, and the immensity of the skies, are its unlimited range.

From this remarkable variety, with regard to the sphere and activity of the senses, St. Paul forms one of the finest, boldest, and most important comparisons in the world. By this he illustrates the difference between the wisdom which is derived from the word of divine revelation, and the wisdom which is acquired by dint of human application. In his oration to the Athenians, speaking of their most celebrated sages, he says, "If so be they might feel after, and find him." Acts xvii. 27. In his epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the man Moses, our author observes, that "he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Heb. xi. 27. Writing to his Corinthian converts, he adds, as a farther heightening of the contrast, "We all beholding with open face the glory of the Lord." 2 Cor. iii. 18. The knowledge of the philosopher is like that obscure and scanty information, which is to be obtained by groping with the hand in a dark night: The knowledge of the Christian is like that copious influx of clear and enlarged ideas, which we receive by the mediation of the eye amidst the shining of a bright day.

Tully, we find, has in the book before us hit upon some of the most general and obvious uses, to which the several parts of the human body are adapted. Yet how superficial and deficient appears his penetration, when we take in the much deeper discoveries and the much higher improvements of our modern anatomy! Thus, and abundantly more defective, is his knowledge of moral duties and divine doctrines, when compared with what is taught us in the plain sermon on the Mount, and the unstudied epistles of the Jewish tent-maker.

Therefore, though I would bless the beneficent God, for the ministration of all the senses, and particularly for the noble organs of vision; I would be more especially thankful for that light of the world, Christ Jesus, and his glorious gospel, as well as for that "spiritual eye," by which the one is understood, and the other seen,—a "lively faith." I would also long for that place of beatific enjoyment, where our views of the adorable Godhead, and our acquaintance with the sublimest truths, will as much transcend all our present apprehensions, as the most enlightened saint exceeds the benighted Gentile.

Ther. The crowning gift—that which improves the satisfaction, and augments the beneficial effects, accruing from all the senses, is speech. Speech makes me a gainer from the eyes and ears of other people; from the ideas they conceive, and the observations they make. And what an admirable instrument for articulating the voice, and modifying it into speech, is the tongue! The tongue has neither bone nor joint; yet fashions itself, with the utmost volubility, into every shape and every posture, which can express sentiment, or constitute harmony. This little collection of muscular fibres, under the conducting skill of the Creator, is the artificer of our words.* By this we communicate the secrets of the breast, and make our very thoughts audible. By this we instruct the ignorant, and comfort the distressed; we glorify God, and edify each other:† the academic explains the abstrusest sciences, and the ecclesiastic preaches the everlasting gospel. This is likewise the efficient of music. It is soft as the lute, or shrill as the trumpet; it can warble as the lyre, or resound like the organ. Connecting the sacred anthem with its tuneful strains, we soothe the cares, and beguile the toils of life; we imitate the angelic choirs, and anticipate in some degree their celestial joys. As the tongue requires full scope and an easy play, it is lodged in an ample cavity, and surrounded with reservoirs of spittle, always ready to distil the lubricating dews. It moves under a con-

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* I am sensible that the glottis has a considerable share in modulating the sound, and forming the voice. But as the nature and office of this most curious aperture are very little known by the generality of people; we choose to follow the popular opinion so neatly described by the poet;

"Dædala lingua,
"Lingua figuratrix verborum, opisexque loquelæ."
Ant. Lucret.

† The articulating tongue is called "our glory." Psal. lvii. 8. And such indeed it is when devoted to these purposes. It is then a distinction, not only of man from the brutal herd, but of the righteous from the congregation of the ungodly. It is then like choice silver, or a tree of life.

"Who would not bless for this the gift of speech,
And in the tongue's beneficence be rich?"

cave roof, which serves as a sounding-board to the voice; giving it much the same additional vigour and grace as the shell of a violin adds to the language of the strings.

Wise, wonderfully wise and eminently gracious, is the regulation both of spontaneous and involuntary motion. Was this regulation reversed, what deplorable inconveniencies would take place; nay, what unavoidable ruin must ensue! Deplorable inconveniencies; if the discharges of the bowels, or evacuations of the bladder, were quite independent on our leave. Unavoidable ruin; if the action of the heart required the co-operation of our thoughts, or the business of respiration waited for the concurrence of our will.

The will, in some cases, has not so much as a single vote; in others, she determines and commands like an absolute sovereign: Nor is there a monarch upon earth so punctually obeyed, as this queen of the human system. If she but intimate her pleasure, the spirits run, they fly to execute her orders; to stretch the arm, or close the hand; to furrow the brow with frowns, or dimple the cheek with smiles. How easily, as well as punctually, are these orders carried into execution! To turn the screw, or work the lever, is laborious and wearisome: But we move the vertebræ, with all their appendent chambers; we advance the leg, with the whole incumbent body; we rise from our seat; we spring from the ground; and though much force is exerted, though a very considerable weight is raised, we meet with no difficulty, we complain of no fatigue.

That all this should be effected, without any toil, and by a bare act of the will, is very surprising: But that these motions should be made, renewed, continued, even while we remain entirely ignorant of the manner in which they are performed, is beyond measure astonishing. Who can play so much as a single tune upon the spinnet, without learning the difference of the keys, or studying the rudiments of music? Impossible! Yet the mind of man touches every spring of the human machine with the most masterly skill, though she knows nothing at all concerning the nature of her implements, or the process of her operations. We walk, we run, we leap: we throw ourselves into a variety of postures, and perform a multitude of motions; yet are utterly unable to say, which nerve should be active, which muscle should swell, or which tendon approximate.

Put a German flute into the hand even of a sensible person, without a master to instruct him, he is at a loss to make the instrument speak; much less is he able to sink and soften the sound, to exalt and extend it, just as he pleases: Yet we are self-taught in the method of forming, regulating, and varying the voice. Naturally, and with unpremeditated fluency, we give it the languishing cadence of sorrow, or the sprightly airs of joy; the low faultering accents of fear, or the elevated tone and rapid sallies of anger.

The eye of a rustic, who has no notion of optics, or any of its laws, shall lengthen and shorten its axis, dilate and contract its pupil, without the least hesitation, and with the utmost propriety; adapting itself, even with mathematical exactness, to the particular distance of objects, and the different degrees of light: By which means, it performs some of the most curious experiments in the improved Newtonian philosophy, without the least knowledge of the science, or so much as any consciousness of its own dexterity.

I can never sufficiently admire this multiplicity of animated organs; their finished form, and their faultless order. Yet I must confess myself struck with greater admiration at the power, the truly mysterious power and sway, which the soul exercises over them. Ten thousand reins are put into her hand: she is not acquainted with their office, their use or their name; she has not learned so much as to distinguish one from another; nevertheless she manages all, conducts all, without the least perplexity, or the least irregularity; rather with a promptitude, a consistency, and a speed, which nothing else can equal!

Upon the whole—great reason had Euripides to call the human body,

Σοφὸν τεκτονος καλον ποικιλμα.

I believe, the preceding observations will justify us, if we give a fuller meaning to the poet, and translate his words—"the infinitely varied, and inimitably fine workmanship of a great, supreme, unerring Artist." Or, as Virgil speaks, with a pertinency and a spirit which epitomises all I have said, and expresses all I would say, this bodily structure is indeed—"non enarrabile textum."*

Asp. "Wonderfully," I perceive, "and fearfully are we made," (Psalm cxxxix. 14.) Made of such complicated parts; each so correctly fashioned, and all so exactly arranged;† every one executing such curious functions, and many of them operating in so mysterious a manner, as may justly render us a wonder to ourselves. Since health

* That is, a structure, not barely correct, or highly finished, but (as Theron has elsewhere expressed it) "beyond description curious."

† St. Paul's language on the subject, is exceedingly beautiful and expressive, Συναρμολογυμενον και συμβιβαζομενον. Eph. iv. 16. The several parts most nicely adapted to each other, and most perfectly harmonizing with the whole. All associated with that propriety, and connected with that firmness, which are the very foundation of symmetry, vigour, and agility.

depends upon such a numerous assemblage of moving organs; since a single secretion stopped may destroy the salutary temperature of the fluids; or a single wheel clogged may put an end to the vital motion of the solids; with what "holy fear should we pass the time of our sojourning here below," (Pet. i. 17.) trusting, for continual preservation, not merely on our own care, but on that omnipotent hand which formed the admirable machine; that the same hand which formed it, may superintend its agency, and support its being.

When we consider the extensive contrivance and delicate mechanism—what plans of geometry have been laid; what operations of chemistry are performed; in a word, what miracles of art and elegance are executed, in order to furnish us with the necessary recruits, and the several delights of life;—is there not abundant reason to cry out, with the same inspired writer, "How dear are thy counsels unto me, O God!" "Thy counsels of creating wisdom!.thou hast not been sparing, but even lavish of thy indulgent designs. Thou hast omitted no expedient which might establish my ease, enlarge my comforts, and promote, yea, complete my bodily happiness!" And is not this a most endearing obligation "to glorify the blessed God, with our bodies, as well as with our spirits?" (1 Cor. vi. 20.)

Ther. "Our spirits!" Ay; What is this mansion of flesh, though so exquisitely wrought, compared with the noble and immortal inhabitant which resides within?

——That intellectual Being;
Those thoughts, which wander through eternity!
MILTON.

This consideration inclines me to think, that if the casket be so highly polished, the jewel cannot be so excessively coarse as my Aspasio's doctrine of original corruption supposes.

Asp. I perceive your aim, Theron; but must beg leave at present to decline all overtures for a dispute. If my arguments have failed, your description has answered its end. I cannot suffer my thoughts to be diverted from a subject which is so very engaging, yet so rarely discussed. I have such a strong desire to recollect and retain what has been observed, that even your conversation will at this juncture lose its relish. Here, therefore, I put a period to our discourse, and must break away from your company, in order to ruminate and digest my notions in some sequestered lonely walk. Unless you will permit me, before I retire, to make one remark. And let it not startle my friend if I venture to say, that, amidst all his curious observations, he has forgot the principal circumstance of honour and excellence which dignifies the human body.

Ther. I have omitted many fine and admirable properties I confess. But sure I have not forgot the principal and most distinguishing.

Asp. You need not be displeased with yourself. It argues no defect in your dissertation. The circumstances I have in my view could never be discovered by following the dissecting knife. It is learned, not from Cheselden's draughts, or the tables of Albinus, but from the word of revelation.—What I mean is this: the human body was exalted to a most intimate and personal union with the eternal Son of God. He who decorated the heaven with stars, and crowned the stars with lustre, "he vouchsafed to be made flesh," (John. i. 14.) "and was found in fashion as a man," (Phil. ii. 8.) Nay, this is even now the apparel of that divine and adorable Person. He is clothed with our nature; he wears our very limbs, and appears in the dress of humanity, even at the right hand of God, and at the head of all the heavenly hosts.

What think you of another privilege, mentioned by the apostle? "Your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost," (1 Cor. vi. 19.) Not your souls only, but your very bodies are the shrine in which "the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity," condescends to dwell. He who sitteth between the cherubim, and walketh in the circuit of the skies, is pleased to sanctify these earthly tenements for his own habitation. And is not this a much grander embellishment than all their matchless contrivance and masterly workmanship? Just as the rod which budded, and the manna which was miraculously preserved; the sacred oracle of Urim and Thummim, with the cloud of glory covering the mercy-seat; were a much higher distinction to Solomon's temple, than the most heightened beauties of architecture.

Nor must I omit the dignity, the transcendent and amazing dignity, which is reserved for these systems of flesh at the resurrection of the just. They will then be refined and improved into the most perfect state, and the most beauteous form; surpassing whatever is resplendent and amiable in the most ornamental appearances of material nature. They will be purer than the unspotted firmament; brighter than the lustre of the stars; and, which exceeds all parallel, which comprehends all perfection, they will "be made like unto Christ's glorious body," (Phil. iii. 21.) like that incomparably-glorious body which the blessed Jesus wears in his celestial kingdom, and on his triumphant throne.

When we add all these magnificent prerogatives which are revealed in scripture, to all those inimitable niceties which are displayed by anatomists, what thankfulness,

what admiration, can equal such a profusion of favours?

When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise!

DIALOGUE XIII.

THE morning had been wet. At noon, the rain ceased; but the heavens still continued gloomy. Towards evening a gentle eastern gale sprung up, which dissipated the dead calm, and cleared the face of the sky. The sun, which had been muffled in clouds, dropped the veil. Disengaged from the dusky shroud, he shone forth with peculiar splendour. His beams, endeared by their late suspension, were doubly welcome, and produced unusual gaiety.

At this juncture Theron and Aspasio walked abroad. They walked alternately on the terraces; one of which was opposite to the country, the other contiguous to the parterre; where the gales, impregnated with the freshest exhalations of nature, breathed the smell of meads, and heaths, and groves; or else, shaking the clusters of roses, and sweeping the beds of fragrance, they flung balm and odours through the air.

At a distance were heard the bleatings of the flock, mingled with the lowings of the milky mothers; while more melodious music warbled from the neighbouring boughs, and spoke aloud the joy of their feathered inhabitants;—and not only spoke their joy, but spread an additional charm over all the landscape. For, amidst such strains of native harmony, the breathing perfumes smell more sweet, the streaming rills shine more clear, and the universal prospect looks more gay.

Then was experienced, what Milton so delicately describes:

If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

With wonder and delight our friends observed both the exquisite beauty and the immense magnificence of things.—They were struck with the most profound veneration of that almighty Majesty, who hung the sun in vaults of azure, and clothed his orb with robes of lustre; "whose right hand spanneth the heavens," (Isaiah xlviii. 13,) "and stretcheth them out as a tent," for innumerable creatures, worlds, systems "to dwell in." (Isaiah xl. 22.)—Charmed they were at the consideration of the Creator's boundless beneficence; who lifts up the light of his countenance, and joy is shed; who opens his munificent hand, and plenty is poured throughout all the regions of the universe. Insomuch, that even inanimate beings seem to smile under a sense of the blessings; and though they find not a tongue to praise, yet speak their acclamations by their gladdened looks.

Ther. How very different, Aspasio, is this delightful appearance of things, from your ill-favoured doctrine of original guilt and original depravity! Your doctrine is a contradiction to the language of nature. Nature says, through all her works, "that God is good, and men are made to be happy." Whereas, your opinion would turn the whole world into a vast hospital, and make every individual person a leper or a Lazarus

Asp. I join with my Theron, and with universal nature, in bearing witness to the goodness of our God. And nothing, I am persuaded, displays it more, nothing manifests it so much, as the doctrine of our fall in Adam, connected with our recovery in Christ.—Only in one particular I am obliged to dissent. It is not my opinion that would make, but the sin of our forefather which has made, the whole world an infirmary, and every individual person a leper.

Ther. At this rate, you would crowd into that single act of disobedience, evils more numerous, and more fatal, than the plagues which were lodged in Pandora's box, or the troops which were stowed in the Trojan horse.

Asp. Far more numerous, and infinitely more pernicious. The fable of Pandora's box seems to have been a shred of the doctrine, picked up by the heathen wits, and fashioned according to their sportive fancy: This would, if there was any occasion for such weak assistance, bring in the Pagan theology, as a subsidiary evidence to our cause. The Trojan horse poured ruin upon a single city; but the primitive transgression entailed misery upon all generations.

Ther. You have advanced this heavy charge pretty strenuously, I must confess; but without descending to facts, or appealing to experience. All the invectives are general and declamatory, none pointing and particular.

Asp. It is easy, my dear friend, too easy to draw up a particular bill of indictment; and not only to specify the facts, but to demonstrate the charge. Experience, sad experience will furnish us with a cloud of witnesses, and prove my remonstrances to be more than invectives.

Were we to dissect human nature, as in our last conference you treated the animal system, we should find the leprosy of corruption spreading itself through our whole frame. For which reason, it is styled, by an inspired writer, "the old man." (Rom. vi. 6.) "Old," because in its commencement it was early as the fall, and in its com-

munication to individuals is coeval with their being. "Man," because it has tainted the body, infected the soul, and disordered the whole person.

St. Paul, describing a profligate conversation, speaks in this remarkable manner: "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Eph. ii. 3. By the desires of the flesh, he means those irregular inclinations which correspond with the animal part of our constitution: By the desires of the mind, he denotes those evil propensities which are more immediately seated in the intellectual faculties. And by both, he very strongly expresses the total depravation of our nature.

Ther. What you call evil propensities, I am apt to think are not really sinful, but appointed for the trial of our virtue. Nay, since they are confessedly natural, they cannot be in themselves evil; because, upon this supposition, God, who is the author of our nature, would be the author also of our sin.

Asp. Then you imagine, that propensities to evil are void of guilt. This is the Popish notion, but neither the Mosaic nor the Apostolic doctrine.—In the law of Moses it is written, "Thou shalt not covet." Exod. xx. 17. The divine Legislator prohibits, not only the iniquitous practice, but the evil desire. The apostle gives it in charge to the Colossians, "Mortify your members, which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, and" which is the source of all, "evil concupiscence." Col. iii. 5. Now, can that be free from guilt which we are commanded to mortify? which, if not mortified, denominates us "children of disobedience," and subjects us to "the wrath of God?" Col. iii. 6.

Though these propensities are confessedly natural, they may be evil notwithstanding. The sacred writers oppose what is natural to what is spiritual. Instead of commending it as innocent, they condemn it as "foolish," 1 Cor. ii. 14, "base," 2 Pet. ii. 12, and "criminal," Eph. ii. 3.—Neither does this make the author of our nature, the author of our sin. But it proves, that our nature has sustained a deplorable loss; that it is quite different from its original state; that what is spoken of the Israelitish people, is applicable to the human race: "I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine?" Jer. ii. 21.

However, let us observe your proposal; dwell no longer on general hints, but descend to a particular examination. As our examination will chiefly respect the soul, let me inquire what are her principal faculties?

Ther. The understanding, the will, and the affections. These are the most distinguishing powers which that queen of the human economy retains in her service. These, like the several distributions of some ample river, run through the whole man, to quicken, fertilize, and enrich all his conversation. But you represent them bitter, as the waters of Marah; unwholesome, as the streams of Jericho; noxious, as the pottage prepared for the sons of the prophets.

Asp. Nor is this a misrepresentation: For such they really are, till divine grace, like Moses' wood, Exod. xv. 25, like Elisha's salt, 2 Kings ii. 21, 22, or the meal, 2 Kings iv. 41, cast in by that holy man of God, sweeten them, heal them, and render their operations salutary.

The understanding claims our first regard. This, however qualified to serve the purposes of civil life, is unable to discover the truths in which wisdom consists, or to form the tempers from which happiness flows.

Let us take our specimen, not from the uncultivated savages of Africa, but from the politest nation in Europe. The Grecians piqued themselves on their intellectual accomplishments: They termed all the rest of mankind barbarians. Yet even these sons of science, "professing themselves wise, were," in fact, egregious "fools." Rom. i. 22. Not to enumerate the shocking immoralities which the poets ascribed to their deities; not to insist upon the gross idolatries which the common people practised in their worship; even their philosophers, the most improved and penetrating geniuses, were unacquainted with the very first principle* of true religion. Even they could not pronounce with an unfaultering tongue, "That God is one."

Ther. With regard to the philosophers, the prejudices of a wrong education might pervert their judgment; or, in compliance with the prevailing mode, they might adopt customs, and assent to notions, which they did not thoroughly approve.

Asp. A poor compliment this to their integrity! Had I been their advocate, methinks, I would have given up the sagacity of my clients, rather than their fidelity to the cause of God and truth.

With reference to the supreme Good, they were equally at a loss. There is not one among all the inferior creatures, not even the crawling worm or the buzzing fly, but perceives what is beneficial, and pur-

* "The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord, &c. Mark xii. 29. From which it appears, that the unity of the Godhead is the foundation of all the divine commandments, and of all human worship.

sues it; discerns what is pernicious, and avoids it. Yonder caterpillar, whose nourishment is from one particular species of vegetables, never makes a wrong application to another; never is allured by the fragrance of the auricula, or dazzled by the splendour of the tulip; but constantly distinguishes, and as constantly adheres to the leaf which affords her the proper food. So sagacious are the meanest animals with relation to their respective happiness! While the most celebrated of the heathen sages were, on a subject of the very same import, mere dotards. Varro reckons up no less than two hundred and eighty-eight different opinions concerning the true good; and not one of them derives it from the true source: I mean a conformity to the ever-blessed God, and an enjoyment of his infinite perfections.

If on these leading points they were so erroneous, no wonder that they were bewildered in their other researches.

Ther. We are not inquiring into the circumstances of this or that particular nation, but into the state of mankind in general.

Asp. Cast your eye, Theron, upon those swallows. They shoot themselves with surprising rapidity, through the air. I should take them for so many living arrows, were it not for their shifting, winding, wanton motions. Are not these what you call birds of passage?

Ther. These, and some other of the feathered race, are our constant visitants in summer, but leave us at the approach of winter. As soon as the weather becomes cold, they assemble themselves in a body, and concert measures for their departure. Who convenes the assembly—what debates arise—or how they communicate the resolution taken—I do not presume to say. This is certain, that not one of them dislodges till the affair is settled, and the proclamation has been published. Not a single loiterer is to be seen, when the troops are preparing for their decampment, not a single straggler to be found, when they have once begun their march.—Having finished their journey through the land, their wings become a sort of sails, and they launch, not into, but over the ocean. Without any compass to regulate their course, or any chart to make observations in their voyage, they arrive safely at the desired shore; and what is still more extraordinary, they always find the readiest way, and the shortest cut.

Asp. "The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming: but my people know not the judgment of their God," (Jer. viii. 7.) The young ones of those birds perceive how absolutely necessary it is to forsake the land of their nativity, and travel in quest of milder climes; but our offspring, even when their minds begin to open, "are brutish in their knowledge," (Jer. x. 14.) Born they are, and too long continue, "like the wild ass's colt,*" (Job. xi. 12.); not only quite destitute of heavenly wisdom, but stupid to apprehend it, and averse to receive it. "As soon as they are born, they go astray," and——

Ther. "Go astray"—To what is this owing, but to the bad examples they behold? They catch the wayward habit from the irregular conversation of others.

Asp. Is not this a confirmation of my point? Why are they yielding clay to each bad impression? case-hardened steel to every edifying application?—From imitating unworthy examples, you can hardly withhold them by the tightest rein. But if you would affect them with a sense of divine things, or bring them acquainted with God their Maker; "line must be upon line, line upon line; precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; here a little and there a little.† What farther corroborates my sentiment, is, that all these tender toils of erudition are generally unwelcome, are too often unsuccessful, nay, will always be ineffectual, without the concurrence of Almighty grace.

Besides, Theron, if this propensity to evil be observable in all children, it seems more than probable that the unhappy bias is derived from their parents, rather than catched from their neighbours; and owing not to the influence of external examples, but to a principle of internal corruption.‡—Neglect the education of children, and you are sure to have their manners evil, their lives unprofitable. Nay, only remit your endeavours, and they lose what has been gained, they start aside like a broken

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* How keenly is this comparison pointed!—Like the ass's, an animal remarkable for its stupidity, even to a proverb:—Like the ass's colt, which must be still more egregiously stupid than the dam.—Like the wild ass's colt, which is not only blockish, but stubborn and refractory: neither possesses valuable qualities by nature, nor will easily receive them by discipline.—The image, in the original, is yet more strongly touched. The comparative particle *like*, is not in the Hebrew—born a wild ass's colt: or, as we should say in English, a mere wild, &c.

† A great critic has laid down the following rule, to be observed in fine writing:

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must be an echo to the sense.

POPE'S *Essay on Criticism.*

Never was this delicate maxim more nicely exemplified, than in the above cited passage of Isaiah, chap. xxviii. 13. Another instance of the same kind occurs in the seventh verse; where the language seems to mimic the reeling, straggling, giddy motions of a drunkard; while it iterates and reiterates the idea; expresses the same thing in a different and still different manner; with an apparent, and in this case, a significant circumrotation of words.

‡ St. Paul confesses, that he and his fellow-saints were, in their unconverted state, depraved: and this, not διὰ την ἕξιν, "by custom or habit," but φυσει, "by nature." Eph. ii. 3.

bow. And wherefore this? Why do they not, without the rules of discipline or lessons of instruction, spontaneously addict themselves to the exercise of every virtue? just as the cygnets in yonder canal, spontaneously take to the element of water, and the act of swimming?

That bed in the garden before us will suggest the reason. It has been digged and dressed this very day. It now lies smooth and clean. Not a single weed appears on its surface. Yet how certainly will it, in a very little time, produce a plenteous growth of those vegetable nuisances? Whence can this proceed? No hand will sow them; no wish will invite them. But the seeds, though unperceived by any eye, are already there. Disseminated by the winds, they have mixed themselves with the mould, and are sunk into the soil. So, just so it is with our children. The seeds of iniquity are within them; and unless proper diligence be exerted by us, unless gracious assistance be vouchsafed from above, they will assuredly spring up, overrun their souls, and dishonour their lives.

Ther. Let us leave the children, and make men the subject of our inquiry.

Asp. In this respect, Theron,

Men are but children of a larger growth.

We may leave the vest or hanging-sleeve coat, but we shall still find the follies of the child. In youth, what low ambition and fondness for despicable pleasures! In manhood, what a keen pursuit of transitory wealth, yet what a cold inattention to God and holiness! Men, and men too of the greatest abilities, whose penetration on other subjects is piercing as the eagle's sight, are on the most important points blind as the incaverned mole.

Ther. What! is the understanding like the most dim-sighted animal, when lodged in her darkest retirement? that sublime faculty of the soul, which lends her eye to all the rest, sits at the helm, and directs their motions!

Asp. You remember, I presume, that beautiful passage in Milton,* which Mr. Addison so highly admires, and so judiciously illustrates: The passage, I mean, where the archangel Michael comes down to advertise Adam of future events, and to execute the sentence of divine justice.

Ther. I remember it perfectly well.—In the east, the great light of day lies under an eclipse. In the west, a bright cloud descends, filled with an host of angels, and more luminous than the sun itself. The whole theatre of nature is darkened, that this glorious machine may appear in all its magnificence and beauty. From this radiant chariot the Potentate of heaven alights, and advances with a majestic stateliness to meet Adam.

Asp. Should you see such an august personage alighting from such a splendid chariot, and walking amidst the thronged streets of a city; should you behold every one intent upon his business or diversions, struck with no awe, paying no reverential regard to this celestial visitant—what would you think?

Ther. I should certainly suspect that some superior power had drawn a veil over their sight, and hid this wonderful spectacle from their view.

Asp. Such is really the case with all mankind by nature, and with the generality of people during their whole life. God, the infinitely great God, is in every place. Yet how few advert to his presence?—All nature exhibits him to their senses, yet perhaps he is not in any of their thoughts.

The sun, clothed in transcendent brightness, most illustriously displays his Maker's glory. The moon, though dressed in fainter beams, has lustre enough to show us the adorable Deity, and his marvellous perfections. The stars, fixed as they are at an immeasurable distance, and lessened almost to a point, come in with their evidence, and magnify their Creator to a gazing but unaffected world.

The air whispers his clemency in the gentle, the refreshing gales of spring. If we take no notice of this soft persuasive address, the tone is elevated, the majesty of Jehovah sounds aloud in roaring winds and rending storms. Yet both expedients fail. Man is like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ears. He refuseth to hear the voice of the charmers, charm they never so sweetly, never so forcibly.

Each flower, arrayed in beauty, and breathing perfume, courts our affections for its infinitely amiable Author.—Not a bird that warbles, not a brook that murmurs, but invites our praise, or chides our ingratitude. All the classes of fruits deposit their attestation on our palates, yet seldom reach our hearts. They give us a proof of the divine benignity; a proof as undeniable as it is pleasing, and too often as ineffectual also.

In short, the whole creation is a kind of magnificent embassy from its almighty Lord, deputed to proclaim his excellencies, and demand our homage. Yet who has not disregarded the former, and withheld the latter?—How few walk as seeing him that is invisible, or have fellowship with the Father of spirits? though to walk before him is our highest dignity; and to have fellowship with him is our only felicity?

Ther. This is owing to inattention, rather than to any blindness or defect in man's un-

* Book xi. l. 203, &c.

derstanding. The many works of genius, which have been produced in various ages, are an abundant proof of his intellectual capacity.—Have not the seas been traversed and the skies measured? Has not the earth been disembowelled of its choicest treasures, while its surface is beautified with towns, cities, palaces innumerable? What fine arts are invented and exercised, and to what a pitch of perfection are they carried? Arts that seem, if not to exceed, at least to rival nature. It was the understanding which formed all these great designs. It was the understanding which contrived the means, and conducted the execution. And are not these unquestionable evidences of her very superior abilities?

Asp. Then she is like some great empress, who conquers half the world, but is unable to rule herself; who extends her regulations into foreign climes, while her domestic affairs are involved in confusion.—Do you doubt the reality of this remark? Set yourself to meditate upon the most interesting truths. How desultory, how incoherent are your thoughts?—Charge them to be collected; they disobey your orders. Rally the undisciplined vagrants; again they desert the task. Exert all your power, and keep them close to their business; still they elude your endeavours.

The other day I could not forbear smiling at a little adventure of your youngest son's. Some quicksilver, which happened to be spilt upon the floor, parted in several globules. The shining balls looked so prettily, he longed to make them his own. But when he offered to take them up, they slipt from his hand; as soon as he renewed the attempt, so often he met with a disappointment; the closer he strove to grasp them, the more speedily they escaped from his fingers: he seemed at first to be amazed, then became quite angry that the little fugitives should so constantly baffle his repeated efforts. Thus unmanageable I very often find my own thoughts. If yours are under no better regimen, this may convince us both, that all is not according to the original creation.

We apply ourselves to converse with the everlasting God in prayer. Here one would expect to have the thoughts all clearness, and all composure. But here "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves. (2 Cor. iii. 5.) All those holy ideas which create reverence, or strengthen faith, or quicken love, come from the Father of lights. Should he withdraw his influence, all will be dull, and dark, and dead. It may be we are somewhat enlivened in this sacred exercise; before we are aware, perhaps in the very midst of the solemn office, our attention is dissipated, and not dissipated only, but scattered to the ends of the earth. The God of all glory is forsaken, and the devotion paid to some senseless foppery. A malefactor begging his life at the knees of his sovereign, and discontinuing his suit in order to caress a lapdog, or pursue a butterfly, is but a faint image of the vanity which attends our devotional services. Reason, which ought to correct these irregularities, is treated like the incredulous lord, who, instead of controlling the unruly multitude, was overborne by their impetuosity, "and trodden under foot." (2 Kings vii. 17.)

Since then the reins are struck out of our hands, and we have lost the rule over our own faculties, surely we are in a state different, very different from our primitive constitution.

Ther. However insensible to refined speculation, the understanding, when interest is in the case, is apprehensive enough.

Asp. In temporal,* not in spiritual affairs.—Your younger brother, Theron, is a merchant. We will suppose him at the sea-side, within a small distance of the vessel in which a considerable part of his substance is embarked. We will suppose the vessel in the utmost distress, ready to founder with her leaks, or to strike upon the rocks. If he discovers no sign of concern, calls in no assistance from the country, makes no effort to save the crew, and secure the cargo, would you not think him bereaved of his understanding, or deprived of his sight? Could you conceive a more favourable opinion of his eyes or his intellect, if, instead of trying every method to prevent a shipwreck, he should amuse himself with picking shells from the ocean, or drawing figures on the sand?

We, and every one of our fellow creatures, have an interest in jeopardy, unspeakably more precious than all the rich lading of a thousand fleets. Our souls, our immortal souls, are exposed, every day, every hour, to the peril of everlasting destruction. Every temptation is threatening to their endless welfare, as a ridge of craggy rocks to a ship that drives before the strongest gale. Yet how unconcerned are mankind? where is their holy fear? where their godly jealousy? where their wakeful circumspection? Rather what a gay insensibility is observable in their behaviour? or else, what a lifeless formality prevails in their supplications—their supplications to that Almighty Being, who alone is able to save and to destroy. Was not the human understanding both darkened and benumbed, we should see our neighbours, we should feel ourselves awakened into much the same earnest solicitude, as the disciples expressed, when, perceiving the

* Called therefore by the apostle, "fleshly wisdom," and opposed to the grace of God. 2 Cor. i. 12.

waves boisterous, and their bark sinking, they cried, "Lord, save us! we perish!"

But, alas! in things of an unseen nature, though of eternal consequence, interest, that habitual darling of every heart, loses its engaging influence. Nay, when eternity, all-important eternity is at stake, even self-preservation is scarce any longer a governing principle. What can be more deplorable? and, if we admit not the doctrine of original corruption, what so unaccountable?

Ther. This, I must confess, is true with regard to the unthinking rabble. To them may be accommodated the remark of Augustus, who, when he saw some foreign females carrying apes in their arms instead of infants, said to one of his courtiers, "have the women of those countries no children, that they are so fond of such despicable animals?"—The vulgar are so immersed in secular cares, that one might indeed be tempted to ask, "have those people no souls, that buying and selling, eating and drinking, engross their whole concern?" But persons of rank and education think in a more exalted manner.

Asp. Do you then imagine, that an elevation of circumstances sets the affections on things above? or that it is the peculiar infelicity of the vulgar to grovel in their desires? Gold, I believe is more likely to increase than to dissipate the fog on the mind. Abundance of possessions, instead of disengaging the heart, fasten it more inseparably to the earth. Even superior attainments in learning, if not sanctified by grace, serve only to render the owner somewhat more refined in his follies. But comparisons between the various classes of mankind, are as useless as they are invidious. None, in either condition, attend to the things which make for their peace, till they are awakened from their lethargy, by the quickening Spirit of Christ; and even then we cannot but observe evident indications of much remaining blindness.

How apt are such persons to mistake the way of salvation, to place their own works for a foundation of hope, instead of Christ the Rock of Ages, thinking by their own performances to win, not seeking from unmerited grace to receive, the inheritance of eternal glory; which is more absurdly vain than to offer toys as an equivalent for thrones, or to dream of purchasing diadems with a mite.—They are also prone to misapprehend the nature of holiness, are zealous to regulate the external conduct, without attending to the renovation of the heart; in outward forms elaborate; with respect to inward sanctity, less if at all exact: a labour just as preposterous, as to skin over the surface of a wound while it festers at the bottom, and consumes the bone.

Give me leave to ask, Theron, when our Lord declares, "Unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" John iii. 3; when he speaks of "eating his flesh, and drinking his blood;" John vi. 54.; when you hear or read of union with the blessed Jesus, or communion with the most high God; is there not a cloud, if not total darkness, on your mind?* How erroneous was the Psalmist himself in his judgment concerning the divine disposals; "So foolish was I and ignorant, even as it were a beast," or as the veriest beast, "before thee."† Psalm lxxiii. 22. The voice of experience therefore will attest, what the word of revelation has averred,—that the natural man, be his intellectual abilities ever so pregnant, or ever so improved, "cannot know the things of the Spirit of God;" 1 Cor. ii. 14; he has no sight to discern their beauty, no taste to relish their sweetness. Nay, though they are the purest light, and the most perfect wisdom, to him they appear not only dark and obscure, but even foolishness itself.

Would this be the case if the understanding was not greatly depraved? Should it be difficult for your ear to distinguish the diversity of sounds, or for your eye to discern the variety of colours, would you not conclude, that the organs were very much impaired?

Ther. I think you have treated the understanding as Zopyrus served his own body,‡ when he went over to the enemy. Do you intend to mangle the other faculties at the same unmerciful rate?

Asp. That nobleman made the wounds which disfigured his flesh; I have only probed the sores which were found in the understanding. If I have touched the quick, and put the patient to pain, it is only to facilitate the operation of medicine, and make way for a cure.—But permit me to ask, Wherein does the excellency of the human will consist?

Ther. In following the guidance of rea-

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* With regard to the mysteries of Christ, the greatest proficients are but *abtuse acuti*, dull even in their acuteness.—What says the wise Augur? an invaluable fragment of whose works is preserved in the book of Proverbs. "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man;" even though the following verses bespeak the very singular elevation and extent of his knowledge, Prov. xxx. 2. Conformably to the experience of this excellent man, I have always observed, that the more enlightened people are, the more they lament their ignorance; the more they pant after a continual progress in heavenly knowledge; and pray for clearer, still clearer manifestations of the incomprehensible God.

† I question whether Aspasio's translation comes fully up to the emphasis of the original. The comparative particle is omitted in the Hebrew, as it softens and palliates the matter. Therefore the Psalmist, to express the deepest sense of his ignorance, says, "I was a beast, yea, the veriest beast."

‡ See Rollin's *Ancient Hist.* vol. iii. p. 46.

son, and submitting to the influence of proper authority.

Asp. The will, I fear, rejects the government of reason; and it is undeniably certain, that it rebels against the authority of God.

Cast your eye upon that team of horses, with which yonder countryman is ploughing his fallow-ground. No less than five of those robust animals are linked together, and yield their submissive necks to the draught. They have more strength than twenty men, yet are managed by a single lad. They not only stand in awe of the lash, but listen to the voice of their driver. They turn to the right hand or to the left; they quicken their pace, or stop short in the furrow, at the bare intimation of his pleasure. Are we equally obedient to the calls, to the exhortations, the express injunctions of our heavenly Lord? The blessed Jesus spoke at the beginning, and the world was made. He speaks by his providence, and the universe is upheld. When he shall speak at the last day, the heavens will pass away, and the earth be dissolved. Yet he speaks to us in his divine word, and we turn a deaf ear to his address. He speaks in tender expostulations, and no melting of heart ensues. He speaks in precious promises, and no ardent desires are enkindled. The will, which in these cases ought to be turned as wax to the seal, is unimpressed and inflexible as an iron sinew?

Ther. The human will is constantly inclined to preserve, accommodate, and make its possessor happy. Is not this the right position, in which it should always stand? Or the most desirable direction that can be given to its motions?

Asp. I should be glad, if fact bore witness to your assertion. But fact, I apprehend, is on the contrary side. I took notice, as we came along, of some ants, busily employed on a little hillock. Have you made any observation, Theron, on this reptile community?

Ther. It is a little republic.* They inhabit a kind of oblong city, divided into various streets. They are governed by laws, and regulated by politics, of their own. Their magazines are commodiously formed, and judiciously guarded against the injuries of the weather. Some are defended by an arch made of earth, and cemented with a peculiar sort of glue: Some are covered with rafters of slender wood, and thatched with rushes or grass. The roof is always raised with a double slope, to turn away the current of the waters, and shoot the rain from their storehouses. They all bestir themselves, with an incessant assiduity, while the air is serene, while the roads are good, and abundance of loose grain lies scattered over the fields. By these precautions, they live secure, when storms embroil the sky, they want no manner of conveniency, even when winter lays waste the plains.

Asp. Do we improve, so diligently, our present opportunities? This life is the seed-time of eternity. Do we husband the precious moments like persons sensible of their unspeakable importance? sensible, that if we trifle and are indolent, they will be irrecoverably gone, and we irretrievably ruined?

Sickness, we know not how soon, may invade us, pain may torment us, and both may issue in our final dissolution. Are we duly aware of these awful changes, and properly solicitous to put all in order for their approach? We walk (alarming thought!) upon the very brink of death, resurrection, and judgment. Do we walk like wise virgins, with our loins girt, with our lamps trimmed, in a state of continual readiness for the heavenly Bridegroom's advent?

Those ants "have no guide, overseer, or ruler; yet they prepare their meat in the summer, and gather their food in the harvest." (Prov. vi. 7.) We have all these, yet neglect the time of our visitation. We have God's unerring word to guide us; God's ever-watchful eye to oversee us; God's sovereign command to rule and quicken us. Notwithstanding all these motives, is not the speech of the sluggard the very language of our conduct? "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." The most supine indifference, where all possible diligence is but just sufficient! This, you must allow, is the true character of mankind in general. And does this demonstrate the rectitude of their will?

Ther. The understanding may be said to carry the torch, the will to hold the balance. Now the perfection of a balance consists in being so nicely poised, as to incline at the least touch, and preponderate with the slightest weight. This property belongs, without all dispute, to the human will.

Asp. What if one of your scales should descend to the ground, though charged with trifles that are light as air? if the other should kick the beam, though its contents be weightier than talents of gold? Is not this an exact representation of our will, when the fleeting pleasures of sense, or the puny interests of time, excite our wishes; even while the solid delights of religion, and the immensely rich treasures of immortality, can hardly obtain our attention? However, let us quit the metaphor, and examine fact. Suppose I make it appear, that, instead of choosing the most eligible objects, the will is so deplorably vitiated as to loathe what is salutary, and to be fond of what is baneful.

* See Nat. Displ. vol. i.

Ther. If you prove this to be universally the case, you will prove your favourite point with a witness.

Asp. When Providence is pleased to thwart our measures, or defeat our endeavours; to bring us under the cloud of disgrace, or lay upon us the rod of affliction; what is our behaviour? Do we bow our heads in humble resignation? Do we open our mouths in thankful acknowledgments? —Observe the waters in that elegant octangular basin. They assimilate themselves, with the utmost readiness, and with equal exactness, to the vessel that contains them. So would the human will, if it were not extremely froward and foolish, conform itself to the divine; which is unerringly wise, and, of all possible contingencies, incomparably the best.* Yet how apt are we to fret with disquietude, and struggle under afflictive dispensations, "as a wild bull in a net?"

Ther. This is a very imperfect proof, Aspasio, and corresponds only with part of your accusation. We may dislike what is wholesome, especially if it be unpalatable, yet not be fond of our bane.

Asp. Should you see a person who thirsts after the putrid lake, but disrelishes the running fountain; who longs for the empoisoned berries of the nightshade, but abhors the delicious fruit of the orchard; would you applaud the regularity of his appetite? I do not wait for your answer. But I more than suspect this is a true picture of all unregenerate people. How do they affect dress and external ornament; but are unwilling, rather than desirous, to be "clothed with humility," 1 Peter v. 5, and "to put on Christ," Rom. xiii. 14. Amusement will engage, play animate, and diversion fire them; but as to the worship of the living God, O "what a weariness is it." Mal. i. 13. This is attended, if attended at all, with languor and a listless insensibility. Frothy novels and flatulent wit regale their taste, while the marrow and fatness of the divine word are as "their sorrowful meat," Job vi. 7. What is all this but to loathe the salutary, and long† for the baneful?

Let me, from the same comparison, propose one question more, which may be applicable both to the will and to the understanding. Should you hear of another person, the state of whose stomach was so disposed that it turned the most nourishing food into phlegm, and derived matter of disease from the most sovereign supports of health, what would you think of this constitution.

Ther. I should certainly think it very much distempered.

Asp. Without the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, our souls turn every occurrence into an increase of their sinful depravity. Our very table is a snare, and instead of exciting us to gratitude, is a provocative to gluttony. How difficult is it, when we flow in plenty, not to be elated; when we are oppressed with poverty, not to repine? Have we business in the world? it cumbers our thoughts, or tempts us to avarice: Have we no business to manage? we sink into sloth, and settle on the lees of voluptuousness. If our schemes are prosperous, it is odds but they attach us to the interests of time: If they prove unsuccessful, we too often are chagrined with the disappointment, and sin against meekness. Even the holy commandment, instead of restraining sin, or producing obedience, irritates the inbred depravity, and renders it more restless, more impetuous, more ungovernable, Rom. vii. 8. Those very things which should have been for our welfare, (so malignant and raging is our corruption!) are converted into an occasion of falling.

Ther. The will is under no necessity of misemploying her powers. She is free to act in this manner or in that; and if a spendthrift, is not a slave.

Asp. In actions which relate to the animal economy the will is unquestionably free. She can contract the forehead into a frown, or expand it with a smile. In the ordinary

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* This seems to be the meaning of the prophet. Isaiah xxvi. 7. Not—"the way of the just is uprightness." This sense, in the present connexion, is hardly consistent with humility; is by no means proper to introduce a devotional address to the great Jehovah. Rather—"God's way to the just is uprightness;" or, still more emphatically, "uprightness;" is in all respects irreprovable, excellent, admirable; suited, perfectly suited, to every sacred attribute of wisdom, goodness, and truth.

† The reader may see this unhappy contrast drawn in the strongest colours, by the royal preacher, and by the mourning prophet. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded! but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof." What a crowd of words! emphatically declaring the most incorrigible perverseness: which is proof against every method of reformation, against all the arts even of divine persuasion. Prov. i. 24, 25.—"The host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped." What a heap of expressions: significantly describing that impetuous ardour, which no prohibitions can restrain; and that insatiable avidity, which never knows when to say, it is enough. Jer. viii. 2.

If I beg leave to add another example of this kind, it is chiefly for the sake of clearing up an obscure passage in the Psalms; which seems to have been mistaken by the authors of both our versions.—David, to set forth the barbarous assiduity of his persecutors, says, "They wander up and down." They pry into every corner; they search the city, and examine the country: not for meat; which in this connexion is a sense quite foreign to the subject, and very jejune indeed; but to devour, to devour me the destined victim of their rage. And if they are not satisfied, if they cannot compass their design by day, will they grudge? No; but they will continue all night, in the prosecution of their purpose. Neither cold nor darkness can retard them; neither hardships nor dangers can divert them; but their attempts are as indefatigable as their malice is implacable. Psalm lix. 15.

affairs of life, she is under no control. We can undertake or decline a journey, carry on or discontinue an employ, just as we please. In the outward acts of religion also, the will is her own mistress. We can read the word of God, or go to the place of divine worship, without any extraordinary aid from above.—But, in matters which are more intimately connected with our salvation, the case is different. Here, as our liturgy expresses it, "we are tied and bound with the chain of our sins."

Would you have a person delight himself in the Lord, take pleasure in devotion, set his affections on things above?—All this is both his duty and his happiness. But alas! he is alienated from the life of God; his inclinations gravitate quite the contrary way; his will is in the condition of that distressed woman, who was "bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, and could in no wise lift up herself." Luke xii. 11. Corruption, like a strong bias, influences, or rather like a heavy mountain oppresses his mind. Neither can he shake off the propensity, or struggle away from the load, until grace, almighty grace, interposes for his release,—"Where the spirit of the Lord is, there," and there alone, "is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17, that sacred and glorious liberty, which is not the common privilege of all men, but the high prerogative of the children of God.

Would you have a person apply to the great Redeemer—apply with a real ardour of desire, as Bartimæus of old, or the Syrophœnician mother?—His will is like the withered arm, cannot stretch forth itself to the all-gracious Saviour; cannot hunger and thirst after his everlasting righteousness and infinite merit, till the Saviour himself speaks power into the enfeebled, the perverted faculty.—If you think otherwise, try the experiment. Persuade men to this necessary practice. Urge the most weighty arguments; devise the most pathetic expostulations; let zeal summon all her force, and rhetoric employ all her art. Without being a prophet, I dare venture to foretell the issue. Disappointments, repeated disappointments, will convince you that our divine Master knew what he said when he solemnly declared, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.* John vi. 44. Our church, in conformity to this and other scriptures, has taught us to pray, "Turn thou us, O good Lord," for nothing but thy omnipotent agency is capable of doing it, "and so we shall be turned."

Ther. Are we slaves then? Will Christianity send us to seek our brethren in the mines or in the galleys?

Asp. Christianity does not send but find us there: There, or in a worse slavery.*—It is doubtless a most abject state, to wear the yoke, and truckle in chains. Yet such, I apprehend, is the state of our minds by nature. To prove this, we need not go down to the lowest ranks of life. "These," you might say with the prophet, "are poor; these are foolish; they have not known the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God"—I will get me therefore to the great men," Jer. v. 4, 5, and examine their disposition.

Have you not known persons of the greatest intrepidity, and firmest resolution, hurried away by their lusts, as "a rolling thing before the whirlwind?" Isa. xvii. 13. Perhaps they were bold enough to face danger, and defy the sword in the field of battle; yet were no more able to withstand the wanton allurements of beauty, or the soft solicitations of pleasure, than the moth can forbear fluttering about the flame, even though it singes her wings, and is scorching her to death. Others, possessed of a refined imagination, disdain the gross indulgencies of sensuality; yet are slaves to their own domineering passions. They are blown into the most intemperate rage, and pushed on to the most extravagant actions, by every little ruffling accident. They see the meanness which such an ungovernable spirit argues; they feel the misery which such internal tempests create: nay, they resolve to suppress the impetuosity of their temper: yet are borne away by the torrent, and upon the very first provocation, are as furiously resentful as ever. Will you call these persons free, because their task-masters and their tyrants are lodged within?† because the fetters are forged, not for the meaner but for the immortal part of their nature?

Ther. Let us pass to the affections. These are to the soul what wings are to the eagle, or sails to the ship. These always stand ready to receive the gales of interest, and to spring at the signal of reason.

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* It is not said the Father drives, but draws: not by violent, irrational, compulsive means; but by clear conviction, sweet persuasion, and inducements suited to a reasonable being. Those are the cords of a beast; these of a man. So that we are not acted upon as clock-work, or influenced as mere machines, but "made willing in the day of his power." Psal. cx. 3.

* St. Paul says of Christians, and reckons himself in the number, that naturally they served (not διακονουντες but δουλευοντες, were absolute slaves to) "diverse lusts and pleasures." Tit. iii. 3. The whole verse is very remarkable, and nothing can be more apposite to Aspasio's purpose. It shows us, what they were by nature, who through grace became living images of the blessed God.

This mortifying doctrine is often acknowledged by our church: Thus begins one of her public supplications, "Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful man." It seems we cannot determine our own wills, nor regulate our own affections. What is this but bondage?

† ——————Inordinate desires
And upstart passions catch the government
From reason, and to servitude reduce
Man till then free.

proportioned to the ballast, what advantage will accrue, either to the animal or to the vessel? The one, will probably be overset in the voyage, the other will lie grovelling on the ground.

Ther. Desire seems to be first, which "opens the mouth, or moves the wing, or peeps." Isa. x. 14. Desire is active as a flame, and ever in pursuit of happiness.

Asp. What if your flame, instead of shooting upwards, should point its inverted spires to the earth? Would not this be strange, and a sign of great disorder?—God is the centre of perfection, and the source of felicity. All that is amiable in itself, is comprehended in God. All that is beneficial to us, proceeds from God. Do our desires uniformly tend to this superexcellent Being? Do our wishes terminate in the enjoyment of his ever-glorious Majesty? Alas! we are naturally estranged from him. We covet no communion with him. We are wedded to trifles, and dote upon vanity: but to God we say—it is evidently the language of our conduct—"Depart from us? we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Job xxi. 14.

If desire is the first-born among the affections, observe it in children. There it appears in its dawn, and has most of pure nature. See how those flies, exulting in the sunny gleam, vibrate with all the rapidity of motion their little wings:* So prompt and expedite are the desires of children to any corrupting diversion. See how sluggishly that snail, crawling forth amidst the refreshing moisture, drags her slow length along: So dull, if not reluctant, are the dispositions of our children to any improving exercise. Rewards will hardly win them to the latter; the rod can hardly deter them from the former: And none, none but God, "by his special grace preventing them, can put into their minds good desires."†

Is our love under better regulation? How easily are we captivated with a fair complexion and graceful form, especially when set off with the decorations of dress; but how little affected with the beauty of internal character, with the ornaments of virtue, and the graces of Christianity! Can it be supposed, that the pulse of the soul beats regularly, when there is such a passionate fondness for fading embellishments, and such a cold indifference for the most substantial endowments? How ready are we to be enamoured with well proportioned clay, often to our apparent prejudice, sometimes to our utter ruin? yet how backward to love that infinitely loving and lovely Redeemer, who would die himself rather than we should become a prey to death! Tinder we are, perfect tinder to the sparks of irrational and dissolute affection; harder than adament, colder than ice, to this heavenly flame.

Ther. If our love is blind, our fear has not lost her eyes. Fear is quick of apprehension; and instead of being stupidly insensible, is ready to "rise up at the voice of a bird." Eccl. xii. 4.

Asp. The passion of fear is sufficiently active, but deplorably misapplied. We fear the reproach of men. But are we alarmed at the view of that everlasting shame which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall pour upon the ungodly? We shudder at the drawn dagger, and stand appalled at the headlong precipice: But how often have we defied the sword of almighty vengeance, and sported upon the brink of irretrievable perdition?

Sin is the most pernicious of all evils. Sin violates the divine command, and provokes the divine Majesty. Sin offers despite to the blessed Spirit, and tramples upon the blood of Jesus. For sin, the transgressor is banished from the blissful presence of God, and doomed to dwell with inextinguishable burnings. Do we dread this grand destroyer of our happiness? dread it more than any calamities, more than all plagues?—Take one of those fine maydukes, which glow with so beautiful a scarlet on yonder espalier: Offer it to the blackbird that serenades us from the neighbouring elm. The creature, though fond of the dainty, will fly from our hand, as hastily as from a levelled fowling-piece. He suspects a design upon his liberty; and therefore will endure any extremity, will even starve to death, rather than taste the most tempting delicacy in such hazardous circumstances. Are we equally fearful of an infinitely greater danger? Do we fly, with equal solicitude, from the delusive but destructive wiles of sin? Alas! do we not too often swallow the bait, even when we plainly discover the fatal hook? Do we not snatch the forbidden fruit, though conscience remonstrates, though God prohibits, though death eternal threatens.

Ther. Conscience, then, according to your own account, has escaped the general shipwreck. Conscience is God's vicegerent in the soul, and executes her office faithfully. Even the Gentiles "show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."* Rom. ii. 15.

Asp. If there be any remains of the divine image, perhaps they are to be found in the conscience. But even this is not ex-

* The wings of a fly are supposed to have the quickest motion of any material substance which lives. And if they make, as naturalists imagine, some hundreds of vibrations in a second of time, I think there can be no competition in the case.

† Collect for Easter-day.

empt from the common ruin.—Consider its light. It is like a dim taper, feebly glimmering, and serving only to make the darkness visible. Or, if it discovers any thing, it is an obscure something, we know not what, which instead of informing tantalizes us; and instead of guiding bewilders us, as false and delusory lights on the shore put a cheat upon the mariner, and lead him on to ruin.*—Consider its operations. It is either dumb or dead, or both. Dumb; or else how vehemently would it upbraid us for our shocking ingratitude to the supreme omnipotent Benefactor? how loudly would it inveigh against our stupid neglect of spiritual interests, and eternal ages? Dead; otherwise how keenly would it smart when gashed with wounds—numerous as our repeated violations of the divine law, deep as the horrid aggravations of our various iniquities?

Ther. Do you call this an answer to my objection, Aspasio? If it be an answer, it resembles, in point of satisfactory evidence, the light which you ascribe unto the conscience.

Asp. The Gentiles, you allege, show the work, but not the love of the law, written on their hearts. Some leading notices of right and wrong they have, some speculative strictures of good and evil; but without a real abhorrence of the one, or a cordial delight in the other: which, far from ennobling their nature, far from vindicating their practice, argues the exceeding depravity of the former, and renders the latter absolutely without excuse.

No; you say, conscience excuses the heathens. Rather, their conscience bears witness to the equity of the law, while their thoughts make some weak apology for the tenor of their conduct. This is far from acquitting, far from justifying them. Besides, these weak attempts to excuse are always founded on ignorance. Did they know themselves, their duty, or their God, conscience would, without the least hesitation, bring in her verdict Guilty. The apostle assures us that till faith, which is a divine principle, takes place in our breasts, "both the mind and conscience are defiled: Tit. i. 15: here and elsewhere very plainly intimating, that the conscience is evil, and ever will be evil, till it is "sprinkled with the blood of Christ." Heb. x. 22.

It accuses some, I acknowledge, and it ought to accuse, yea, to condemn all. But even here it evidences itself to be corrupt, for its accusations are sometimes erroneous, and no better than false witnesses, sometimes partial,* and suborned by appetite; and very, very often ineffectual. Nay, when they do take effect, they produce no fruit that is truly good. They work not a genuine humiliation, or an unfeigned repentance; but either a slavish dread of God as a severe judge, or hatred of him as an inexorable enemy.

Ther. Hatred of God! Astonishing impiety! Is it possible for the human heart to admit such enormous, almost incredible wickedness?

Asp. You may well be astonished, Theron; and God may justly demand; "What iniquity have my people found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity?" Jer. ii. 5. "I created you out of nothing, and endowed you with an immortal soul. As a father, I have provided for you: As a nurse, I have cherished you. I have consigned over to your possession the earth, and the fulness thereof. All my creatures do you service, and even my angels minister unto your good. Do you desire greater demonstrations of my love? I have given what was dearer to me than all angels, than all worlds: I have given my son from my bosom, to die in your stead. Would you have farther evidences of my tender, my distinguished regard? Behold! I touch the mountains, and they smoke: I look upon the earth, and it trembles: I cast even the princes of heaven, when they break my law, into chains of darkness. But to you, O men, I condescend to act as a supplicant! Though highly injured, and horribly affronted, I beseech you, again and again I beseech you, to be reconciled."

To hate† such a God, is indeed the most detestable impiety. Yet man, foolish man, practises this impiety, whenever, for the sake of a vile lust, an ignoble pleasure, or an unruly passion, he transgresses the command of his Creator.

Shall I exemplify the doctrine in another of the affections?

Ther. In truth, Aspasio, I begin to be sick of the subject. If human nature is so ulcerated, the less you touch it the better. However, let us not quite omit the irascible appetite.

* This seems to have been the case with the bulk of the Heathen world. Conscience arraigned, and found them guilty. This put them upon practising their abominable, sometimes their inhuman idolatries. Nay, this induced them to give the most scandalous and impious misrepresentations of the Deity. That they might sheath the sting of conscience, and find some salvo for their own iniquities, they made even the objects of their worship the patrons and the precedents of their favourite vices.

* Partial—otherwise, how could the most celebrated among the ancient heroes applaud and practise that execrable unnatural crime, self-murder? How could their first-rate historians extol and almost consecrate that diabolical principle of action, pride? And how could their ablest teachers of morality, not only tolerate, but establish the error, by neglecting to find so much as a name for that amiable virtue, humility.

† *Hatred of God* is so shocking an expression, that one would almost wish never to hear or read it. But it occurs in our unerring book; is too often exemplified in common life; and is engraven, by corrupt nature, on every human heart. See Rom. i. 30; Exod. xx. 5; John xv. 25; Rom. viii. 7.

Asp. Of this we have already taken a side view: if you choose to see it in full proportion, make your observation on Fervidus. Fervidus comes home in a rage. His cheeks are pale and his lips quiver with excess of passion. Though he can hardly speak, he vows revenge, and utters imprecations. What is the cause of all this wondrous ferment? A neighbour, it seems, has dropt some reflecting hint, or a servant has blundered in some trifling message. Such usage, Fervidus says, is intolerable, and such negligence unpardonable. This same Fervidus has offered innumerable affronts to his Maker, he has most scandalously neglected the will of his almighty Lord, yet feels no indignation against himself. He is all fury when his own credit is touched, but when the interest of Christ is wounded, he can sit unconcerned, or pass it off with a laugh. Anger, I acknowledge, is sometimes becoming and useful. But is this its right temperature? this its proper application?

Ther. This is the practice only of some few turbulent spirits. To saddle their qualities upon every person, is a procedure just as equitable, as the madman's* calculation was reasonable, who took an account of every ship which entered the harbour, and set it down for his own.

Asp. The latter part of my charge, I fear, is applicable to more than a few. However, let us consider the most calm and sedate minds. How are they affected under injuries? Do they never aggravate failings into crimes? Do they find it easy to abstain from every emotion of ill-will? easy to love their enemies, and do good to those who hate them? These god-like tempers, if our nature was not degenerated, would be the spontaneous produce of the soul. But now, alas! they are not raised without much difficulty: seldom come to any considerable degree of eminence; never arrive at a state of true perfection. An undoubted proof, that they are exotics, not natives of the soil.

Now we are speaking of plants, cast your eye upon the kitchen-garden. Many of those herbs will perfume the hard hand which crushes them, and embalm the rude foot which tramples on them. Such was the benign conduct of our Lord: He always overcame evil with good. When his disciples disregarded him in his bitter agony, he made the kindest excuse for their ungrateful stupidity. Matth. xxvi. 41. When his enemies, with unparalleled barbarity, spilt his very blood, he pleaded their ignorance as an extenuation of their guilt. Luke xxiii. 34. Is the same spirit in us which was also in our divine Master? Then are our passions rightly poised, and duly tempered. But if resentment kindles, and animosity rankles in our hearts; this is an infallible sign, that we swerve from our Saviour's pattern, consequently, are fallen from our primitive rectitude.

Ther. What say you of the fancy? This, sure, if no other, retains the primitive rectitude. What pictures does she form, and what excursions does she make? She can dive to the bottom of the ocean, can soar to the height of the stars, and walk upon the boundaries of creation.

Asp. That the fancy is lively and excursive, I readily grant. It can out-travel the post, or out-fly the eagle. But if it travel only to pick up shells, or fly abroad to bring home mischief; then, I apprehend, though you should admire the faculty, you will hardly be in raptures with its agency. This is the real truth. Our fancy, till divine grace regulate and exalt its operations, is generally employed in picking painted shells, or culling venomous herbs; "weaving (as the prophet very elegantly, and no less exactly describes the case) the spider's web, or hatching cockatrice-eggs;" Isa. lix. 5; busied in the most absurd impertinences, or acting in speculation the vilest iniquities. That which should be "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed," Cant. iv. 12, for the Prince of Peace, is the thoroughfare of vanity. And even when we are renewed from above, O! how necessary is it to keep an incessant watch, and exercise a strict discipline, over this volatile, variable, treacherous vagrant!

The memory, as well as the fancy, is impaired, or if not impaired, is debauched. Why else does it so firmly retain the impressions of an injury, but so easily let slip the remembrance of a benefit? Any idle fopperies which sooth our vanity, and increase our corruption, cleave to the thoughts, as the vexatious burr to our clothes; while the noble truths of the gospel, and the rich mercies of a gracious God, slide away from the mind, and leave no lasting trace behind them. This double perverseness is very emphatically and too truly represented by Jeremiah: "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number. Jer. ii. 32. If we hear a loose hint, or read an immodest expression, they are almost sure to fasten themselves on our memory. If shaken off, they follow us with a troublesome importunity. If excluded, as unwelcome visitants, they force themselves again and again upon our imagination. They dog us to the closet; they haunt our most retired hours; and too often disturb our very devotions. Tell me now, can that faculty be upright and uncorrupted, which is a perforated sieve

* Thrasylus, an Athenian.

to transmit the beneficial, but a thirsty sponge to imbibe the pernicious?*

Ther. Well, my friend, whatever guilt I or others have contracted, flattery I dare be positive, is none of yours. Human nature has received no heightening or adulatory touches from your pencil. You have portrayed her foolish and beastly, and every thing bad and devilish.

Asp. And this, even this abomination I must not secrete, I dare not except. Envy is a devilish disposition. It subsists nowhere but in damned spirits and fallen souls: Yet, infernal as it is, it has been found in persons of the most exalted character. The magnanimous Joshua felt its cankerous tooth. Numb. xi. 29. The disciples of the blessed Jesus were soured with its malignant leaven. Matt. xx. 24. An apostle declares, that "the spirit which dwelleth in us, lusteth to envy," James iv. 5, is impetuously prone to that detestable temper.

Lying is confessedly a diabolical practice; yet how unaccountably forward are our children to utter falsehood? As soon as they are born, they go astray; and as soon as they speak, they speak lies.—I said unaccountably; but I recall the expression: The cause is evident—they have lost the image of the God of truth, and are become like that apostate spirit, who "is a liar and the father of it." John viii. 44.

What think you of malice, of hate, and revenge? Are they not each a species of murder, and the seed of the old serpent? Unless, therefore, we are entirely free from all these hellish emotions, we must, we must acknowledge, "that the prince of this world," John xiv. 30, has his party within us. May the almighty hand of our God extirpate and subdue it day by day!

You tell me I am no flatterer. Should a person who professes himself the friend of his fellow-creatures, soothe them into a false peace? should he bolster them up in a groundless conceit of their excellency, when they really are no better than "an unclean thing?" shall the surgeon assure his patient, "all is well," even when the mortification has taken place, and the gangrene is spreading? This were to refine the first out of all benevolence, and to flatter the last into his grave.

A disputant of less complaisance than my Theron would probably ask with a contemptuous sneer, "Have you then been drawing your own picture?"—To whom I would reply, with confusion and sorrow, "I have;" alleging this only to moderate my confusion, that I am daily seeking, by prayer and watchfulness, more and more "to put off this old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Eph. iv. 22. And, to alleviate my sorrow, I am endeavouring continually to remember, that however unworthy I am, however vile I may have been, my adored Redeemer's righteousness is perfect; and in this righteousness every believer is to make his boast.

Ther. So then man is blind in his understanding; perverse in his will; disorderly in his affections; influenced by dispositions which are partly brutal and partly diabolical.—I have often heard you extol, in terms of high admiration, the virtue of humility: You have lavished all the riches of eloquence when haranguing on poverty of spirit. If such be the condition of mankind, they have infinite cause to be poor in spirit. They must therefore have one excellency left, and, according to your own account, a very distinguishing one.

Asp. Scarce any thing displays in a more glaring light the extreme depravity of man than his strong propensity to pride, notwithstanding so much vileness, and so many deformities.—Should the noisome leper admire the beauty of his complexion, or the impotent paralytic glory in the strength of his sinews, would they not be mistaken, even to a degree of sottishness and frenzy? Yet for man, fallen man, who has lost his original righteousness, which was the true ornament of his nature; who is become subject to base and sordid lusts, or as the apostle speaks, "is earthly and sensual,"—for him to be proud, is still more absurdly wicked. And since this is the case, I cannot acquit him from the last and heaviest article of the sacred writer's charge; I have a fresh and more convincing proof that we do him no wrong, when we call his nature, his disposition, his wisdom—"devilish." Jam. iii. 15.

Ther. Why do you reckon pride an universally prevailing corruption? I see no ground for such a dishonourable suspicion. I hope I myself am an instance to the contrary. To unguarded sallies of passion, to several other faults, I confess myself subject; but cannot think that I am proud.

Asp. Ah! Theron, if you was not proud, you would not be passionate. Unreasonable anger always proceeds from an overweening opinion of our own worth. One who, besides his acquired knowledge of human nature, had the supernatural gift of discerning spirits, is observed to join "humility" and "meekness," Eph. iv. 2, intimating, that they are amiable twins, and where one exists the other cannot be absent. Always consistent with himself, he links together the opposite vices, "heady and

* This I think suggests an unanswerable confutation of that specious argument, frequently used in behalf of some fashionable but dissolute diversions. "They are interspersed," say their admirers, "with sentiments of virtue, and maxims of morality." Should we admit the truth of this plea, yet the depraved disposition of mankind is pretty sure to drop the morality, and carry away the ribaldry.

high-minded, 2 Tim. iii. 4, not obscurely hinting, that those who are easily provoked are certainly proud. Shall I add, without offence, if we fancy our minds to be clear from the weeds of vanity, and our thoughts free from the workings of self-admiration, it is a most pregnant symptom, that we are overrun with the former, abandoned to the latter, and blinded by both.

Pride was the first sin that found entrance into our nature, and it is perhaps the last that will be expelled. What are all our afflictions, but a remedy provided for this inveterate disease; intended to "hide pride from man." Job xxxiii. 17. What is the institution of the gospel, but a battery erected against this stronghold of Satan; ordained to "cast down every high imagination." 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Though that remedy is often applied, though this battery is continually playing, yet the peccant humour is not entirely purged off, nor the elatement of spirit totally subdued, till mortality is swallowed up of life.

Pride is the sin which most easily besets us. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean," Prov. xx. 9, from this iniquity? It defiles our duties, and intermingles itself with our very virtues. It starts up, I know not how, in our most solemn hours and our most sacred employs. The good Hezekiah, whose prayers were more powerful than all the forces of Sennacherib, was not proof against the wiles of this subtile sorceress. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. Even the great apostle, who had been caught up into the third heavens, was in danger of being puffed up with pride; in such great danger, that it was necessary to put a lancet into the gathering tumour; or, as he himself expresses it, to fix a "thorn into his flesh, and permit the messenger of Satan to buffet him." 2 Cor. xii. 7.

How pathetically is this corruption lamented, and how truly described by "a sweet singer of our Israel!"

> But pride, that busy sin,
> Spoils all that I perform;
> Cursed pride! that creeps securely in,
> And swells a haughty worm.
>
> Thy glories I abate,
> Or praise thee with design;
> Part of thy favours I forget,
> Or think the merit mine.
>
> The very songs I frame
> Are faithless to thy cause;
> And steal the honours of thy name,
> To build their own applause.
>
> WATT'S *Hor. Lyr.*

Ther. Now, I presume you have given the last touches to your distorted portrait.

Asp. There are other disagreeable and shocking features; but these I shall cast into shades, or hide under a veil. One particular you must allow me to add, which, like a sullen air in the countenance, throws aggravated horror over the whole: I mean, an inclination to be fond of our slavery.

In other instances, the "captive exile hasteth to be loosed." Isa. li. 14. But here we prefer bondage to freedom, and are loath to leave our prison. Of this, our backwardness to self-examination is both a consequence and a proof. Self-examination, under the agency of the Spirit, would open a window in our dungeon; would show us our wretched condition, and teach us to sigh for deliverance. Why have we such a dislike of reproof? Because we hug our chains, and choose darkness rather than light. Reproof is more grating than the harshest discord, though it tends to dissolve the enchantment, and rescue us from the tyranny of sin; while flattery, which abets the delusion, and strengthens the spell, is music to our ears. Is not our reason, which should arraign and condemn every irregularity, forward to invent excuses, and to spare the favourite folly? Reason, which should unsheath the dagger, super-induces the mask; and, instead of striking at the heart of our vices, screens them under the cover of some plausible names. A wicked habit is called a human infirmity, ensnaring diversions pass for innocent amusements, a revengeful disposition is termed spirit, gallantry, and honour. Thus our reason (if, when so egregiously perverted, it deserves the name) is ingenious to obstruct our recovery, and rivets on the shackles which our passions have formed.*

This the eternal Wisdom foresaw, and therefore uttered that tender expostulation, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" Even the inestimably precious knowledge of an all-atoning and completely justifying Saviour; who preaches, who has purchased, and who works deliverance—preaches in his word, has purchased by his blood, and works by his Spirit, deliverance for the captives, the wretched captives of ignorance, sin, and death. This I take to be the most flagrant and deplorable effect of human depravity—our aversion to the doctrine, the privileges, the grace of the gospel. Beware, dear Theron, lest you prove my point by—shall I speak it? would you suspect it?—your own practice. Zealous as I am for my tenets, I should be sorry, extremely sorry, to have such a demonstration of their truth.

Ther. You are highly obliging, Aspasio, to single me out for your evidence. Yet why should the honour be appropriated to myself? It belongs, upon the foot of the preceding calculation, not to your friend only,

* Perhaps this is what our Lord means, when developing the human heart, and discovering its latent enormities, he closes the dark account with ἀφροσυνη, *foolishness:* implying that stupidity which has no sense of its misery: that perverseness which has no inclination for a recovery; both which render all the other evils far more inveterate, Mark vii. 22.

but to the whole species. If you was aiming at none but the licentious and abandoned, you would have none to oppose you but persons of that character. Your arrows of satire would then be rightly levelled, and might be serviceable to mankind; whereas, to put all in the black list, to mark all with the villain's brand—this can never be Christian charity, this is insufferable censoriousness.

Asp. Let me beseech you, Theron, not to misapprehend my design. I speak not as a malevolent satirist, but would imitate the faithful physician. I am opening the sore, that it may admit the healing balm: and should I perform the operation with an envenomed instrument? My soul abhors the thought.—I must entreat you likewise to remember the distinction between a state of nature and a state of grace. We are all naturally evil. Such we should for ever continue, did not a supernatural power intervene; making some to differ, both from their original selves, and from the generality of their neighbours. Are they refined in their temper, and reformed in their life? I grant it. But then it is the influence of the sanctifying Spirit, which purges away their dross, yet not without leaving some alloy.

Ther. Here, Aspasio you certainly strain the bow, till it breaks; since scripture itself celebrates some persons as absolutely perfect. What says Moses, the inspired historian? "Noah was perfect in his generation." Gen. vi. 9. What says the God of Moses, who can neither deceive nor be deceived? "Job was a perfect man and an upright." Job. i. 1. consequently their nature must be entirely cleansed from this hereditary defilement; and their character confutes your derogatory representations of mankind.

Asp. Those eminent saints were perfect; that is, they were sanctified throughout, sanctified in all their faculties; no one grace of religion was lacking. As in the newborn infant there is a human creature complete; no constituent part of the vital frame is wanting; though each is tender, all are very feeble, and none arrived at the full size.

They were upright. This word seems to be explanatory of the preceding; and signifies an unfeigned desire, joined with a hearty endeavour, to obey the whole will of God; excluding not all defect, but all reigning hypocrisy, and willful remissness. —The interpretation, thus limited, is of a piece with their conduct. If stretched to a higher pitch, it is evidently inconsistent with the narrative of their lives.

Pray, what was your motive for decorating the sylvan retirement (which sheltered us yesterday) with the statue of Elijah?

Ther. Because I thought his solitary life and gloomy temper suited that sequestered bower; because the memorable adventure there represented, is with me a favourite portion of sacred history.

Are we pleased with spirited and delicate railery? Nothing exceeds his pungent sarcasm on the stupid and despicable dupes of idolatry. Every sentence is keen as a razor, and pointed as a dagger, yet wears the appearance of the most courtly complaisance. We may truly say, in the beautiful language of the Psalmist, "His words are smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords!"*

Are we delighted with instances of magnanimity? A single prophet, unsupported by any human aid, maintains the cause of truth against the king, his grandees, and hundreds of the apostate priests. He ventures to stake all his credit, to risk his very life, and (what was dearer to him than personal credit, or bodily life) the honour of the true God, and interests of his holy religion; to risk all on the immediate interposition of a most surprising miracle.

Do we admire the triumphs of faith? His faith was in a manner omnipotent. He prays, and torrents of fire descend from the sky, to devour his adversaries, 2 Kings i. 10. He prays again, and the sluices of heaven are shut; there is neither dew nor rain for several years, 1 Kings xvii. 1. A third time he prays, and the windows from on high are opened; abundance of showers water the earth, (Jam. v. 17, 18.) On another occasion he presents his supplications, and God makes his feet like harts' feet, insomuch that an aged prophet outruns the royal chariot, (1 Kings xviii. 46.)

Asp. I commend your taste, Theron; and am particularly pleased with the reasons of your choice. But do not you remember, that even the wonder-working Tishbite failed in his resignation, and failed in his faith? Eminent as he was for mortification, he gave way to unreasonable discontent; and, though a champion for the living God, he yielded to unbelieving fear.† "The man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth, Num. xii. 3; yet he, even he was provoked in his spirit, and spake unadvisedly with his lips," Psal.

* 1 Kings xviii. 27. "And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud, for he is a God. Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked."

† Elias, or rather Elijah, "was a man subject to like passions as we are," James v. 17. Upon which passage an eminent commentator makes the following remark; "This probably is said with respect to his fear and discontent, manifested, 1 Kings xix. 3, 4. Ομοιοπαθης must, I think, imply a state liable to the irregular workings of passion; not free from the sinful infirmities of nature. Otherwise, it is an instance foreign to the purpose, does by no means answer the end designed; which is to encourage the heart, and strengthen the faith, even of frail, corrupt, offending creatures. See verse 16.

cvi. 33. Was not Peter the hero among our Lord's followers? Yet he trembles, more than trembles, at the shaking of a leaf, he denies his divine Master, scared by the voice of a woman.

Look wherever we will, we find proofs of human depravity, reigning uncontrolled in some, making frequent insurrection in all. It is written in our own hearts, by the pen of experience; the finger of observation points it out in the practice of others—even in the practice of those who have been saints of the first rank, and of the highest endowments. Yet they were defective;—defective too, in that very quality which was their distinguishing gift, in which they particularly excelled.

Ther. While we are talking, the day has insensibly stole itself away, and left us surrounded with twilight: which is a sort of lustre intermingled with darkness; no part wholly lucid, no part wholly obscure. An emblem, according to your representation, of the renewed soul and its imperfect holiness.

Asp. A very just one. Even where the gospel shines still there is an incurrent gloom of corruption. Ignorance mixes itself with our knowledge; unbelief cleaves to our faith: Nor is our purity free from all contamination. The prophet Zechariah, fortelling the establishment of the gospel kingdom, and describing the state of its spiritual subjects, says, "It shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark."* This, as to its literal sense, we now see exemplified in the circumambient atmosphere. With regard to its spiritual meaning, every true believer feels it accomplished in his own breast.

Ther. While you are so vehement in decrying all human attainments, consider, Aspasio, whether you do not check and dispirit us in the pursuit of exalted virtue.

Asp. I suppose you never expected to be such an adept in geometry as Archimedes, nor so profound an astronomer as Newton; yet this did not check your application to the study of mathematics, or the contemplation of the heavens. Your brother, the merchant, I presume, has no prospect of amassing the wealth of a Crœsus, or the immense treasures of a Kouli-Khan; yet this does not dispirit him in prosecuting the business which brings him both opulence and honour.

However, Theron, so long as you deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness, I must acknowledge you act a consistent part in being zealous for the perfection of personal obedience. You ought either to acquire the one, or to accept the other: Therefore I shall produce no more arguments for your discouragement; but shall comprise the whole of my answer in the motto to an Irish nobleman's arms—TRY. Or, if this be too concise, I will subjoin, with a very little alteration, the words of a king; "When you have attained what you pursue, bring me word again, that I may go and possess it also," Matth. ii. 8.

Ther. According to your account, the most advanced and established Christians are but like a company of invalids. Does not this extremely derogate from the honour of our Lord, considered as the Physician of souls? It seems to make a mere nothing of sanctification, and would swallow up Christ the King in Christ the Priest.

Asp. Invalids they are;* and such will continue till they are dismissed from this great infirmary, and admitted into that holy, happy, blessed world, where "the inhabitants shall no more say, I am, either in soul or in body, sick." Isa. xxxiii. 24.

If the cure was never to be completed, this doubtless would be dishonourable to our almighty Physician. But the spiritual recovery, begun on earth, and advancing through time, will be perfected in heaven, and prolonged to eternity. Does this make a mere nothing of sanctification? No; but it makes room for a continual progress, and affords cause for continual humiliation. It reserves a most exalted prerogative for the heavenly state and beatific vision; and perpetually reminds us of a most important truth,—That our present blessedness consists, not in being free from all sin, but in having no sin imputed to us. Psalm xxxii. 2.

This imperfection of our obedience, instead of confounding, maintains a proper distinction between Christ the King, and Christ the Priest: whereas, if we were perfect in piety, the priestly office, with regard to us, would be superseded. What need of an intercessor to recommend our prayers? what occasion for an high priest to "bear

* Zech. xvi. 6. 1 Cor. xiii. 9. "For we know in part." Perhaps this declaration of the apostle may be a key to the prophet's meaning. However, it is a sufficient confirmation of Aspasio's sentiment.

* Not the best of men lament their ignorance of the divine perfections, their slowness of heart to believe the divine promises, and the languor of their gratitude for inestimable, for innumerable gifts of the divine goodness. Do they not frequently feel deadness in their devotions, disorder in their affections, and various other relics of the original leaven?—Do they not often complain, in the language of the apostle, "When I would do good, evil is present with me: And say with the earliest Christians, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened;" burdened, not so much with affliction—those heroes in Christianity had learned to rejoice in tribulation—but burdened with a sense of their spiritual infirmities, and with the workings of their inbred corruption; which, to a tender and lively believer, are the heaviest of crosses, and the most galling of loads. Nay, do not the heirs of glory wash their very robes, even their fairest deeds and their brightest graces, in the blood of the Lamb? which, if they were free from spot, and void of impurity, need not be made white in this sacred fountain. See 2 Cor. v. 4; Rev. vii. 14.

the iniquity of our holy things?"* if some taint of the original leaven did not pollute our best services?

Neither does this detract from the wisdom, from the goodness, or from the power of Christ. It rather administers to the advantageous display of all these divine attributes: Of his wisdom, in conducting the affairs of his church with such exact propriety, that the righteousness of faith may have its due honour, and the sanctification of the Spirit its proper esteem: Of his goodness, in carrying on the work of grace amidst so much infirmity, and so many corruptions; and in crowning, with consummate happiness, such frail undeserving creatures: Of his power, in extracting a variety of benefits even from—

Ther. Benefits, Aspasio! Can any thing beneficial proceed from an evil, which, according to your own representation, is so incorrigibly malignant?

Asp. It will tend to make us lowly in our own eyes, when we remember that by nature we are altogether become abominable; that the remains of natural depravity still adhere to our minds. How must such a view of ourselves cover us with shame, and lay us low in abasement! "Less than the least of all thy mercies." Gen. xxxii. 10, will be the language of such a one's very soul.

It will dispose us to compassionate others. How can we take a brother by the throat, and require faultless perfection in his behaviour, when we ourselves in many things offend, in all things fall short? Every such consideration rebukes what I may call spiritual unmercifulness: it pleads for tenderness and forbearance to our fellow-creatures; it is a monitor within, and whispers that affecting remonstrance, "Oughtest not thou to have compassion upon thy fellow-servant, since thy almighty Lord hath" such renewed, such unwearied "pity on thee." Matth. xviii. 33.

It will teach us to admire the riches of grace. Shall fallen creatures, that are taken from the very dunghills of sin, and rescued from a hell of inward iniquity—shall they, notwithstanding their deplorable depravity, and innumerable deficiencies—shall they be admitted into the bosom of eternal love? they be exalted to the thrones of glory, and numbered with the princes of heaven? This is grace, transcendently rich, and divinely free indeed!

Will it not reconcile us to the approach of death? This, methinks, like wormwood on the nipple, or gall in the cup, must tend to wean us from the world. How can we be enamoured with such a land of darkness, and such a vale of tears? Or why should we covet, when Providence gives the signal for our departure, to prolong our abode in these territories of disorder? Surely this must incline us to leave them, every day, more and more in our affections; and at last to leave them, without any reluctance, by final dissolution: leave them for that better country, where our personal righteousness will no longer be defective, like the waning moon, but shine forth with consummate lustre, like the meridian sun, in the kingdom of our Father.

It will endear the blessed Jesus in every capacity; as the stings of the fiery flying serpents, and the dearth of the waste howling wilderness, endeared to the Israelites both their miraculous antidote, and their bread from heaven. They who believe this truth, must see their inexpressible and incessant need of Christ's Spirit. The protestation of Moses, on a particular occasion, will be the daily, the hourly breathing of their souls: "Carry us not up hence, unless thy presence, thy Spirit, go with us." Exod. xxxiii. 15. For without his aid, we can discharge no duty aright, nor successfully resist any temptation. They will be exceedingly cautious not to "grieve" (Eph. iv. 30) that sacred guest, lest he depart from them, and abandon them to the power of their lurking corruptions; knowing that if he abandon them, when such foes are within, and so many snares without, their case will be worse than Samson's, when his locks were shaven, and the Philistines all around him.

How highly will such persons value the blood of the covenant, and the intercession of their great High Priest! They will no more presume to enter into the presence of the most high God, without a fiducial reliance upon the atoning and interceding Saviour, than the sons of Jacob would have ventured to appear before the viceroy of Egypt, without the company of their younger brother. Gen. xliii. 5. In all, in all their intercourse with heaven, the great Propitiation will be their plea, and the great Advocate their confidence. The impotent man waited at the pool of Bethesda, and the Syrian general dipped seven times in Jordan. These persons will not only wait, but live by the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness." Zech. xiii. 1. They will wash in the sacred sanctifying stream, not seven times only, but seventy times seven.

And when such sentiments possess the mind, how dear! O how dear and desirable will our Lord's obedience be! I called, some time ago, our own works worm-eaten things: and must not these corruptions, if they remain ever so little in the heart, tarnish our graces, and debase our duties? Must they not be depreciatory to all our ac

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* Exod. xxviii. 38. "Id est, expiare peccata, quibus sanctissimæ cæteroquin actiones nostræ inquinatæ sunt." Wits. *de Œcon.*

complishments, and too much like corroding vermin in the substance of our timber, or at the core of our fruits?—Should we not then renounce, utterly renounce, these tarnished worm-eaten things, and rely, wholly rely, for everlasting acceptance, on our divine High Priest, who, in his mediatorial works, as well as in his wonderful person, is altogether light and perfection?* and neither in him nor in them is there any deficiency or any darkness at all.

Excuse me, Theron; I fear I have been preaching. The importance of the text must form my apology. It is an introduction, not to the records of history, or the transactions of philosophy, but to the riches of Christ.

Ther. If my Aspasio has been preaching, I can assure him for his comfort, that his audience has been very attentive; and though the sermon was somewhat copious, the hearer neither slept nor gaped. However, I should be glad to have the whole reviewed and summed up, that if it has been large as the pyramid, it may, like the pyramid, terminate in a point.

Asp. This then is the state of our nature. The image of the Creator is lost; blindness is in the understanding; disorder in all the affections.—In the will, enmity against God, the sovereign good; inability to all that is spiritual and heavenly; with a propensity to whatever is sordid and earthly. The whole soul is deformed, distempered, rebellious. And shall such a creature lay claim to those amiable and sacred endowments, which may be a proper recommendation to infinite holiness? Is such a creature qualified to perform those righteous acts, which may approve themselves to the demand of God's law, and to the inflexibility of his justice?

Should he conceive the vain hope, or make the vainer attempt, I would now address him as Jehoash formerly answered Amaziah. Amaziah king of Judah, elated with the little victories he had obtained over the Edomites, began to fancy himself invincible. Prompted by this foolish imagination, he challenges Jehoash king of Israel to meet him in a pitched battle, and receives this ironical apologue by way of reply, which, for gallantry of spirit and delicacy of wit, for poignancy of satire and propriety of application, has seldom been equalled, perhaps never exceeded: "The thistle that was in Lebanon, sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife; and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle." 2 Kings xiv. 9. What are we, when we offer to establish our own righteousness, or presume to justify ourselves before the most high God, but despicable thistles, that fancy themselves stately cedars. And is not every temptation, is not each corruption, a wild beast of the desert, which will trample on the impotent boaster, and tread his haughty pretensions in the dust?

* *Light and perfection.*—This is the meaning of that mysterious ornament, which, in the grand officiating robes of the Jewish high priest, was annexed to the breast-plate, and styled Urim and Thummim; only the Hebrew words are in the plural number, and denote every degree of illumination, and all kinds of perfection.—Does not this very significantly teach sinners whence to seek their wisdom, and where to look for their perfection? There never was, in all ages, more than one Urim and Thummim, and only one person in each generation was appointed to wear it. And who is there, in all worlds, that can give us heavenly knowledge, but the Spirit of Christ?—What is there in ourselves, or all creatures, that can present us unblamable before God, but the obedience of Christ?

DIALOGUE XIV.

Aspasio was employed in preparing for his journey. Theron, free from business, and disengaged from company, had the greatest part of the day to himself, which he spent in reviewing the substance of their late conferences, not without intermingling aspirations to God for the guidance of his divine Spirit.

At evening he went, like the patriarch of old, "into the field to meditate," Gen. xxiv. 63, amidst the calm of nature to meditate on the grace of the gospel. The sky was peculiarly beautiful, and perfectly clear; only where the fine indigo received an agreeable heightening by a few thin and scattered clouds, which imbibed the solar rays, and looked like pensile fleeces of purest wool. All things appeared with so mild, so majestic, so charming an aspect, that, intent as he was upon a different subject, he could not but indulge the following soliloquy.

"How delightful are the scenes of rural nature! especially to the philosophic eye, and contemplative mind. I cannot wonder that persons in high life are so fond of retiring from a conspicuous and exalted station, to the covert of a shady grove, or the margin of a cooling stream; are so desirous of quitting the smoky town and noisy street, in order to breathe purer air, and survey the wonders of creation, in the silent, the serene, the peaceful villa.

"It is true, in the country there are none of the modish, I had almost said, meretricious ornaments of that false politeness, which refines people out of their veracity; but an easy simplicity of manners, with an unaffected sincerity of mind. Here the solemn farce of ceremony is seldom brought into play, and the pleasing delusions of compliment have no place. But the brow is the real index of the temper, and speech the genuine interpreter of the heart.

"In the country, I acknowledge, we are

seldom invited to see the mimic attempts of human art: But we everywhere, behold the grand and masterly exertions of divine power. No theatre erects its narrow stage, surrounds it with puny rows of ascending seats, or adorns it with a shifting series of gorgeous scenery: But fields extend their ample area, at first lightly clad with a scarf of springing green, then deeply planted with an arrangement of spindling stalks; as a few more weeks advance, covered with a profusion of bearded or husky grain; at last, richly laden with a harvest of yellow plenty.

"Meadows disclose their beautiful bosom; yield a soft and fertile lap for the luxuriant herbage, and suckle myriads of the fairest, gayest flowers; which, without any vain ostentation, or expensive finery, outvie each other in all the elegance of dress. Groves of various leaf, arrayed in freshest verdure, and liberal of their reviving shade, rise in amiable, in noble prospect all around. Droves of sturdy oxen, strong for labour, or fat for the shambles; herds of sleeky kine with milk in their udders, and violets in their nostrils; flocks of well fleeced sheep, with their snowy lambkins, frisking at their side—these compose the living machinery. Boundless tracts of bending azure, varnished with inimitable delicacy, and hung with starry lamps or irradiated with solar lustre, from the stately ceiling; while the early breezes, and the evening gales, charged with no unwholesome vapours, breeding no pestilential taint, but fanning the humid buds, and waving their odoriferous wings, dispense a thousand sweets, mingled with the most sovereign supports of health. And is not this school of industry, this magazine of plenty, incomparably more delightful, as well as infinitely less dangerous, than those gaudy temples of profuseness and debauchery, where sin and ruin wear the mask of pleasure, where Belial is daily or nightly worshipped with what his votaries call modish recreation, and genteel amusement?

"Here indeed is no tuneful voice to melt in strains of amorous anguish, and transfuse the sickening fondness to the hearer's breast: No skilful artist, to inform the lute with musical enchantment, to strike infectious melody from the viol, and sooth away the resolution and activity of virtue in wanton desires or voluptuous indolence. But the plains bleat, the mountains low, and the hollow circling rocks echo with the universal song. Every valley re-murmurs to the fall of silver fountains, or the liquid lapse of gurgling rills. Birds, musicians ever beauteous, ever gay, perched on a thousand boughs, play a thousand sprightly and harmonious airs.

"Charmed, therefore, with the finest views, lulled with the softest sounds, and treated with the richest odours, what can be wanting to complete the delight? Here is every entertainment for the eye, the most refined gratifications for the ear, and a perpetual banquet for the smell, without any insidious decoy, for the integrity of our conduct, or even for the purity of our fancy.

"O ye blooming walks and flowery lawns, surrounded with dewy landscapes! how often have patriots and heroes laid aside the burden of power, and stole away from the glare of grandeur, to enjoy themselves in your composed retreats!* Ye mossy couches, and fragrant bowers, skirted with cooling cascades! how many illustrious personages, after all their glorious toil for the public good, have sought an honourable and welcome repose in your downy lap?† Ye venerable oaks and solemn groves; woods that whisper to the quivering gale, cliffs that overhang the darkened flood! who can number the sages and saints, that have devoted the day to study, or resigned a vacant hour to healthy exercise, beneath your sylvan porticoes and waving arches? that, far from the dull impertinence of man, have listened to the instructive voice of God, and contemplated the works of his adorable hand amidst your moss-grown cells and rocky shades? How inelegant, or how insensible is the mind, which has no awakened lively relish for these sweet recesses, and their exquisite beauties!"

But whither am I carried? Is not this rural enthusiasm? I find myself talking to trees, and forget the momentous question, which waits for our decision. Here, then, let my rhapsody end, and my inquiry proceed.—Does it betray a want of true delicacy, to be insensible of nature's charms? My Aspasio thinks, it argues as wrong a taste in practical divinity, not to acquiesce in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. To this doctrine I have been always extremely averse. I set myself to oppose it with objections, drawn from the reason of things, and from various passages of scripture; to all which my friend replied. And though I was scarcely convinced, yet I was silenced by his answers.

I pleaded for the insufficiency of our sincere obedience, especially when accompanied with repentance, and recommended by the merits of Christ. Neither was this attempt successful: His arguments, somewhat like the flaming sword planted at the entrance of paradise, "turned every way;" Gen. iii. 24; and precluded all access to life on the foot of our own duty.

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* ——— "Mihi me reddentis agelli,"—says Horace of his little country-seat.

† Virgil was so smitten with the amiableness of these scenes, that he assigns them as an habitation for happy spirits, in the regions of Elysium.

——— "Lucis habitamus opacis,
Riparumque toros, et prata recentia rivis
Incolimus."

At length, Aspasio quitted the defensive, and attacked me in his turn. He explained the precepts, and enforced the threatenings of the divine law. So exact its tenor, that it demands a perfect and persevering conformity to every injunction. So extensive its authority, that it reaches the inmost thoughts, and requires obedience, not barely in the actions of life, but the very intentions of the heart. So inexorable its severity, that it condemns every the smallest offence, and curses every the least offender.

This remonstrance had some of the terror, and almost all the effect of a masked battery. It was quite unexpected, and alarmed me considerably. To push his advantage, he enlarged upon the infinite purity of God: A God, glorious in holiness, who cannot look upon evil with any connivance, or without the utmost abhorrence; before whom the heavens are unclean, and who will in no wise clear the guilty.

To complete his victory, he played off the doctrine of original guilt, and original depravity: That, besides the imputation of Adam's apostacy, besides the commission of numberless iniquities, we were born in sin; are, by nature, enmity against God; in all our faculties corrupt; in every imagination evil; and, even when renewed* by grace, are still, still tainted with some base remains of the old leprosy.

After all, he bid me consider—what fruits must spring from such a nature? how they must appear when compared with such a law? what they must deserve when tried before such a God? These, I must confess, are very weighty and startling queries. If these representations are true, the face of human affairs carries a most gloomy aspect; or rather, a most dreadful storm is hanging over the children of men. Aspasio urges me to fly, without any delay, to the covert of Christ's meritorious obedience. This, he says, was wrought out in my name, and in my stead; this will be admitted both at the throne of grace, and the bar of judgment, as my justifying righteousness.

This, he adds, opens a way, on God's part, for the largest emanations, and most honourable exercise of mercy. On man's part, it founds a title to pardon, to life and every spiritual blessing. This doctrine, especially in such a connexion, begins to put on a more recommending appearance. My prejudices are really wearing away. I am almost a convert.

Aspasio overheard the close of these reflections. Unwilling to interrupt his friend in so serious an inquiry, and desirous to observe the issue of so interesting a debate, he had hitherto concealed himself. But, thinking this a favourable minute, he stepped forward and said,—

Asp. Almost! and why not altogether a convert? What should hinder my dear Theron from submitting to so rational a scheme, with the most entire acquiescence? What should hinder him from embracing so comfortable a doctrine with the utmost complacency? Why should he not subscribe, both with hand and heart, that divine decree? "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord," (Isa. liv. 17.)

Ther. If, by this doctrine, the claims of the law are answered—if the perfections of God are glorified—if the interests of morality are secured—I must acknowledge, it will be more worthy of acceptance than I could once have imagined.

Asp. And if these points are not gained, gained too in the most eminent manner, I solemnly declare, that I will never plead for imputed righteousness more.

But the claims of the law are all answered: For there is nothing in its sacred injunctions, which Christ did not perform; and nothing in its awful threatenings which Christ did not sustain. He fulfilled all its precepts, by an unspotted purity of heart, and the most perfect integrity of life. He exhausted its whole curse, when he hung upon the cross, abandoned by his Father, and a bleeding victim for the sins of his people. This obedience brings higher honour to the divine law, than it could have received from the uninterrupted duty of Adam, and all his posterity in all their generations.

The perfections of God which were dishonoured by our rebellion, are glorified. He appears, by this method of justification, inconceivably rich in showing mercy, yet steady, inflexibly steady, in executing vengeance. The sceptre of grace, and the sword of justice, have each its due exercise, each its full scope. The holiness of the divine nature, and the dignity of the divine government, are not only maintained, but most magnificently displayed. Indeed it is the peculiar excellence of this wonderful expedient, that it renders all the divine attributes supremely venerable, and supremely amiable.

Ther. But are the interests of morality secured?—This is what I am strongly inclined to doubt. And, to say the truth, this is now my principal objection to your scheme.

* "Even when renewed."—For a display of this important truth, and a remedy against this stubborn evil, let me refer the reader to a little treatise published by Dr. Owen, and entitled, "The Nature, Power, Deceit, and Prevalency of the Remainders of Indewelling Sin in Believers." The author's pen is indeed a dissecting knife, goes deep into this subject, and lays open this plague of the heart. Like a workman that need not be ashamed, he demonstrates his point, from the unerring word of God, and the acknowledged experience of Christians. Like a compassionate as well as able physician, he all alone prescribes the proper antidote; nay, he shows how the poison may be so over-ruled by divine grace, and so managed by the watchful patient, as to become medicinal, salutary, and conducive to the most beneficial purposes.

Asp. I shall never blame my friend for being vigilant and jealous over the interests of morality. If our doctrine had a malignant aspect on true morality, I would give my voice against it, and use all my endeavours to suppress it: But it is formed with every tendency to awaken the utmost dread of sin, and affect us with the warmest sense of our Creator's love. And is not that the strongest barrier against the encroachments of vice? Is not this the sweetest inducement to the practice of virtue?

I am glad to find, that a jealousy for the interests of morality is the chief obstacle in the way of your assent; because I am persuaded, it is much of the same nature with those forbidding and mistaken apprehensions which our ancestors entertained concerning the ocean. They looked upon it as an unsurmountable obstruction to universal society: whereas it is, in fact, the very cement of society: the only means of accomplishing a general intercourse, and the great highway to all the nations of the earth. What is here affirmed may, on some future occasion, be proved. At present let me desire you to imagine, rather may the blessed Spirit enable you to believe, that your sins are expiated through the death of Jesus Christ—that a righteousness is given you, by virtue of which you may have free and welcome access to God, the merit of which you may plead for obtaining all the blessings of time and eternity. Then let me ask, will this alienate your affections from your Almighty Benefactor? will this irritate evil concupiscence, or send you to carnal gratifications in quest of happiness. Quite the reverse. When this faith is wrought in your heart, nothing will be so powerful to produce holy love and willing obedience, to exalt your desires and enable you to overcome the world.

What says the apostle? "I through the law am dead to the law. Gal. ii. 29. Being made to understand its spirituality and perfection, I have no longer any hope of justification from my own conformity to its precepts. Did this prompt him, did this embolden him to neglect or violate his duty? Hear the sacred writer's own declaration;—I am released from the rigour and bondage of the law; I am directed to Christ for righteousness and salvation; "that I may live unto God;" that my whole life may be devoted to his honour, who has brought me into a state so delightful, into a liberty so glorious.

Ther. This liberty, I am afraid, will be of very little service to the licentious and gay world

Asp. I shall be in no pain even for the gay world, if once they cordially receive this grace, and are vitally influenced by this doctrine; which, far from dissolving the least obligation to obedience, or weakening any one principle of piety, adds to every other motive, the endearing engagements of gratitude and the winning persuasives of love.

Nay, I verily believe, that multitudes in the gay and licentious world are held fast in the fatal snare, by their ignorance of this sweet, alluring, consolatory truth. They find themselves deeply obnoxious to divine justice, and feel themselves strongly bound with the chains of sensuality. They think it is impossible to clear the enormous score of their guilt; impossible to deliver themselves from the confirmed dominion of sin: Therefore, like desperate debtors, they stifle every serious thought; lest a consciousness of their long arrears, and a prospect of the dreadful reckoning, should "torment them before the time." Matt. viii. 29.

But if they were informed, that the infinitely-merciful Son of God has undertaken to redeem such undone and helpless sinners; that he has thoroughly expiated the most horrid transgressions, and procured, even for ungodly wretches, all the needful supplies of strengthening grace; that, instead of being prohibited, they are invited to partake, freely to partake, of these unspeakable blessings: were they acquainted with these glad tidings of the gospel, surely they would burst their chains, and spring to liberty. These truths, if once revealed in their hearts, would, of all considerations, be most effectual to "make them free." John viii. 32.

What shall I say more to obtain my Theron's approbation? Shall I point out and plead the most illustrious precedents?—God the Father is well pleased with this righteousness of our Redeemer. He expresses his complacency by the most emphatical words: "Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Isaiah xlii. 1. In Christ and his righteousness, God is not only pleased but "delighted; his "very soul," every perfection of the Godhead, with ineffable satisfaction, rests and acquiesces in them.—I said ineffable; for he has declared this, in a manner superior to all the energy of language, by raising our crucified Surety from the dead, by exalting him to the heaven of heavens, and placing him at his own right hand in glory.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is well pleased. He esteems it his honour to shine forth as the everlasting righteousness of his people: It is the brightest jewel of his mediatorial crown. In this he "sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied:" accounting himself fully recompensed for all the labours of his life, and all the sorrows of his death, when sinners are washed from their guilt in his blood, and presented faultless by his obedience.

The Holy Spirit is equally pleased with this great transaction, and its noble effects. It is his peculiar office, and favourite employ,

to convince the world of their Saviour's righteousness: not only that his nature was spotlessly pure, and his conversation perfectly holy; but that from both results a righteousness of infinite dignity and everlasting efficacy; sufficient, throughout all ages sufficient, for the acceptance and salvation of the most unworthy creatures.

Since then this method of acceptance and salvation is excellent and glorious in the eyes of the most adorable Trinity; since it magnifies the law, and yields the most exalted honour to its divine Author; since it makes ample provision for the holiness of a corrupt, and the happiness of a ruined world; why should my friend any longer dislike it, oppose it, or treat it with a cold indifference? Surely, all these grand recommendations are enough to overrule any little objections which may arise from the suspicions of timidity, or may be started by the artifices of sophistry.

Ther. I know not how it is, Aspasio; but I cannot reconcile myself to this doctrine of imputed righteousness, notwithstanding all the pains you have taken to make me a convert.

Asp. The disappointment is mine, but the loss is yours, Theron. However, let me entreat you not to reject my sentiments absolutely, nor to condemn them prematurely. Suppose it possible, at least, that they may be true, and weigh them in an even balance. Learn wisdom from your Aspasio's folly. I was once exactly in your situation; saw things in your light, and through your medium.

Conversing, I well remember, with a devout, but plain person, our discourse happened to turn upon that solemn admonition; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." Matth. xvi. 24. I was haranguing upon the import and extent of the duty; showing, that merely to forbear the infamous action, is little. We must deny admittance, deny entertainment at least, to the evil imagination; and quench even the enkindling spark of irregular desire. When I had shot a random bolt, my honest friend replied, "There is another instance of self-denial, to which this injunction extends, and which is of very great moment in the Christian religion: I mean, the instance of renouncing our own strength, and our own righteousness; not leaning on that for holiness, not relying on this for justification." I thought the old man, I must confess, little better than a superstitious dotard; and wondered at (what I then fancied) the motley mixture of piety and oddity in his notions. But now I discern sense, solidity, and truth in his observation.* Now I perceive, that we ourselves are often the dreamers, when we imagine others to be fast asleep.

Ther. I shall not forget your caution, and will endeavour to avoid the rock on which my Aspasio struck, but happily, it seems, escaped shipwreck. You may likewise assure yourself, that upon a subject of exceeding great and eternal consequence, I shall not fail to use the most attentive and impartial consideration. An indolent supineness or a bigotted obstinacy, in this great crisis of affairs, would be of all errors the most inexcusable, and must prove of all miscarriages the most fatal.

Asp. But still you cannot reconcile yourself. And no wonder. For this way of salvation runs directly counter to the stream of corrupt nature. It puzzles our reason, and offends our pride. What? shall we not work, but "believe unto righteousness?" Rom. x. 10. Shall we receive all freely, and reckon ourselves no better than unprofitable servants? This is a method to which we should never submit; this is a proposal which we should always spurn, were not our sentiments rectified, and our hearts new-moulded, by sovereign grace.

Let me remind you of a little incident which you must have read in the Grecian history. A certain stranger came, one day, to dine with some Lacedemonians. They, you know, always sat down at a public table, and were content with the plainest food. The gentleman, accustomed to higher eating, could not forbear expressing his disgust at the homely provision. Sir, said the cook, you do not make use of the sauce. What do you mean? replied the guest. You do not use hard exercise; nor habituate yourself to long abstinence, nor bring a sharpened appetite to the meal.—And you, my dear friend, I am apprehensive, have not the sauce, have not the proper preparative for this salutary doctrine, which is indeed the bread of life, and the very marrow of the gospel.

Ther. What preparative?

Asp. A sense of your great depravity, your extreme guilt, and your utterly undone condition.—While destitute of these convictions, our souls will be like the full stomach, that loathes even the honey-comb. So long as these convictions are slight, and hover only in the imagination, we shall be like Gallio,* listless, indifferent, and "

* Milton thought the same, otherwise he would never have put those words into the mouth of a divine speaker.

——Thy merit
Imputed shall absolve them, who renounce
Their own, both righteous and unrighteous, deeds
And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
Receive new life.—*Book* iii. l. 290.

* Acts xviii. 17. A late commentator, of distinguished eminence, has attempted to vindicate Gallio's conduct; and would represent it as an amiable instance of prudence and moderation.

According to my apprehension, this Roman governor acted a part both irreligious and unjust. *Irreligious*, because he refused to hear the apostle's defence,

for none of these things." But when they are deep and penetrate the heart, then the righteousness of a Redeemer will be sweet, tasteful, and inviting, as myrrh and frankincense to the smell, as milk and honey to the palate, as gold and treasures to the ruined bankrupt.

Ther. What method would you advise me to use, in order to get these convictions impressed on my heart?

Asp. Endeavour to understand God's holy law. Consider how pure, how extensive, how sublimely perfect it is. Then judge of your spiritual state, not from the flattering suggestions of self-love, nor from the defective examples of your fellow-creatures, but by this unerring standard of the sanctuary. Above all, beseech the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to send his enlightening Spirit into your soul. For indeed, without the enlightening influences of the Spirit, we may have the divine law in our own hand, we may comprehend its grammatical meaning, yet be like blind Bartimeus under the meridian sun. It is the blessed Spirit alone who can rend the veil of ignorance from our minds, and show us either "the wonderful things of God's law," or the glorious mysteries of his gospel. In this sense, our polite poet* speaks a truth, as singularly important, as it is elegantly expressed:

> He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
> And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day.—
> POPE's *Messiah.*

Will you give me leave to propose another expedient, which I believe may be considerably serviceable in this particular case,—which I am assured will be greatly advantageous in many other respects?

Ther. Backward as I am to adopt your doctrine, I am no enemy to my own interest; therefore shall not only give you leave to propose, but give you thanks for communicating so valuable an advice.

Asp. It is, in reality, none of mine. It was long ago recommended by your old acquaintance Horace.† It consists in keeping a diary.

Compile a secret history of your heart and conduct. Take notice of the manner in which your time is spent, and of the strain which runs through your discourse; how often the former is lost in trifles, how often the latter evaporates in vanity. Attend to the principle from which your actions flow; whether from the steady habitual love of God, or from some rambling impulse, and a customary propensity to please yourself. Minute down your sins of omission; how frequently you neglect to glorify your Creator, to edify your fellow-creatures, and to improve yourself in knowledge and holiness. Observe the frame of your spirit in religious duties—with what reluctance they are undertaken, and with what indevotion performed; with how many wanderings of thought, and how much dullness of desire: how often, in the common affairs of life, you feel the inordinate sallies of passion, the workings of evil concupiscence, or the intrusion of foolish imaginations.

Register those secret faults, to which none but your own conscience is privy, and which none but the all-seeing eye discerns. Often review these interesting memoirs. Frequently contemplate yourself in this faithful mirror. An artist some time ago took a survey of your estate, drew the form and measured the dimensions of each enclosure, pictured out every hedge, and scarce omitted a single tree that grew upon the premises. Act thus with your will, your understanding, your affections. These are your noble internal demesne, of which none but yourself can be a competent surveyor.

Ther. It is unreasonable and preposterous, I must acknowledge, to be minutely exact in meaner matters, and use no accuracy of inspection in the most momentous affairs; to have a correct draught of our lands, which are a transient inheritance, and no map of that everlasting possession—the soul.

Asp. Gratify me then, my dear Theron, in this particular. As I purpose to set out very early in the morning, I shall insist upon it that you do not rise before your usual time in order to compliment my departure. But I now make it my last wish, and my parting request, that you will for some months at least keep a diary.

You have wondered at my opinion concerning the corruption of our nature, and the insufficiency of our own righteousness. This may seem strange, this may appear shocking, to a mind unacquainted with itself. But when you have searched your heart by this probe—when you have felt the pulse of your soul by self-examination—then you will be better able to judge of my sentiments, and enter into the reasons of my faith.

By this means we shall also discover the sins that most easily beset us, which most frequently elude our vigilance, and baffle our resolution. We shall learn how to post our guard, when to exercise the strictest watch, and where to direct the artillery of prayer. In a word, we shall learn, better than from ten thousand volumes, to *know ourselves:* a knowledge which was supposed by the an-

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which was the most likely means of his conversion and salvation. *Unjust*, because he permitted Sosthenes, then an innocent person, afterwards a disciple of Christ, (1 Cor. i. 1.) to be so illegally treated, and outrageously abused, without interposing for his rescue.

* Mr. Pope, in his charming poem styled the Messiah.

† "Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
Credebat libris; neque si male cesserat usquam
Decurrens alio, neque si bene: quo sit, ut omnis
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
Vita senis."—HORAT. *Sat.*

cient philosophers, to descend from heaven; and which, I believe, our Christian divines will allow, has a happy tendency to lead people thither; because, of all other preparatives, it best disposes them for that blessed Redeemer, who is the way, the only way to those blissful mansions.

Now I have mentioned a way, let me suppose you travelling through an unknown country. You come to a place, where the road divides itself into two equally inviting parts. You are at a loss which track to pursue. Whose direction will you choose to follow? that man's who has passed through neither of them; that man's who has passed through one of them only; or that man's who has passed and repassed them both? To wait for an answer, would be an affront to your judgment. Only let me observe, that the last is your Aspasio's case. He has travelled long, and proceeded far, even in your path. All that circumspection and assiduity, all that prayer and self-denial, all that fasting and alms, and every other means of grace could do, in order to establish a righteousness of his own, has been done: But to no purpose. He has also trod every step in the way which he recommends to his beloved friend. He has made the trial; can set his *probatum est* to whatever he advises; and may very truly say, with his divine Master, "We speak that we do know," John iii. 11, and testify that we have experienced.

Ther. I am sorry to observe, that the night is coming on, and our conversation almost at an end. My regret is increased, by the consideration of your intended journey. Though business obliges you to depart, it will, I hope, afford you leisure to write. This will be some compensation for the want of your company.

Yonder sun is sinking below the horizon, and just taking his leave of our earth. To retard the departing radiance, at least to alleviate the approaching loss, those western clouds catch the rays, and reflect them to our view in a most amusing diversity of colours. By this means we enjoy the great luminary in his beams, even when his orb is withdrawn from our sight.—An epistolary correspondence has something of the same nature. Letters may be called the talk of absent friends. By this expedient, they communicate their thoughts, even though countries, kingdoms, or seas intercept their speech. You must therefore promise me this satisfaction; and let me converse with my Aspasio by the pen, when I can no longer have an intercourse with him in person.

Asp. You have anticipated me, Theron. Otherwise, what is now my promise would have been my request.

I cannot but take notice of another particularity in that magnificent assemblage of clouds. How they varied their appearance, as the lamp of day changed its situation! A little while ago, these curtains of the sky were streaked with orange, or tinged with amber. Presently, they borrowed the blush of the rose, or the softened red of the pink. Ere long, they glow with vermilion, or deepen into crimson. Soon succeeds the purple-tinctured robe of majesty; and as soon (thus transient is all sublunary grandeur!) gives place to the sable veil of evening, or the gloomy pall of night. Such, I trust, will be the issue of my Theron's present apprehensions. All his splendid ideas of human excellency and self-righteousness will become faint, will lose their imaginary lustre, till at length they fade away, and darken into absolute self-abasement. Then the Sun of Righteousness will be amiable, will be desirable, as the beauties of the dawn breaking upon the shades of night.

LETTERS.

LETTER I.

Aspasio to Theron.

Dear Theron,—I am now at the seat of my worthy friend Camillus, where business and inclination will fix me for some weeks. This evening we had a most pleasing ramble. I have met with nothing so agreeable since I left your house, and lost your company.

The time was just arrived, and the scene was fully opened, which furnished our great poet with his fine description:

> Now was the sun in western cadence low,
> From noon; and gentle airs, due at their hour,
> To fan the earth now waked, and usher in
> The evening cool.

At this juncture, Camillus invited me to take the air. We walked several times along a close shady alley, arched with the foliage of filberts. Here, hid from every eye, and the whole world withdrawn from our view, we seemed like monks strolling in

their cloisters. Turning short at the end, we enter a parallel range of majestic and uniformly spreading walnut-trees. This transition was somewhat like advancing, through a low porch, into the aisles of a magnificent cathedral. The broad leaf and large trunk of those lordly trees, their very diffusive spread, added to their prodigious height, gave them an air of uncommon dignity. It swells the imagination with vast ideas, and entertains us with a romantic kind of delight, to expatiate amidst such huge columns, and under such superb elevations of living architecture.

Quitting our cathedral, we turn once again, and pass into a grand colonnade of oaks; so regular in their situation, so similar in their size, and so remarkably correspondent in every circumstance, that they looked like the twins of nature, not only belonging to the same family, but produced at the same birth. Through these lay a walk, straight, spacious, and gracefully long, far exceeding the last in the extent of its area, though much inferior in the stateliness of its ceiling. It put me in mind of that divine benignity, which has allowed us six days for the prosecution of our own comparatively low affairs, and set apart but one for the more immediate attendance on the sublime exercises of devotion.

This walk was covered with the neatest gravel, and not a weed to be seen, nor one spire of grass, through the whole extended surface. It stole into a continual ascent, yet so very gradually, that the rise was scarce discernible, either by the searching eye, the toiling feet, or the panting breath. At the extremity, a handsome summer-house showed a flight of steps, and half a Venetian door. The rest of the building was hid by the clustering branches.

As soon as we enter the apartment, Camillus throws open the left-hand sash, and with it a most enlarged and amusive prospect. The structure appeared situate on the brow of a considerable eminence, whose sides were partly confused and wild with broken rocks, partly shagged and perplexed with thorny shrubs. The spectator is agreeably surprised to find himself accommodated with so elegant a mansion, on the summit of so rude and ruinous a spot. But how greatly is his surprise and his satisfaction augmented, when he casts his eye forward, and beholds the beautiful meads, which, from the foot of this rugged hill, stretch themselves into a space almost unmeasurable!

Through the midst of this extensive vale, which was decked with the finest verdure, and replenished with the richest herbage, a river rolled its copious flood—rolled in a thousand serpentine meanders, as though it had lost its way in the flowery labyrinth, or made repeated efforts of flowing back to its source, till at last, having wandered more than twice the length of the meadows, having held a mirror to the aspiring poplars and bending willows, having paid a welcome salute to several ornamented villas, and passed through the arches of two or three curiously pendent bridges, it seemed to meet the sky, and mingle with the horizon.

Opposite to the front window, a cascade fell from the adjacent stream. It flashed and foamed along the broad slope, indented with small pits, and jagged with protuberant stones. The current, vexed and embarrassed, seemed to rave at the intervening obstacles, and forcing its rapid, indignant, sonorous way, struck the ear with a peal of liquid thunder. These fretful waters—let our angry passions observe the admonition, and follow the example—soon were pacified, soon forgot to chide. Collected into a little rivulet, they ran off in calm and silent lapse, till they lost themselves amongst beds of osier and plantations of alder.

The river, widening as it flowed, was parted here and there by several little islands; some tufted with reeds, and the resort of swans; some adorned with stately porticoes and splendid alcoves, the graceful retreats of rural pleasure; some furnished with green embowering walks, fitted for studious retirement and sedate contemplation. On either side of the charming valley, towns and villages lay thick, and looked gay, adding ornament and variety to the scene, and receiving innumerable advantages from the passing wave.

The whole recalled to an attentive observer's mind that amiable and august spectacle, which the Syrian soothsayer could not behold without a rapture of delight: Numb. xxiii. 7: "From the top of the rocks I see the tribes of Jehovah, and from the hills I behold the habitations of his chosen people. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side; as trees of exquisite fragrance,* which the Lord hath planted; as cedars of stateliest growth, flourishing beside the waters."

We had but just looked about us when a messenger came for Camillus. As he was called to settle some private affairs, I chose to stay in this inviting retreat; and determined to make myself amends for the loss of Camillus' company, by beginning a corres-

* Numb. xxiv. 5. 6. It is well known that the original word is used in the sacred writings, to denote either a delightful perfume, Prov. vii. 17, or that aromatic plant which produces it. Cant. iv. 14. For which reason, I think it very justifiable to render the expression, "trees of exquisite fragrance," and am persuaded it will be far more intelligible to the generality of readers, than "trees of lign-aloes."

pondence with my Theron. We have pen, ink, and paper, in all our rural retirements, that if any thing is started in discourse, or occurs in meditation, worthy to be remembered, it may immediately be committed to writing.

I could not but observe to my friend, that, fine as the prospect appeared, there was one decoration wanting; if some grand deformity may be called a decoration. The ridges of a bleak and barren mountain, or the skirts of a sun-burnt tawny heath, would give additional liveliness to the ornamented parts of the landscape, and make their beauties strike with double vigour. This also, by showing us what wretched abodes and inhospitable quarters might have fallen to our share, would awaken in our hearts a more fervent gratitude to the Supreme Disposer of things; who has cast our "lot in a fairer ground, and given us a more goodly heritage."

So, a proper knowledge of the divine law—of its sublime perfections and rigorous sanction—joined with a conviction of our own extreme deficiency and manifold transgressions;—all this would endear the blessed Jesus to our affections, and powerfully recommend his righteousness to our desires. The remainder of this epistle, therefore, shall turn upon some instances of duty enjoined in that sacred system: by which it may be highly useful to examine our conduct and sift our hearts; in which, I believe, we have all fallen short, and are all become guilty; from which, we may learn the imperfection of our best services, and see the inexpressible need of a better righteousness than our own.

The knowledge of God is the foundation of all vital religion, and indeed is the consummation of human happiness. It is not only matter of present duty, but the very essence of our future bliss: "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. Yet, important and obligatory as it is, are we not very defective in this divine science? Have we duly acquainted ourselves with the marvellous excellencies of the Lord Jehovah? his uncontrollable power, and all-comprehending wisdom; his unbounded goodness, and unwearied patience; his immaculate holiness, and inflexible justice; his never-failing faithfulness, and inviolable veracity? Have we, according to the direction of our inspired tutor, pursued this sacred study on our knees? James i. 5; and sought this most noble of all intellectual endowments, not merely from books, but principally at the throne of grace? Have we sought it, like that ancient Jewish student, with an early application, and with incessant assiduity; even "from the flower till the grape was ripe? Eccl. li. 15.

Is that scanty ray of knowledge, which perhaps has forced itself through our original darkness, operative on our affections? "Have we loved the Lord our God with all our heart?"—"This is the first and great commandment!" Matth. xxii. 38. Have we constantly entertained the most magnificent and honourable thoughts of his sublime perfections? Is our esteem for this immensely great and most blessed Being, high, superlative, matchless? somewhat like that expressed by the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee," Psalm lxxiii. 25. Have we been affectionately concerned for his glory, and zealous to advance his holy religion? troubled, very sensibly troubled, when our Maker's honour has been trampled in the dust, by licentious tongues, or flagitious deeds?

Have we made it our ruling care to approve the whole of our life, and the most secret transactions of our breast, to his all-seeing eye? resolved, deliberately resolved to sacrifice, not only our darling lusts, but even our most valuable interests, whenever they stand in competition with the good pleasure of his will? In a word, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, with such vehement and inextinguishable ardour have we thirsted after—a brighter manifestation of his divine attributes—some sweeter assurances of his special love—and an ever increasing conformity to his holy image?

Such was the temper of those excellent men, who are characterised in the scriptures of truth as children of the Highest, and patterns for our imitation. This is their language: "The desire of our soul is unto thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early."* Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. Neither is such warmth of love, and fervour of desire, any needless or extravagant pitch of devotion: but a reasonable service, indispensably due, from all intelligent creatures, to the great author of their being; in whom all possible perfections, with the utmost exaltation and dignity, reside: from whom all manner of blessings, in the most copious and never-failing communications, flow.

When we receive from an absent friend rich and repeated presents; casks of gener-

*We can hardly tell which to admire most, the beauty of the description, or the piety of the persons. I have desired, and not with inactive wishes, but such as prompt to vigorous endeavours. I will seek thee: and early, with the most vigilant application, and unwearied assiduity. The emphasis is very much increased, by the addition of these lively words, "with my soul, yea, with my whole spirit;" with the whole bent and sway of my affections, and with the steady invariable determination of my judgment. Thus have I desired thee, even in the night; when both the pursuits and the thoughts of other people are sunk and lost in profound repose. Thus will I seek thee, with a zeal—early as the rising—constant as the returning sun.

ous wine, or jars of delicious fruit, we feel ourselves enkindled into a grateful affection. We honour, we love the person, who allows us such a distinguished place in his heart; and expresses his cordial regard, by such a series of active and tender benevolence. The blessed God is a friend to us all, infinitely powerful, and equally munificent. We are the constant objects of his more than friendly, of his parental cares. Every passing moment is a messenger of his patience, and charged with some token of his bounty. For our sake, he has diffused blessings over all the face of the earth, and commanded every element to concur in ministering to our accommodation. He has not only adapted his benefits to our several wants; but has given them a diversification, large as the scope of our wishes; and an enrichment, far beyond all that our fancy could conceive. Profuse liberality! yet small and scanty, compared with his most adorable benignity in Christ Jesus.

What, if God, willing to manifest the superabundant riches of his kindness, had made bare the arm of his omnipotence, and struck a most miraculous road through the surges of the ocean, to afford us a safe passage?—if, to accommodate us in our travels, he had brought waters out of the flinty rock; and bid the ravens bring meat to our hands, bid the winds convey manna to our doors?—if, to furnish us with a commodious settlement, he had dethroned mighty kings, dispossessed populous nations, and made the walls of impregnable cities fall to the ground?—if, to further the dispatch of our business, or facilitate the conquest of our enemies, he had arrested the sun in his meridian career, and laid an embargo upon the moon setting out on her nightly tour? In short, if, to promote our welfare, he had suspended the powers, and controlled the laws of universal nature; had wrought all the miracles exhibited in the land of Egypt, or recorded in the volumes of inspiration; —should we not think ourselves under the most inviolable engagements to love the Lord our God, "who had done so great things for us?" to love him unfeignedly and ardently; to love him with a supreme affection, far above every other amiable object? Yet we have greater, incomparably greater obligations to our almighty Benefactor. (For hear, O heavens! wonder, O earth! and let eternity dwell upon the stupendous truth!) "God spared not his Son—his own Son"—his transcendently glorious and divinely excellent Son—but delivered him up to the deepest humiliation, and to the most accursed death, for us men, and our salvation."

O, Theron! have we been impressed with wonder, at the contemplation of this goodness? Have our hearts glowed with gratitude, under a sense of these mercies? Surely no man need be convicted of any other crime at the great tribunal than insensibility of such love, and ingratitude for such favours. This, without the accession of horrid impieties, is enough to leave him absolutely inexcusable. This is enough to prove him one of the most disingenuous and detestable of creatures.

Have we exercised ourselves in frequent thanksgiving? Many are the exhortations to this honourable duty. "Praise thy God, O Zion," Psalm cxlvii. 12, "praise him for his mighty acts;" Psalm cl. 2; "praise him according to his excellent greatness."* Innumerable are the incitements to abound in this pleasant service. Every comfort has a voice, and cries in the ear of reason, "O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness!" Every deliverance enforces the address, and furnishes fresh materials for the heavenly employ. The man after God's own heart declares, as an inviting example for our practice, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth." Psalm xxxiv. 1. "Yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God," Psalm cxlvi. 2. Indeed, when we consider the inexhaustibly rich bounty of God our Creator, and the inconceivably tender mercy of God our Redeemer, it is both strange and deplorable that the love of God is not always prevailing in our hearts, and the language of praise ever flowing from our lips.

I will not suppose our character so irreligious, that we have neglected the daily worship of God, either in our closet or in our family: But have we prayed with that profound reverential awe, which is due to the high and lofty One, "who inhabiteth eternity?" Have we made our supplications with that fervent importunity which may, in some measure, correspond with the extreme indigence of our state, and the invaluable worth of the blessings we crave? Have our petitions been attended with that steady affiance, which may glorify the goodness, the power, the veracity of the Lord? may evidently declare that he "is rich in mercy to all that call upon him;" Rom. x. 12; that he is the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength;" Isa. xxvi. 4; "that he is the God of truth, and faithful for ever." Deut. xxxii. 4. We call him Father; but have we trusted in him with that unsuspect-

* Among these exhortations, we may rank that beautiful and devout address to God, Psalm xxii. 3 Thou that inhabitest—light inaccessible, shall I say? the regions of immensity, or the ages of eternity? No, but what is a more exalted character—the praises of Israel: finely signifying that praise is a most acceptable sacrifice, to which the divine Majesty attends with the greatest delight; intimating also, that the exercise of praise should not be an occasional thing, like a transient visit to a stranger's house; but a daily and almost unintermitted service, like the stated residence of a person in his own habitation.

ing, cheerful, filial confidence, which a child reposes on the fidelity and indulgence of such an earthly relative? Have we not entertained, too often entertained, narrow, dishonourable, beggarly apprehensions, concerning the treasures of his liberality, and the bowels of his pity; rating them even lower than our parents, our friends, or our own?

Have we been careful to carry the spirit of our prayers into our ordinary conversation, and waited at the door, as well as approached to the throne of grace?—Amidst the intervals of our solemn devotions, have we cultivated an ejaculatory intercourse with heaven? How highly would the ambitious courtier prize, and how frequently would he use a privy key, which should give him, at all hours, free admittance to his sovereign. This key of admittance, only to an infinitely more exalted Potentate, we all possess in the practice of mental aspirations to God. It is certainly the noblest employ, and will be the richest improvement of our thoughts, to send them in such short embassies to the King of kings; and to derive, by such occasional sallies of faith* a renewed supply from the fountain of all good. How great a loss then must it be to our spiritual interests, and how contemptuous a disregard of the ever-present Jehovah, to omit entirely, or long to discontinue, this most beneficial practice of habitual adoration?—Can you, my dear Theron, acquit yourself on this article of inquiry? Has not every day of your life been a day of negligence in this respect; been a perpetual disobedience to our Saviour's injunction, "Men ought, in this manner, always to pray, and not to faint?" Luke xviii. 1.

Have we sanctified the Sabbath? Has the Lord's day, with all its solemn and sacred offices, been our delight? Have we remembered that distinguished portion of our time, as Jacob remembered the delightful interview at Peniel? Have we expected it, as merchants expect the arrival of a richly laden vessel? Have we improved it, as husbandmen improve the shining hours of the harvest? Have we wholly laid aside every earthly engagement, "not speaking our own words," Isa lviii. 13, nor allowing ourselves in any gratifications that may interrupt our communion with the Father of Spirits? Has "one day in his courts been preferable to a thousand," Psal. lxxxiv. 10, spent either in the works of our calling, or in the scenes of recreation? Have the memorials of our Redeemer's dying merits, and the seals of his unchangeable loving-kindness, been relished as a feast, and prized as a portion?

Have we honoured God's holy word? What greater mark of disesteem than to despise a person's discourse, and not to think his speech worthy of our notice? especially when he addresses us with very great seriousness, and with the utmost affection. In our Bible, the God of glory speaks to his creatures; speaks with the most persuasive energy, and with all the yearnings of parental tenderness. Have we listened to our Creator, with reverence and delight; and rejoiced with trembling at—"Thus saith the Lord?"

Have we searched the oracles of truth, not merely as scholars, but as sinners; not from a spirit of curiosity, or with an air of formality, but with a solicitude and ardour becoming persons who inquire after the Saviour of their lost souls? Have we submitted our inmost thoughts to their impartial scrutiny; to receive conviction of sin from their awful remonstrances, and to hear the sentence of condemnation at their righteous bar? Have we been willing to suffer the reproach of conscious baseness, while they have ripped up the disguises of falsehood, laid open our secret iniquities, and brought all our evil ways to remembrance? Thus Josiah acted: "His heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the Lord; he rent his clothes, and wept before the Lord, when he heard

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* We have, in Scripture, very remarkable instances of the success which has attended ejaculatory prayer. Observe Nehemiah: He stands before Ahasuerus, apprehensive of the monarch's displeasure, yet desirous to solicit him in behalf of Jerusalem. To be delivered from his fears, and to obtain his desires, what method does he use? The mean and servile arts of flattery? No; but the manly and devout expedient of prayer. I prayed, says the patriot, to the God of heaven.—We cannot suppose, that he fell on his knees, or spoke with his lips, while he continued in the royal presence. But he darted up his soul in silent supplication; which supplication pierced the clouds, reached the eternal throne, and returned not again till a blessing was sent; such as totally averted the wrath he dreaded, and procured favour and assistance much larger than he expected. Neh. ii. 4.

When David heard that Ahithophel, the ablest politician in his kingdom, was revolted to Absalom; sensible what a loss his affairs had sustained, and what an advantage the rebellious party had acquired, he betook himself to his God. He staid not for an opportunity of retirement, but instantly and upon the spot cried, "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!"—A short address, but very efficacious. He who disappointeth the devices of the crafty, sent a spirit of infatuation among the rebels; and inclined them to reject the advice of that judicious statesman. Which false step brought upon their horrid enterprise the ruin it deserved, and chagrined the wretched traitor, even to rage, frenzy, and suicide. 2 Sam. xv. 31; xvii. 23.

Amyntor, at a memorable period of his life, was under great distress of conscience, and harassed by violent temptations. He made his case known to an experienced friend, who said, "Amyntor, you do not pray."—Surprised at this, he replied, "I pray, if such a thing be possible, too much. I can hardly tell how many times in the day I bow my knee before God: almost to the omission of my other duties, and the neglect of my necessary studies." "You mistake my meaning, dear Amyntor. I do not refer you to the ceremony of the knee, but to the devotion of the heart; which neglects not any business, but intermingles prayer with all; which, in every place, looks unto the Lord; and, on every occasion, lifts up an indigent, longing soul, for the supply of his grace. Thus," (added he, and spoke with a peculiar vehemence), "this is the prayer which all the devils in hell cannot withstand." This, I would further observe, is the prayer which brings down somewhat of heaven into the heart; in which I would desire to abound, and would earnestly recommend to all my acquaintance, and all my readers.

the words of the book of the law." 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.

Have we hid the glad tidings of the gospel within our memories, within our hearts? Have we been diligent to suck this "honeycomb" (Cant. v. 1.) of grace, by concomitant meditation, and subsequent prayer? Have we valued the precious promises, as gentlemen of wealth value the writings of their private estates; or as infranchised bodies esteem the charter of their public privileges? Have we, like the princely patriarch, longed for those words of edification, exhortation, and comfort, more than for our necessary food? Job xxiii. 12, and, like the royal prophet, prevented the night-watches, that we may be occupied in those statutes and ordinances of heaven? Psalm cxix. 148.

We have hitherto confined the examination to a few instances of the affirmative kind; how dreadfully will the dark account be swelled, if, instead of love and obedience, there be hatred and opposition—hatred of the name, glory, and worship of God—opposition to his interest, kingdom, and service?

God is infinite perfection, worthy of all admiration, exalted above all praise. Yet do not our thoughts more frequently, or more naturally, turn upon our own accomplishments, than upon the adorable and shining attributes of the almighty? This is, in itself, the most shameful dotage; and, in God's sight, the most abominable idolatry. Yet let us observe what passes within, and we shall probably find, that as damps arise in the mines, or fogs in the fenny grounds, so naturally and so copiously do these overweening reflections arise in our depraved minds.

God is an everlasting King. Have we not too often resisted his authority? Have we not, as far as in us lay, deposed the omnipotent Sovereign, and exalted self into the throne? made self-will our law, and self-pleasing our end? thus adding sacrilege to rebellion?

God is transcendently gracious and amiable. Have we not turned our backs upon him, by forgetting his mercies? Nay, have we not spurned him from our affections, by being "lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God?" 2 Tim. iii. 4. Awake, conscience! bear thy impartial testimony; and I am persuaded, the Pharisee in our breasts, like the man unfurnished with the wedding garment, must be struck dumb; must be covered with confusion.

Is our hearts warm with brotherly love? Good manners will put expressions of civility into our mouths; but has a power from on high implanted the royal law of charity in our breasts? The character of a gentleman requires a deportment accessible, obliging, and courteous; has the spirit of Christianity taught us to love, "not in word," or plausible appearance only, "but in deed and in truth?" 1 John iii. 18. Do we love our neighbours, not merely on account of some relation they bear us, or some services they have done us; but because they are creatures of the blessed God, are the objects of his providential care, and capable, at least, of being conformed to his image? Do we love them, because we hope that the Lord Jesus Christ has bought them with his blood; is willing to make them partakers of his Spirit, and members of his mystical body?

Are we sincerely concerned for their present welfare and their eternal happiness? Do we embrace all opportunities of promoting both the one and the other? embrace them with the same alacrity; and improve them with the same zeal, which actuate us in seeking our own felicity? If they exceed us in all that is amiable, and all that is prosperous, do we contemplate their superior excellence with a real complacency, and their more abundant success with a real satisfaction?

Do we dislike to hear, and abhor to spread, defamatory tales; even when our adversaries are the men whom they tend to blacken? When rudely affronted, or causelessly abused, do we pity the offenders, for the wrong done to their own souls, rather than kindle into resentment at the indignity offered to ourselves? When greatly injured, are we slow to anger, and not easily provoked? Are we much more willing to be reconciled than to foment displeasure, and prosecute revenge? In a word, do we "love our enemies; bless them that curse us; do good to them that hate us; and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us?" Matt. v. 44. Without this loving and lovely disposition, we abide, says the apostle, in death, 1 John iii. 14, are destitute of spiritual, and have no title to eternal life.*

Let me add—are all our graces, and all our works "clothed with humility?" This should be the dress in which they severally appear, as well as the bond of connexion which unites them all. Do we maintain a very low opinion of our own accomplishments, and "in honour prefer others to ourselves?" Rom. xii. 10; habitually sensible that we are less than the least of the divine mercies, and the very chiefest of sinners?

I might easily have branched out the preceding subjects into a much greater va-

* What manner of love is this? How disinterested! how extensive! how triumphant! Must not all the boasted benevolence of the philosopher and the moralist strike sail to this evangelical charity? Must not both moralist and philosopher acknowledge the necessity of a divine operation, thus to enlarge, exalt, and refine their social affections?

riety of interrogatory articles. But I intend only to present you with a specimen. Your own meditations will enlarge the sketch, and supply what is defective. Only let me beg of you, my dear friend, to try your state by this touchstone; to prove your conduct by this standard. And may the Father of lights give you an understanding to discern the exact purity and sublime perfection of his holy law!

Have you lived in the uninterrupted observance of all these duties; avoiding whatever is forbidden, and obeying whatever is commanded? Your outward behaviour, I know, has been free from notorious violations; but has your inward temper been preserved from all ungodly motions, and from every irregular desire? Is there no enmity in your heart to any of the precepts, nor any backwardness, nor any failure in performing each and every injunction?

When you put these questions to yourself, remember, that if you fail in one point, or in any degree, you are guilty of all, James ii. 10. If your conformity be not persevering as well as perfect, you incur the penalty, and are abandoned to the curse. Gal. iii. 10. You stand charged, before the Judge of the world, with all the guilt of all your sins, both original and actual; and there is not one circumstance, nor one aggravation, of any of your iniquities, overlooked or forgotten—unless, renouncing all your personal performances, you place your whole affiance on a Saviour's atonement, and a Saviour's righteousness. I think you will not dare to put the issue of your everlasting state upon the former footing, which is not only hazardous, but must be inevitably ruinous. You will infinitely rather choose to acknowledge yourself a poor insolvent, and plead the unsearchable riches of your Redeemer's obedience.

To those who believe, the law, though strict, is not terrible; because, be its precepts of holiness ever so extensive, they have been most completely fulfilled by their glorious Surety. Be its penal sanctions ever so rigorous, they have been satisfied to the utmost by their great Mediator. Believers, therefore, may make their boast of their adorable Sponsor; they "may sit under his shadow with great delight," Cant. ii. 3; while the thunderings of Mount Sinai, and all the terrors of the legal dispensation, tend only to increase and quicken the refreshing sense of their safety. Just as the possessor of a plentiful estate, in some peaceful and prosperous country, reposes himself under the shade of his vine, or the shelter of his fig-tree; and hearing of the wars which embroil, or the plagues which depopulate other nations, tastes, with augmented relish, his own felicity.

Let me close with the affectionate and emphatical wish of an inspired epistolary writer—"That the Lord of peace may give," my dear Theron, "peace—always by all means!" 2 Thess. iii. 16. Then I shall think my wishes are accomplishing, and this blessing is at the door, when he sees the purity of the divine law—sees the depravity of his own nature—and the impossibility of being justified without an interest in the great Mediator's righteousness; that righteousness which, as it is the only hope and the constant joy, is therefore the darling theme, of

Your ever faithful

ASPASIO.

P. S. Shall I abridge the preceding letter, and contract the whole into those two great commandments which made the first awakening impressions on my own mind? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Amazing! said your Aspasio. Are these the commands of God? as obligatory as the prohibition of adultery, or the observation of the Sabbath? Then has my whole life been a continual act of disobedience. Not a day, no, nor an hour, in which I have performed my duty. This conviction struck me, as the hand-writing upon the wall struck the presumptuous monarch. It pursued me, as Saul pursued the Christians, not only to my own house, but even to distant cities; nor ever gave up the great controversy, till, under the influences of the Spirit, it brought me "weary and heavy laden to Jesus Christ."

LETTER II.

THERON TO ASPASIO.

DEAR ASPASIO,—MORE than three weeks are elapsed since you favoured me with your improving company, during which interval I have frequently recollected the most material parts of our late discourses. I have carefully considered both the doctrines you advanced and the answers you returned to my several objections. I have often reviewed your valuable letter, have used it as a touchstone to examine my state, and have with great punctuality observed your parting advice. I have sat every evening for a picture of my mind, and have endeavoured to take a true unflattering draught of all its distinguishing qualities. And if the diary is a faithful mirror, if it does not aggravate the deformity of my features, I shall be absolutely out of conceit with myself: I

shall ever entertain the meanest opinion of my own, either moral or religious qualifications.

Where is that intense and supreme love of God, which his transcendent perfections challenge, and his ineffable goodness claims? Where that firm and joyful reliance on Christ Jesus in any degree proportioned to his infinite merits and inviolable promises? Where that cordial and tender affection for my fellow-christians, which is due to the servants of a divine Redeemer; the people whom he ransomed by his agonies, and purchased with his very blood? Where is the incense of holy contemplation and refined desire? where the flame of fervent devotion and ever-active zeal; such as become the living temple of God, in which his most immaculate and glorious Spirit vouchsafes to reside? These fundamental graces, like the grand organs in the animal system, should impart health to the soul, and spread the beauty of holiness through all the conversation. But these, alas! far from beating with a vigorous and uniform pulse, hardly heave with life; only just struggle, now and then, with some faint, intermitted, uneven throes.

How seldom do my actions spring from gratitude to the everlasting Benefactor, or aim at the glory of his superexcellent majesty! In addressing the King immortal, invisible, how languid are my affections, and how wandering is my attention! how great my unbelief, and how little my reverential awe! I receive innumerable mercies; but where are my returns of correspondent thankfulness? I am visited with many gracious chastisements: but without proper resignation, or due improvement. Alas, for my heartless devotions, my lifeless virtues, and the multitude of my refined iniquities! Hid behind the mask of outward decency, and some customary forms of religion, I was altogether unacquainted with my spiritual state. I fancied myself "rich, and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing;" even while I was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii. 17.

If I look back, and review the years of youth and manhood, what has been the tenor, what is the aspect of my life? More like a desolate and horrid wilderness, than a cultivated garden, or a fruitful vineyard. In youth, what sordid gratifications of appetite! In manhood, what base compliances with a wicked world! In both, what shoals of evil inclinations have polluted my heart! what swarms of vain imaginations have debased my thoughts! what frothy and unprofitable words have dropt from my lips! By all which, how have I disobeyed, and how dishonoured God! how have I denied, and how crucified the Lord Jesus Christ! and yet supposed myself, all the while, to be good enough.

It is something unaccountable, that a person of my inquisitive disposition should, through the course of so many years, be such an utter stranger to himself. I wonder at my own preposterous folly! To travel into foreign countries, and visit the most renowned cities of Europe; yet never step over the threshold, nor look within the apartments of my own breast! To carry on a correspondence with my friends, even in the remotest nations, and never enter upon a conference, nor hold any intelligence with my own heart! To inquire after news from the fleet, news from the army, news from the court; yet exercise neither curiosity nor care with regard to the hope of heaven, and the concerns of eternity! What egregious misconduct is this! A most pernicious error in the economy of religious life!

Sometimes I have cast a transient glance on my outward behaviour, but never extended my search to the delinquent, the traitor, the rebel within. And even my outward behaviour has been surveyed with as much erroneous partiality as superficial levity. It has been compared, not with that exact and sublime standard, the scriptures of truth; but, as in the case of the self-deceiving Pharisee, with the unjust, extortionate, adulterous practices of some other people. From whence I most unwarrantably concluded, that being not quite so abandoned as the most profligate creatures, my character must be good, and my condition safe. But, thanks to your last friendly letter, and the searching expedient it recommended, I am now in a different way of thinking.

It is strange to recollect, and indeed it is shameful to confess, the many artifices which I have used to put a cheat upon myself. Sometimes I have fancied that the divine law could never be so strict as to condemn us inexorably, if we continue not in all its precepts. Sometimes I have pleaded the infirmity of our nature, and endeavoured to make the works of darkness appear only as pitiable failings. Sometimes I have taken refuge in the excellency of our church, and plumed myself with the borrowed feathers of a religious profession. At other times I have soothed my conscience to rest, by a punctuality of attendance on places, or a zealous attachment to forms. And all this to seduce, cajole, and betray myself—betray myself, first into a vain conceit of my own endowments, then into a contemptuous disregard of Christ, and at last into eternal destruction. But now I see my guilt, I apprehend my danger, and feel my helpless condition.

Indeed, my Aspasio, I am now convinced

that the darkest colours cannot be too dark for the portrait of my spiritual state. I see myself overspread with an habitual depravity, and cannot forbear crying out, with the abashed leper, "Unclean! Unclean! Lev. xiii. 45. The sacred oracles in no wise misrepresent fallen man, when they describe him as altogether become abominable. Job xv. 16. They are far from underrating human works, when they denominate them "filthy rags."* Rags they are, if we consider their great imperfections; filthy rags, if we advert to their manifold defilements. And since the nature of God is so irreconcilably adverse to all contamination, since the law of God requires such unspotted perfection, O! "who can stand before this holy Lord God," 1 Sam. vi. 20; in any accomplishments of their own?

When I farther reflect, that I have only a very obscure glimpse of the divine purity, and am a mere novice in the knowledge of my own heart; how am I amazed at the lofty apprehensions which I once formed concerning the dignity of my nature and the integrity of my conduct! All owing to ignorance, the grossest ignorance of myself and the scriptures. How do I shudder to think, that, in expecting justification from the law, I was resting the welfare of my immortal soul, not on the foundation of a rock, but on the point of a dagger. I was going to the decisive tribunal, flushed with the falsest hopes, and charged with a set of glittering sins; going, like poor deluded Uriah, 2 Sam. xi. 14, 15, not with any valid credentials, but with "the ministration of death," 2 Cor. iii. 9, in my hand.

Though I cannot but acknowledge the arrogance of these pretensions, yet loath, very loath, is my pride to renounce the pleasing absurdity. Self-love has searched, and searched again, for something excellent. It would fain make a better appearance, and can hardly brook the humiliation of imploring all *sub forma pauperis*.* With what reluctance is a sinner brought to confess himself sinful in every duty, sinful in every capacity? Strange perverseness! But the charge is undeniable. However unwilling, I must plead guilty. "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting," Dan. v. 27, is evidently written on all I am, all I have, all I do. And if I am thus defective, even in my own estimation; if I am utterly condemned at the bar of my own conscience, "what then shall I do, when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Job xxxi. 14.

I now see the necessity of an imputed righteousness. Without some such object for my trust, I am undone. I long, therefore, to hear your arguments in its behalf. And I must declare to you, if it can be satisfactorily proved from the scriptures, it is the most comfortable doctrine in the world, and worthy of all acceptation.

A letter upon this subject would be a singular favour, and, I hope, an equal blessing, to your obliged and affectionate

THERON.

* Isa. lxiv. 6. Does not Theron misapply this text? Can it be intended to discredit the qualifications of the upright? Is it not rather a brand set upon the works of the wicked; whose very sacrifices are an abomination to the Lord? Or, a rebuke given to the specious performances of the hypocrite: who is precise in the form, but destitute of the power of godliness? Or, may it not refer to ritual observances; in contradistinction to moral duties and spiritual accomplishments?

The disparaging character must not, I think, be confined to ritual observances; because it is expressly said, *all our righteousnesses*, including every kind of religious duty: Neither can it be appropriated to the formal hypocrite, much less to the notoriously wicked; because, those very persons, who are the subject of this assertion, declare, in the context, "Lord, we are thy people, thou art our Father, we shall be saved." So that it seems intended to stain the pride of all human glory.

Besides, the prophet speaks of himself: We are all as an unclean thing; which, however strange or unreasonable it may seem, is the very same charge to which he pleads guilty in another place; "Woe is me! I am undone! for I am a man of unclean lips!" Not that he was defiled with any gross pollutions; nay, he was a saint of the most distinguished lustre, but his eyes had seen the King, the Lord of hosts. He was under the clear manifestations of a God, glorious in holiness, inflexible in justice, and infinite in all perfections. Amidst these manifestations, the impurity of his heart and nature were not only apparent, but glaring; overwhelmed him with abashment, and, till Christ was applied in a type, (Isa. vi. 7,) filled him with terror.

In such circumstances, and under such views, all our moral virtues and evangelical graces, all our exercises of devotion, and acts of charity, will appear both defective and polluted: by no means proportioned to the demands of the law, nor sufficient for our recommendation to the Supreme Lawgiver; no more than a few tattered rags can claim the character or perform the services of a complete suit; no more than a few filthy rags are fit to dress the bride for her nuptials, or the courtier for a birthnight.

But there is a righteousness—blessed be divine grace!—spotlessly pure and consummately excellent; a righteousness which answers all that the Creator requires, and supplies all that the creature needs. To prove this momentous point, and to display this unspeakable gift, is the design of the following sheets.

LETTER III.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,—THOUGH all your letters give me pleasure, none was ever so highly pleasing as your last. I look upon it with the same secret joy, as when a compassionate physician observes some very favourable symptoms in the crisis of a beloved patient's distemper.

What you ask, I shall, without any farther preface, attempt to execute. If my attempt proves satisfactory to your judgment, I am sure it will be the most likely means

* This is under the character of a poor destitute, or as a begger sues for his alms.

of healing your conscience, and calming your fears. When we perceive the odious depravity of our nature; when we discern the horrible iniquity of our lives, and are sensible of that tremendous wrath and everlasting vengeance which are due to such guilty creatures; then nothing can be found that will speak effectual peace, nothing that will administer solid comfort, but only the vicarious sufferings and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

To this purpose speaks one of the wisest and best of spiritual guides; "Has sin abounded?" as undoubtedly it has, in our heart and our life; "grace has much more abounded," in the obedience and the merits of our Redeemer. Nay, "has sin reigned?" exerted its malignant power in the most extensive and most destructive manner, rendering us subject unto death, both temporal and eternal? "Even so has grace reigned;" exerted its benign efficacy, and in a manner yet more triumphant; not only rescuing us from guilt and ruin, but restoring us to everlasting life and glory; and all this through the righteousness, the complete meritorious righteousness, brought in "by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 21.

You inquire after the proofs of this imputed righteousness. From a multitude I shall select a few; sufficient, I hope, to make it appear, that this is the declared doctrine of our church, and the avowed belief of her most eminent divines; that it is copiously revealed through the whole Scriptures, revealed in many express passages, and deducible from a variety of instructive similitudes.

Hear the language of our Common Prayer, in a very affecting and solemn address to the Almighty! "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness." If we may not, if we dare not, rely on our own righteousness when we approach the eucharistic table, much less may we depend upon it when we are summoned to the decisive tribunal. Should you ask, on what we are to depend? The exhortation to the communion furnishes an answer; "On the meritorious death and passion of Christ, whereby alone we obtain remission of sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven."

The Collect appointed for the festival of circumcision, has this remarkable introduction; "Almighty God, whose blessed Son was obedient to the law for man." In what sense, or with what propriety, can this be affirmed, unless Christ's perfect obedience be referable to us, and accepted instead of ours? On any other interpretation, I should think he was obedient, not for man, but for himself.

Should the artful critic give some other turn to these passages, it will avail him but little; because the church, her own best expositor, has explained the meaning of such phrases, and put the matter beyond all doubt. In her eleventh article she says, "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The doctrine relating to pardon of sin had been stated in a preceding article. This displays the method whereby sinners may appear righteous in the eye of God and in the court of heaven, so as to recover the divine favour and obtain a title to eternal bliss. This is done, not by any native righteousness, not by any acquired righteousness, but by an imputed righteousness. Were we justified by either of the former methods, it would not have been said, we are *accounted*, but we *are* righteous. They are so far from constituting our reconciling and justifying righteousness, that they have no share in it, contribute nothing towards it, are totally excluded from it. We are accounted righteous, and accepted as such, *only* (mark the expression) *only* through the meritorious obedience, and propitiating blood of our great Mediator.

The Homilies are, if it be possible, still more explicit and more cogent. In the Homily concerning the salvation of mankind, we read the following words; "The apostle toucheth three things, which must go together in our justification: On God's part, his great mercy and grace: On Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption, by the offering of his body, and the shedding of his blood, with fulfilling of the law perfectly: On our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours, but by God's working in us." You see, according to the judgment of our venerable reformers, not only the offering of Christ's body, and shedding of Christ's blood, but also his perfect fulfilling of the law, are the adequate price of our redemption. All these act conjointly; they sweetly harmonize in the great and glorious work. To suppose their disunion, is a doctrinal mistake, somewhat like that practical error of the Papists, in severing the sacramental wine from the sacramental bread; administering to the laity the symbols of the slaughtered body, but withholding the symbols of the streaming blood.

There are other clauses in the same Homily, which set the seal of the church to our sentiments. I shall content myself with transcribing one from the conclusion. "Christ," says that form of sound words, "is the righteousness of all them that do truly believe. He, for them, paid their ransom by his death. He, for them, fulfilled the law in his life. So that now, in him, and by him, every true Christian may be called a fulfiller of the law; forasmuch as

that which their infirmity lacked, Christ's righteousness hath supplied." This authority is as clear, as the doctrine authorized is comfortable. May the former sway our judgment! may the latter cheer our hearts!

The Homily on Christ's nativity informs the reader, that the design of our Lord's incarnation was—"to give light unto the world, and call sinners to repentance; to fulfil the law for us, and become the propitiation for our sins; to cast out the prince of this world, and destroy the works of the devil." We have all broke the law; we are all unable to keep the law; therefore the blessed Jesus fulfilled the law; fulfilled it in each and every of its demands; fulfilled it in the highest degree of perfection; and what is of all considerations most delightful, fulfilled it for us. His obedience took the place of what we were obliged to perform under the covenant of works; and is not only the meritorious, but also the constituent cause of our justification.

So that, if there be any worthiness in our Lord's most holy nature, any merit in his exercise of the sublimest virtues, completed by his submission to the most ignominious sufferings and tormenting death, then, according to this standard-system of orthodox divinity, these are the ground, these are the substance of a sinner's justification. And, according to the dictates of the most unbiassed reason, they are the best, the surest ground that can either be wished or imagined.

Does it not from the preceding quotations appear, that the doctrine of justification, through the imputed righteousness of our Redeemer, is far from being disclaimed by the established church? I am sorry, but constrained to own, that we rarely find any considerable strictures of this great evangelical peculiarity in our modern theological discourses. Yet there have been preachers of the highest repute for learning, for judgment, and for piety, who professedly maintained this grand truth of the gospel.

The devout Bishop Beveridge, in his "Private Thoughts," has left upon record the following very remarkable acknowledgment, which, if it suited his state of eminent holiness, cannot be too humbling, my dear Theron, for your lips and for mine. "I do not remember, neither do I believe, that I ever prayed, in all my lifetime, with that reverence, or heard with that attention, or received the sacrament with that faith, or did any work with that pure heart and single eye, as I ought to have done. Insomuch, that I look upon all my righteousness but as filthy rags; and it is in the robes only of the righteousness of the Son of God, that I dare appear before the Majesty of heaven."

The fervent and affectionate Bishop Hopkins* speaks in perfect consonance with his brother of St. Asaph. "The law was given us, not that we should seek justification by the observance of it, but finding it impossible to be justified by fulfilling it, we should thereby be driven to Christ's righteousness, who hath both fulfilled it in himself, and satisfied for our transgressing of it; and therefore saith the apostle, "The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith." To this end it was promulgated, that seeing the strictness of its precepts, the rigour of its threatenings, and withal being convinced of our impotence to fulfil its commands, we might be urged, by its terrors, to fly to Christ, and find that righteousness in him which may answer all the demands of the law."

Bishop Reynolds,† styled by his contemporaries, and not without reason, "a walking library," bears his testimony in the following words: "Christ as our surety paid our debt, underwent the curse due to our sins, and bare them all in his own body on the tree; became subject to the law for us, and representatively in our stead fulfilled all the righteousness the law required, active and passive. For sin being once committed, there must be a double act of justification; the suffering of the curse, and the fulfilling of righteousness anew. The one, a satisfaction for the injury we have done to God as our Judge; the other, the performance of a service which we owe unto him as our Maker."

To this illustrious triumvirate, let me join Bishop Davenant, who for his great abilities, and unquestionable integrity, was appointed one of our religious plenipotentiaries at the renowned Synod of Dort. In his very valuable exposition of the epistle to the Colossians, he wrtes to this effect: "Ye are complete in Christ. Ye are furnished, in that all-sufficient Redeemer, with whatever is requisite to everlasting salvation. With wisdom; since it is the consummation of this noble endowment, to know Christ, and him crucified. With righteousness; because he has perfectly satisfied the law,‡ and thoroughly expiated

* See his Sermon on John vii. 19.

† See his treatise, entitled, the Life of Christ, which, as well as all his other works, abound with striking sentiments, have much elegance of diction, a copious variety of learning, and a lively animating spirit of evangelical piety.

‡ In this respect principally (says our author, enlarging upon the text) are believers complete; because, though destitute of any righteousness that may properly be called their own, Christ has graciously enriched them with his. *Vid.* DAVENANT *in epist. ad Coloss.* cap. ii. com. 10.

Let me beg leave to intimate, that this exposition of the epistle to the Colossians, for perspicuity of style, and accuracy of method, for judgment in discerning, and fidelity in representing the apostle's meaning, for strength of argument in refuting errors, and felicity of invention in deducing practical doctrines, tending both to the establishment of faith, and the cultivation of holiness—is, I think, inferior to no

our guilt. With sanctification; because his Spirit, dwelling in our hearts, mortifies our corrupt affections, and renews the soul after the image of its Creator."

Let me bring up the rear with a testimony, which for clearness, solidity, and a full representation of the evangelical doctrine, might very justly have claimed a place in the van. It is taken from an author, whom the general consent of our nation has distinguished with the title of "judicious." The judicious Hooker, in a treatise on justification, says—"It is a childish cavil our adversaries so greatly please themselves with, exclaiming, that we tread all Christian virtues under our feet, because we teach, that faith alone justifieth. Whereas, by this speech, we never meant to exclude either hope or charity from being always joined as inseparable mates with faith in the man that is justified; or works from being added, as necessary duties, required of every justified man; but to show, that faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ to justification; and Christ the only garment which, being so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled nature, hideth the imperfection of our works, and preserveth us blameless in the sight of God: before whom, otherwise, the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable, yea, to shut us out of the kingdom of heaven, where nothing that is not absolute can enter."

You will allow the sagacious Bishop Sanderson* to sum up the evidence; or rather, to make an important remark on the whole of the controversy. That great light of the church, both in casuistical and practical divinity, observes—"The tidings of a Redeemer must be blessed and welcome news, to those that are sensible of their own poverty, and take it of grace." Our eagle-eyed divine penetrates into the true cause of the prevailing averseness to this evangelical doctrine. It is founded on the state of the heart, more than upon any force of argument. People are but little, if at all, sensible of their spiritual and moral indigence; of the defects which depreciate, and the defilements which sully, whatever they have, and whatever they do. Nay, strongly tinctured with pride, they would be themselves the Alpha, and suffer the blessed Jesus to be no more than the Omega, in procuring their eternal salvation. Therefore they can hardly be reconciled to the humbling character of an eleemosynary; one who lives wholly upon the alms of the gospel, and is dependent upon grace for his all.

Whereas, was this grand obstacle once removed; were men convinced of sin, of exceeding sinfulness in their worst estate, and of remaining sinfulness in their best; they would soon be "convinced of righteousness," John xvi. 8, of the absolute necessity and inestimable worth of a Redeemer's righteousness. They would no longer dispute against it, but cordially receive it; entirely rely on it; and adore the goodness, the transcendent and unutterable goodness of God, in providing it.

I think, in one of our conferences, I undertook to produce my vouchers from the ancient fathers. Let me now subjoin two or three attestations of this kind. From one of which you will perceive, that those early writers had a considerable degree of clearness upon the point. From the other you will see, that far from rejecting the doctrine, they embrace it with delight and rapture.—And if you will admit of the last, you cannot be startled at any thing which I shall advance upon the subject. Let me only premise, in general, that if those authors are not so copious and explicit with regard to the imputation of active righteousness, they abound in passages which evince the substitution of Christ in our stead: passages which disclaim all dependence on any duties of our own, and fix the hopes of a believer entirely upon the merits of his Saviour. When this is the case, I am very little solicitous about any particular forms of expression; and far from being angry, even though the words which I think most significant are not retained.

Clemens—an intimate acquaintance of St. Paul's, and whose "name was in the book of life," Phil iv. 3, in his truly excellent epistle to the Corinthians, assures that people;* we are not, in any respect, or in any degree, justified by ourselves, but wholly by Jesus Christ; "not by our own wisdom or prudence," which could never find out the way; "not by the piety of our hearts, or works of righteousness performed in our lives," which could never be sufficient for the purpose; "but by faith;" the one invariable method, "by which the Almighty Sovereign has justified all" his people, "ever since the world began."

Justin, who was first a Gentile philosopher, then an eminent Christian, and at last a martyr for the truth, speaks more fully to the point;†—"What else could cover our

writing of the kind; and richly deserves to be read, to be studied, to be imitated by our young divines.

* See his Sermon on Isa. liii. 3.

* Ου δι εαυτων δικαιωμεθα, ουδε δια της ημετερας, σοφιας, η συνεσεως, η ευσεβειας, η εργων ων κατειργασαμεθα εν οσιοτητι καρδιας· αλλα δια της πιστεως, δι ης παντας τους απ αιωνος ο παντοκρατωρ Θεος εδικαιωσεν. 1 *Epist. ad Corinth.*—This quotation is explained, as well as translated. But that every reader may distinguish the text from the paraphrase, the first is printed within inverted commas.

† Τι αλλο τας αμαρτιας ημων ηδυνηθη καλυψαι, η εκεινε δικαιοσυνε; Εν τινι δικαιωθηναι

sins, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ? By what possible means could we, unrighteous and unholy creatures, be justified, but only by the interposition of the Son of God in our behalf?"—Having in this clause made a profession of his faith, the good man, on the contemplation of such a privilege, breaks out into a kind of holy transport! "O sweet and delightful exchange! a dispensation unsearchably wise and gracious! benefits quite unexpected, and rich beyond all our hopes! that the sin of many should be hid by one righteous person, and that the righteousness of one should justify many transgressors."

The following words are remarkably strong, and the sentiments peculiarly bold. But they come from the pen of the finest writer in ecclesiastical antiquity. They have the great name and venerable character of St Chrysostom for their recommendatory preface.* "Fear not, says he, on account of any of thy past transgressions of the law, when once thou hast fled by faith to Jesus Christ. The most enormous and the most destructive violation of the law is, to be withheld, by the consciousness of any guilt whatever, from believing on Christ. When thou actest faith on him, thou hast fulfilled, I might say more than fulfilled the law: For thou hast received a better righteousness than it could ever require; thou art possessed of a better obedience than any creature could possibly pay."

Two or three witnesses of distinguished ability, and undoubted veracity, are a sufficient confirmation of any cause. For this reason, and to avoid a tiresome prolixity, I have set aside a multitude of voices, which, from the writings of our own and foreign divines, are ready to pour their united evidence; and lest the business of quotation, though sparingly managed, should seem dry and tedious, I will relieve your weariness, and enliven the collection, by an extract from the prince of English poetry. Michael, the prophetic archangel, mentioning the destructive consequences of the fall, and asserting the Godhead of that glorious Person who undertook to be the repairer of this deadly breach, adds,

Which he, who comes thy Saviour, shall secure,
Not by destroying Satan, but his works,
In thee and in thy seed. Nor can this be,
But by fulfilling (that which thou didst want)
Obedience to the law of God, imposed
On penalty of death; and suffering death,
The penalty to thy transgression due;
And due to theirs, which out of thine will grow,
So only can high justice rest appaid.
Milton, book 12, l. 393.

Here then is the express determination of our Homilies, supported by the authority of our Articles, established by the concurrence of our Liturgy, still farther ratified by the unanimous attestation of several celebrated divines, whose lives were the brightest ornament to our church, and whose writings are the most unexceptionable interpretation of her meaning. As a capital to crown and complete this grand column, supervenes the declaration of the ancient fathers, those who flourished, and with the highest renown, in the first and purest ages of Christianity. So that, if great authorities carry any weight, if illustrious names challenge any regard, this tenet comes attended and dignified with very considerable credentials.

Yet I will venture to affirm, that all these, considerable as they appear, are the least of those testimonials which recommend the doctrine to my Theron's acceptance, and which have gained it admittance into the heart of,

His most affectionate

ASPASIO.

LETTER IV.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,—THE family in which I have the satisfaction to reside, though remarkable for their genteel figure and ample fortune, are still more amiably distinguished by their benevolence, hospitality, and charity. As they live at a distance from the market town, the lady has converted one apartment of her house into a little dispensatory, and stocked it with some of the most common, the most needed, and most salutary medicines, which, in cases of ordinary indisposition, she distributes to her indigent neighbours with singular compassion, and with no small success. This fine morning, Emilia has ordered some skilful hands into the fields, to cull their healing simples, and lay up a magazine of health for the afflicted poor. Camillus is withdrawn to receive his rents, and settle accounts with his tenants.

Suppose we act in concert with these valuable persons. Suppose we range the delightful fields of scripture, and form a collection, not of salutiferous herbs, but of in-

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δυνατον τȣς ανομȣς ημας και ασεβεις, η εν τω υιω τȣ Θεȣ; Ω ΤΗΣ, ΓΑΥΚΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΤΑΛΛΑΓΗΣ, ω της ανεξιχνιαστȣ δημιȣργιας ω των απροσδοκητων δε ενος πολλȣς, ανομȣς δικαιωση. *Epist. ad Diogn.* Though Du Pin questions the authority of this epistle, he allows it to have been written by an ancient hand. Dr. Cave, as capable a judge, thinks there is no reason to doubt but it is the genuine work of Justin.

* Μη τοινυν φοβηθης, ως τον νομον παραβαινων, επειδαν τη πιστει προσελθης· τοτε γαρ αυτον παραβαινεις οτε δι αυτον τω Χριστω μη πιστευσης· ως αν πιστευσης αυτω, κακεινον επληρωσας και πολλω πλεον η εκελευσε· πολλω γαρ μειζονα δικαιοσυνην ελαβες. *Homil.* xvii. *in* x. *ad Rom.*

estimable texts; such as may be of sovereign efficacy to assuage the anguish of a guilty conscience, and impart saving health to the distempered soul. Suppose we open the mines of divine inspiration, and enrich ourselves, not with the gold of Ophir, but with the unsearchable treasures of Christ; or with that perfect righteousness of our Redeemer, which is incomparably more precious than the revenues of a county, or the produce of Peru.

In pleading for imputed righteousness, we have already urged the authority of our established church, and the suffrage of her most eminent divines. The opinion of excellent writers, which has been the result of much learning, great attention, and earnest prayer, is no contemptible evidence. Yet we must always reserve the casting voice for those infallible umpires the prophets and apostles. "If we receive," with a differential regard, "the witness of men; the witness of God is greater, 1 John v. 9, and challenges the most implicit submission; which remark naturally leads me to the intended subject of this epistle, or rather calls upon me to fulfil my late engagement, and show that the above-mentioned doctrine is copiously revealed through the whole process of the Scriptures.

Let me detach a very significant portion from the epistle to the Romans; which, though little inferior to a decisive proof, is produced only as an introduction to others; "Now the righteousness of God without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe," Rom. iii. 21, 22. The righteousness of God signifies that righteousness which the incarnate God wrought out in his own all-glorious person.* It is styled the righteousness of God by way of superlative pre-eminence, in opposition to any righteousness of our own, and in contradistinction to the righteousness of all creatures whatever. This righteousness is without the law. Its efficacy has no dependence on, its merit receives no addition from any conformity of our practice to the divine law; being complete, absolutely complete in itself, and altogether sufficient to procure the reconciliation and acceptance of sinners. This righteousness is "witnessed by the law and the prophets;" receives an uniform attestation from the various writings of the Old Testament. To investigate which attestation, to examine its pertinency, and weigh its sufficiency, is our present pleasing business.

We may begin with that gracious declaration made to the first trangressors; "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15, shall destroy the works of the devil, and retrieve whatever was lost by his malicious artifices.* How could this be effected, but by restoring that righteousness which for a while our first parents possessed: which they ought always to have held fast; but from which they so soon and so unhappily swerved. Take the position in the right sense, and Christianity is, if not entirely, yet very nearly as old as the creation. It was comprehended in this blessed promise, as the stamina of the largest plants are contained in the substance of their respective seeds: every subsequent revelation being no more than a gradual evolution of this grand evangelical principle; acting like the vegetative powers of nature, which in rearing an oak, with all its spread of branches, only expand the tunicles, and fill up the vessels of the acorn.

This doctrine seems to have been typically taught by the remarkable manner of clothing our first parents. All they could do for their own recovery was like the patched and beggarly mantle of fig-leaves: This they relinquish, and God himself furnishes them with apparel, Gen. iii. 21. Animals are slain, not for food but sacrifice; and the naked criminals are arrayed with the skins of those slaughtered beasts. The victims figured the expiation of Christ's death, the clothing typified the imputation of his righteousness. In perfect conformity, perhaps with a reference to the passage thus interpreted, the apostle just now expressed himself: "Even the righteousness of God, which is not only made over to all believers, as a rich portion, but put upon all as a beautiful garment," Rom. iii. 22,† whereby alone their moral deformity can be covered, and their everlasting confusion prevented. Milton, it is certain, speaking of this memorable transaction, considers it in the same spiritual sense:—

* This explication, or something to the same purpose has occurred already. But it is hoped, that the candid reader will not condemn the repetition, as a disagreeable and jejune tautology.—Because it is so consonant to the practice of our great apostle, who repeats the term, reinculcates the doctrine, and hardly knows how to desist from the favourite topic, like one who was quite enamoured with the subject, who found music in the words, and whose happiness was bound up in the blessing. Because it is conformable to another and a greater example. The Lord Jehovah himself, within the compass of one chapter, once and again, yea, a third and a fourth time, styles this wonderful obedience, my righteousness. As though the God of infinite perfection glorified in it, thought himself most eminently magnified by it, and was jealous to have all the honour resulting from it. See Isaiah ii.

* In some such sense, I think, our first parents must understand the promise. Otherwise it could yield them no effectual relief, under the distressing sense of their own misery, and the dismal apprehension of their posterity's ruin.

† ΕΙΣ παντας ΕΠΙ παντ. ς τους πιστευοντας.

Nor he their outward only with the skins
Of beasts, but inward nakedness, (much more
Opprobrious!) with his robe of righteousness
Arraying, covered from his Father's sight.

"In thy seed," says the great Jehovah to his servant Abraham, "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," Gen. xxii. 18. That the seed here mentioned is Christ, the apostle places beyond all doubt.* Both scripture and reason declare that true blessedness must necessarily include the pardon of sins and the favour of God, the sanctification of our souls, and the inheritance of life eternal. None of which are to be acquired by any human performances, but all are to be sought, and all may be found in the root and offspring of Abraham, Jesus Christ; who is therefore most pertinently styled, "The desire of all nations," Hag. ii. 7, the actual desire of every enlightened nation, and the implicit desire of all nations whatever; because all, without any exception, covet what is to be derived only from Jesus Christ the righteous, real happiness.

The patriarchal age, and the legal economy, bore their testimony to this truth, by typical persons, emblematical miracles, and figurative usages. Indeed, the whole ceremonial service was a grand series of types, representing Christ and his everlasting righteousness. In all which this was the unanimous though silent language; "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." These I shall not stay to discuss, because proofs of a more explicit and positive nature wait for our consideration; only I would just make a transient observation, relating to one very remarkable constitution in the Jewish ritual.—The high-priest had on the front of his mitre a plate of pure gold, engraven with that venerable motto, "Holiness to the Lord," Exod. xxviii. 36, 37, which was always to be on his forehead when he performed the solemn ministrations of the sanctuary; and for this important reason, that the people "might be accepted before the Lord." Exod. xxviii. 38. Did not this most clearly foreshow the immaculate holiness of our great High Priest? and with equal clearness imply, that his holiness should procure acceptance for all his followers.

In the book of Job we have several hints of this truth, and one passage very express to our purpose. Elihu describes an unconverted person under the chastising hand of Providence, "whose life," through the extremity of his disease, "drew near to the grave; and his soul," through the multitude of his iniquities, was ready to become a prey "to the destroyers." In this deplorable condition, "if there be present with him the Messenger* of the covenant of peace, that great Interpreter* of the divine councils," who for his superexcellent wisdom is justly deemed "one among a thousand," or rather "the chiefest among ten thousand;" if he, by his enlightening Spirit, vouchsafe to show unto the afflicted man his own perfect righteousness, that most meritorious uprightness on which alone a sinner may depend, both for temporal and eternal salvation; then the poor distressed creature, attentive to this instruction, and applying this righteousness, is made partaker of pardon. God, the sovereign Lord of life and death, is gracious unto him, and saith, in the greatness of his strength, as well as in the multitude of his mercies, "deliver him from going down into the pit" of corruption, as a pledge of his deliverance from the pit of perdition; for "I have found a ransom" sufficient to satisfy my justice: I have received an atonement in behalf of this once obnoxious, now reconciled transgressor.

But why do I select one particular paragraph? It seems to be the main design of the whole book to overthrow all pretensions of any justifying righteousness in man, that the wretched sinner, nay, that the greatest saint, stript of every personal plea, may rely only on the merits of a Redeemer. This is the final issue of all those warm debates which pass between the afflicted hero and his censorious friends. This is the grand result of Elihu's calm reasoning, and of God Almighty's awful interrogatories. The apparent centre this, (see Job xlii. 6,) in which all the lines terminate; justly therefore to be considered as the principal scope of the whole work.

I must not omit an excellent observation, which I find in some critical and explanatory notes† on the last words of David. The judicious author, proving that this song relates to Christ; that it displays the dignity of our Redeemer, under the character of the "the King," and "the Just One," adds, as an explication of the last amiable and glorious title—"Our Lord Jesus Christ is so called, not so much for having fulfilled all righteousness in his own person, and performed

* See St. Paul's comment upon this invaluable promise, Gal. iii. 8, &c. This commentator, we all allow, was guided by the Spirit, and knew the mind of God. According to his exposition of the text, it is pregnant with the doctrine of justification by faith, and contains an abridgment of the gospel.

* See Job xxxiii. 22, &c.—Christ is called מלאך the angel of the divine presence, Isa. lxiii. 9. The messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1. He is also, in the most unlimited sense of the phrase, מליץ the interpreter of the divine councils; he to whom the Father hath given the tongue of the learned, and by whom he makes known the otherwise unsearchable mysteries of the gospel.—Should any doubt remain concerning the propriety of applying this passage to our Lord Jesus Christ, the reader, I hope, will give himself the pleasure of perusing the polite Witsius, Œcon. lib. 4. chap. iii. xxxi. and Dr. Grey's valuable notes upon the place, in his Liber Jobi.

† By Dr. Grey. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, &c.

an unsinning obedience to the will of God, as because, by his righteousness imputed to us, we also, upon the terms* of the gospel, are justified, or accounted righteous before God."

I think we may evidently discern the same vein of evangelical doctrine running through many of the psalms. "He shall convert my soul,"† Psal xxiii. 3, turn me not only from sin and ignorance, but from every false confidence, and every deceitful refuge. "He shall bring me forth in paths of righteousness," in those paths of imputed righteousness which are always adorned with the trees of holiness; are always watered with the fountains of consolation: and always terminate in everlasting rest. Some, perhaps, may ask, Why I give this sense to the passage? Why may it not signify the paths of duty; and the way of our own obedience? Because such effects are here mentioned as never have resulted, and never can result from any duties of our own. These are not "green pastures," but a parched and blasted heath. These are not "still waters," but a troubled and disorderly‡ stream. Neither can these speak peace or administer comfort when we pass through the valley and shadow of death. To yield these blessings is the exalted office of Christ, and the sole prerogative of his obedience.

Admitting that this obedience is of sovereign advantage during the years of life, and in the hour of death, it may still occur to the serious and inquisitive mind what will be our safeguard after the great change? When the soul departs, and our place on earth knows us no more; when the body revives, and we shall all stand before the judgment-seat, what will then avail us? The same righteousness of our divine Lord. This, if I mistake not, is displayed in the very next psalm, which begins with a solicitous inquiry; subjoins a satisfactory answer, and closes with a most pertinent but rapturous apostrophe. This is the inquiry, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord! or who shall rise up in his holy place?" This is the answer: "Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart.* He shall receive the blessing" of plenary remission "from the Lord, and righteousness also from the God of his salvation;" even that perfect righteousness, which is not acquired by man, but bestowed by Jehovah; which is not performed by the saint, but received by the sinner; which is the only solid basis, to support our hopes of happiness; the only valid plea for an admission into the mansions of joy. Then follows the apostrophe: The prophet foresees the ascension of Christ and his saints into the kingdom of heaven. He sees his Lord marching at the head of the Redeemed world, and conducting them into regions of honour and joy. Suitably to such a view, and in a most beautiful strain of poetry, he addresses himself to the heavenly portals: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory," with all the heirs of his grace and righteousness, shall make their triumphant entry; "shall enter in," and go out no more.

Having shown the powerful and extensive influence of our Redeemer's righteousness—its efficacy in this world to justify, in the other world to glorify—well may the sweet singer of Israel profess his supreme value for it, and entire dependence on it. "I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of thy righteousness only."† As though he had said, I will have recourse to no other righteousness for the consolation of my soul. I will plead no other righteousness for the recommendation of my person. I will fly to no other righteousness for my final acceptance and endless felicity. This is that "raiment of needlework and clothing of wrought gold," Psalm xlv. 13, in which the King's daughter is introduced to Him "who sitteth in the heavens over all." This is that "garment for glory and for beauty," which clothed our great High Priest, and descending to his very

* That is, freely; or, as the prophet speaks, "without money and without price." For nothing is requisite in order to a participation of Christ and his benefits, but a conviction of our extreme need, and an unfeigned desire to receive them; receive them as gifts of pure grace, vouchsafed to the most undeserving creatures. This point, which is so intimately connected with our comfort and hope, the reader may see more fully stated in Dialogue XV.

† I am sensible the word ישובב may signify to refresh or restore; may answer to the Greek phrase αναψυξις, and denote the comforts of the Holy Ghost. This verb may also bear the same signification with the participle επιστρεψας, in our Lord's exhortation to Peter, *when thou art converted.* Not describing the first grand revolution in the heart, by which a new determination is given to the judgment, and a new bias to the affections: but expressing those subsequent operations of the Divine Spirit, by which we are recovered from our various relapses, and healed of our daily infirmities. And I question whether there is any instance in which we more frequently need these restoring aids, than in the case of adhering to our Redeemer's righteousness. So prone are we to forget our resting place! so liable to fall from our steadfastness in Christ.

‡ Blasted, disorderly.—Let not these words grate on the ear, or, if they grate on the ear, let them humble the heart. What were Job's duties? Zealous and exemplary; practised from his very youth, and neither equalled nor excelled by any person on earth. Yet these, in point of justification, were not a whit better than Aspasio represents. Let us hear the last words of this matchless saint, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." From this confession we learn, that, with all his furniture of personal obedience, he had just enough to be ashamed, confounded, undone.

* Psal. xxiv. 4. "Who hath clean hands and a pure heart?" he only whose heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, by the precious blood of Christ; and who lives by faith in the Son of God. Heb. x. 22. Gal. ii. 20.

† Psalm lxxi. 16. There is, in the Hebrew original and in the new translation, a very emphatical repetition; which adds weight to the sentiment, and demands a peculiar attention from the reader: "Thy righteousness, even thine only."

feet, Rev. i. 13, clothes and adorns the lowest members of his mystical body.

Recollecting all the foregoing particulars, justly, and on the most rational ground, does our royal author declare, "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16. They are truly blessed, they alone are happy, who "know the joyful sound" of the gospel; not only receive it with their ears, but admit it into their very hearts, so as to partake of the sacred peace and spiritual liberty which it proclaims. "They shall walk in the light of thy countenance;" they shall enjoy such communications of thy grace, and such manifestations of thy love, as will constitute the serenity and sunshine of their souls. In thy name, O Lord Jesus Christ, in thy glorious person, and thy infinite merit, "shall they rejoice:" and not occasionally, but habitually; not barely at some distinguished intervals, but "all the day." Their joy shall be as lasting as it is substantial. "And in thy righteousness shall they be exalted," set above the tantalizing power of temporal things; placed beyond the slavish fear of the last enemy; and raised, when time shall be no more, to a state of celestial glory and consummate bliss.

How thoroughly evangelical is this seraphic writer! He has joy, he has blessedness, and he looks for everlasting exaltation; yet not from his faith, his repentance, and his own sincere obedience. According to this, which is the modern scheme, faith, instead of receiving, would supplant the Lord Jesus; repentance, instead of being the gift of Christ, would become his rival; and sincere obedience, which is for the praise and glory of God, would eclipse and impoverish his grace. But David adopts no such sentiments; David maintains no such doctrine. This is the invariable language of his heart: "All my springs of hope, of trust, and consolation, O thou adored Emanuel! are in thee." Psalm lxxxvii. 7.

This sense is the less precarious, I had almost said the more certain, as it exactly corresponds with the analogy of faith, and coincides with the express declarations of other scriptures. Isaiah is styled the evangelist of the Jewish church; because more frequently than any of the prophets he celebrates, and more copiously explains, this and other peculiarities of the gospel. In the very first chapter, he preaches these glad tidings: "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." Zion, the gospel church, composed of fallen creatures, sometime disobedient to their God, and enslaved to Satan, shall be redeemed; redeemed, "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold," but by severe judgments executed on their glorious Head, and gracious Representative; and not by these only, but by righteousness also, by the perfect and most meritorious righteousness of the same divinely-excellent Person.

Our sacred author bears his testimony with warmer zeal and brighter evidence as he proceeds in his incomparable discourses. "Surely shall one say," (or, as it may be rendered, *only*) "in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Isaiah xlv. 24. Please to observe, Theron, it is not said, in my own works, in my own repentance, no, nor in my own faith, "but in the Lord Jesus have I righteousness;" righteousness for justification, and strength for sanctification; an imputed righteousness, to procure my acceptance; an imparted strength, to produce my holiness: the first constituting my title to the everlasting inheritance, the last forming my personal preparation for its enjoyment. "Surely," which expresses a firm persuasion, and an unshaken affiance. "Only," which denotes an utter renunciation of all other confidence, and excludes every other ground of hope. "Righteousnesses,"* the original is in the plural number; which seems to be used, not without an important design, to enlarge the significancy of the word, and make it correspond with the richness of the blessing; so that it may imply the fulness and the supereminent excellency of this gift of grace; as comprehending whatever, either of suffering or obedience, is requisite to the justification of sinners. Insomuch that, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and his all-perfect righteousness, the seed of Israel shall not only be justified, but rejoice; and not only confide, but glory, Isa. xlv. 25.

What he had just now asserted, he exemplifies in his own, and in the person of every true believer. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 10. True believers are compared, in one of our sacred eclogues, to "a company of horses in Pharoah's chariot;" Cant. i. 9; to horses, than which no animal is more stately and graceful; to Egyptian horses, which were the best and completest then in the world; to those in Pharaoh's chariot, which doubtless were a choice set, selected from thousands, and finest where all were fine. Here, methinks, I see the comparison realized. Christians, endued with such a spirit as

* צדקות parallel to which, both in construction and signification, is the phrase used by St. John Δικαιωματα, Rev. xix. 8. "The fine linen is the righteousness (properly, the righteousnesses) of the saints."

breathes in this animated text, are like a collection of those gallant and majestic steeds—not destined to low drudgery, but appointed to run in the royal chariot; all life, full of fire, champing the bit, and eager for the chase. Nothing can more beautifully describe a state of exultation and ardour, than the preceding similitude, or the following words: "I will rejoice; I will greatly rejoice; my very soul, and all that is within me, shall be joyful in my God." Wherefore? Because he hath clothed me, undone sinner as I am, with the garments of salvation; because he hath covered me, defective as all my services are, with the robe of righteousness; a robe, which hides every sin that, in thought, word, or deed, I have committed; a robe, which screens from the sword of justice, the curse of the law, and all the vengeance my iniquities have deserved; a robe, which adorns and dignifies my soul, renders it fairer than the moon, clear as the sun, and meet for the inheritance of saints in light.

Having represented this righteousness, in a variety of grand and charming views, the prophet farther characterises it, as the unalterable and never-failing origin of our justification and happiness. This he displays by a train of images, bold and sublime to the last degree. "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." Isa. li. 6. Observe the vast dimensions, and the firm foundations, both of the upper and the lower world, how strong, how steadfast they all appear! Yet these, indissoluble as they may seem, shall perish. This majestic globe, on which mountains rise, and oceans roll, shall lose its beautiful gloss; and be laid aside, like a decayed useless garment. Even that more majestic concave, in which stars are fixed, and planets revolve, shall be deprived of its very superior lustre; and vanish away like the dissolving smoke. Whereas, "my salvation," with all the spiritual and heavenly blessings included in it, shall subsist and flourish for ever: "And my righteousness," which is the meritorious cause of all, shall be an immoveable foundation for repose and happiness. In short, whether there be moral virtues, they shall be found wanting; whether there be Christian graces, they shall prove ineffectual; but my conformity to the law, and my obedience unto death, neither need addition, nor admit of change: they are all-sufficient in their merit, and in their virtue everlasting.

When day arises on our benighted hemisphere, it breaks and spreads by a gradual increase—forming, first the grey twilight, next the blushing morn, then the shining light, till all is heightened into the blaze and glow of noon. When spring revisits our wintry clime, she also advancece by gentle degrees; first swells the bud and protrudes the gem, then expands the leaf, and unfolds the blossom: the face of things is continually changing for the better, and nature shows herself, almost every hour, in some new and more engaging dress. This leisurely process renders the strong effulgence of the celestial orb more supportable, and the lovely expansions of the vegetable creation more observable.

So progressive and increasing are the displays of Jesus Christ exhibited in the Scriptures, whose appearance is unspeakably more delightful to the soul than the emanations of orient light are to the eye, or the entertainments of the vernal season to our other senses. The gloom of fallen Adam was alleviated by a ray from this Sun of Righteousness. Abraham and the patriarchs saw afar off the blessed Jesus, "as the morning spread upon the mountains, Joel ii. 2. The psalmist and the prophets beheld his nearer approaches, like the sun upon the point of rising. To the apostles and evangelists, he arose in perfect lustre and complete beauty. The grace and the privileges which dawned under other dispensations of religion, are brought even to meridian light by the gospel. This I mention, just to intimate what you may expect from a following letter.

In the mean time, let us attend to the prophet Daniel. He records a message from heaven, which is more clearly descriptive of this great evangelical blessing than all the foregoing texts. He had been under much distress, and in great perplexity; afflicted for his own and his countrymen's sins; anxious for the welfare of the chosen nation, and the prosperity of true religion; when an angel was despatched to the holy mourner with this most cheering news, which, received by faith, is the richest balm to a wounded conscience, and the only remedy for a guilty world: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city; to finish the transgression, and make an end of sin; to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Dan. ix. 24. This prophecy relates to the Messiah. It foretells that, in the fulness of time, he should "finish the transgression;" restrain and suppress the power of corruption, by purifying to himself a peculiar people;—should "make an end of sin;" by sealing up or secreting its guilt, and totally abolishing its condemning power;—should "make reconciliation for iniquity," by sustaining the vengeance due to sinners, and fully satisfying the divine justice for all their offences;—should not barely publish,

and lift up its head like a cedar in Lebanon. To such a soul the great Redeemer's righteousness will be welcome, as waters to the thirsty soil, or as rivers in the sandy desert.

LETTER V.

Aspasio to Theron.

Dear Theron,—Give me leave to relate an uncommon accident which happened a little while ago in this neighbourhood, and of which I myself was a spectator. The day was the Sabbath; the place appropriated to divine worship was the scene of this remarkable affair.

A boy came running into the church breathless and trembling. He told, but in a low voice, those who stood near, that a press-gang* was advancing to besiege the doors, and arrest the sailors. An alarm was immediately taken. The seamen, with much hurry, and no less anxiety, began to shift for themselves. The rest of the congregation, perceiving an unusual stir, were struck with surprise. A whisper of inquiry ran from seat to seat, which increased by degrees into a confused murmur. No one could inform his neighbour, therefore every one was left to solve the appearance from the suggestions of a timorous imagination. Some suspected the town was on fire: some were apprehensive of an invasion from the Spaniards: others looked up, and looked round, to see if the walls were not giving way, and the roof falling upon their heads. In a few moments the consternation became general. The men stood like statues, in silent amazement, and unavailing perplexity. The women shrieked aloud; fell into fits; sunk to the ground in a swoon. Nothing was seen but wild disorder; nothing heard but tumultuous clamour. Drowned was the preacher's voice. Had he spoke in thunder, his message would scarce have been regarded. To have gone on with his work, amidst such a prodigious ferment, had been like arguing with a whirlwind, or talking to a tempest.

This brought to my mind that great tremendous day, when the heavens will pass away, when the earth will be dissolved, and all its inhabitants receive their final doom. If at such incidents of very inferior dread our hearts are ready to fail, what unknown and inconceivable astonishment must seize the guilty conscience, when the hand of the Almighty shall open those unparalleled scenes of wonder, desolation, and horror! when the trumpet shall sound—the dead arise—the world be in flames—the Judge on the throne—and all mankind at the bar!

"The trumpet shall sound," 1 Cor. xv. 52, says the prophetic teacher. And how startling, how stupendous the summons! Nothing equal to it, nothing like it, was ever heard through all the regions of the universe, or all the revolutions of time. When conflicting armies have discharged the bellowing artillery of war, or when victorious armies have shouted for joy of the conquest, the seas and shores have rung, the mountains and plains have echoed. But the shout of the archangel and the trump of God will resound from pole to pole; will pierce the centre, and shake the pillars of heaven. Stronger, stranger still! it will penetrate even the deepest recesses of the tomb. It will pour its amazing thunder into all those abodes of silence. The dead, the very dead, shall hear.

When the trumpet has sounded, "the dead shall arise." In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the graves open, the monumental piles are cleft asunder, and the nations under ground start into day. What an immense harvest of men and women, springing up from the caverns of the earth, and the depths of the sea! Stand awhile, my soul, and consider the wonderful spectacle.—Adam formed in Paradise, and the babe born but yesterday; the earliest ages and latest generations, meet upon the same level. Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, people of all climes and languages, unite in the promiscuous throng. Here, those vast armies, which like swarms of locusts covered countries, which with an irresistible sweep overrun empires—hear they all appear, and here they all are lost—lost like the small drop of a bucket, when plunged into the unfathomable and boundless ocean. O the multitudes! the multitudes which these eyes shall survey, when God "calleth the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people!" What shame must flush the guilty cheek! what anguish wound the polluted breast! to have all their filthy practices, and infamous tempers, exposed before this innumerable crowd of witnesses!—Fly, my Theron; and fly, my soul; instantly let us fly, earnestly let us fly, to the purifying blood of Jesus; that all our sins may be blotted out; that we may be found "unblamable and unreprovable" in the presence of the assembled world, and what is infinitely more to be revered, in the sight of the omnipotent God.

When the swarm issues, the hive will

* The reader, it is hoped, will excuse whatever may appear low, or savour of the plebeian, in any of these circumstances. If Aspasio had set himself to invent the description of a panic, he would probably have formed it upon some more raised and dignified incident. But as this was a real matter of fact, which lately happened in one of our sea-port towns, truth, even in a plain dress, may possibly be no less acceptable than fiction tricked up with the most splendid embellishments.

burn: There is no more need of this habitable globe. The elect have fought the good fight, and finished their course: The wicked have been tried, and found incorrigible. The important drama is ended, every actor has performed his part; now, therefore, the scenes are taken down, and the stage is demolished. "Wo be to the earth, and to the works thereof!" Its streams are turned into pitch, its dust into brimstone, and the breath of the Almighty, like a torrent of fire, enkindles the whole. See! see how the conflagration rages, spreads, prevails over all! The forests are in a blaze, and the mountains are wrapt in flame. Cities, kingdoms, continents sink in the burning deluge. London, Britain, Europe, are no more. Through all the receptacles of water, through all the tracts of land, through the whole extent of air, nothing is discernible, but one vast, prodigious, fiery ruin.—Where now are the treasures of the covetous? where the possessions of the mighty? where the delights of the voluptuary?—How wise, how happy are they, whose portion is lodged in heavenly mansions! their "inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled;" such as the last fire cannot reach, nor the dissolution of nature impair.

But see! the azure vault cleaves; the expanse of heaven is rolled back like a scroll; and the Judge, the Judge appears! "He cometh," cries a mighty seraph, the herald of his approach, "he cometh to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people!" He cometh, not as formerly in the habit of a servant, but clad with uncreated glory, and magnificently attended with the armies of heaven. Angels and archangels stand before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand of those celestial spirits minister unto him. Behold him, ye faithful followers of the Lamb; and wonder and love! This is he who bore all your iniquities on the ignominious cross: This is he who fulfilled all righteousness for the justification of your persons.—Behold him, ye despisers of his grace, and wonder, and perish! This is he whose merciful overtures you have contemned, and on whose precious blood you have trampled.

The great white throne, Rev. xx. 11, beyond description august and formidable, is erected. The King of heaven, the Lord of glory, takes his seat on the dreadful tribunal. Mercy on his right hand displays the olive-branch of peace, and holds forth the crown of righteousness: Justice on his left poises the impartial scale, and unsheaths the sword of vengeance: while wisdom and holiness, brighter than ten thousand suns, beam in his divine aspect. What are all the preceding events to this new scene of dignity and awe? The peals of thunder, sounding in the archangel's trumpet; the blaze of a burning world, and the strong convulsions of expiring nature; the unnumbered myriads of human creatures, starting into instantaneous existence, and thronging the astonished skies; all these seem familiar incidents, compared with the appearance of the incarnate Jehovah. Amazement, more than amazement, is all around. Terror and glory unite in their extremes. From the sight of his majestic eye, from the insupportable splendours of his face, the earth itself, and the very "heavens flee away." Rev. xx. 11. How then? Oh, how shall the ungodly stand? stand in his angry presence, and draw near to this consuming fire!

Yet draw near they must, and take their trial, their decisive trial, at his righteous bar. Every action comes under examination; for each idle word they must give account. Not so much as a secret thought escapes this exact scrutiny. How shall the criminals, the impenitent criminals, either conceal their guilt or elude the sentence? They have to do with a sagacity too keen to be deceived, with a power too strong to be resisted, and (O! terrible, terrible consideration!) with a severity of most just displeasure, that will never relent, never be entreated more. What ghastly despair lowers on their pale looks! What racking agonies rend their distracted hearst! The bloody axe and the torturing wheel are ease, are down, compared with their prodigious wo. And (O holy God!) wonderful in thy doings! fearful in thy judgments, even this prodigious wo is the gentlest of visitations, compared with that indignation and wrath which are hanging over their guilty heads, which are even now falling on all the sons of rebellion, which will plunge them deep in aggravated and endless destruction.

> And is there a last day? and must there come
> A sure, a fix'd irrevocable doom?

Surely then, to use the words of a pious prelate,* it should be "the main care of our lives and deaths, what shall give us peace and acceptation before the dreadful tribunal of God. What but righteousness? What righteousness, or whose? Ours, or Christ's? Ours, in the inherent graces wrought in us, in the holy works wrought by us? or Christ's, in his most perfect obedience and meritorious satisfaction, wrought for us, and applied to us? The Popish faction is for the former: we Protestants are for the latter. God is as direct on our side as his word can make him; everywhere blazoning the defects of our own righteousness, everywhere extolling the perfect obedience of our Redemer's."

"Behold!" says the everlasting King, "I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone; a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a

* Bishop Hall.

sure foundation: he that believeth, shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16. As this text contains so noble a display of our Saviour's consummate ability for his great work; as it is admirably calculated to preserve the mind from distressing fears, and to settle it in a steady tranquillity; you will give me leave to touch it cursorily with my pen, just as I should descant upon it in conversation, was I now sitting in one of your agreeable arbours, and enjoying your more agreeable company.

How beautiful the gradation! how lively the description! and how very important the practical improvement; or, I might say, the inscription, which is engraven on this wonderful stone.—"Behold!" Intended to rouse and fix our most attentive regard. The God of heaven speaks. He speaks, and every syllable is balm; every sentence is rich with consolation. If ever, therefore, we have ears to hear, let it be to this Speaker, and on this occasion.

"A stone."—Every thing else is sliding sand, is yielding air, is a breaking bubble. Wealth will prove a vain shadow, honour an empty breath, pleasure a delusory dream, our own righteousness a spider's web. If on these we rely, disappointment must ensue, and shame be inevitable. Nothing but Christ, nothing but Christ, can stably support our spiritual interests, and realize our expectations of true happiness. And, blessed be the divine goodness! he is, for this purpose, not a stone only, but

"A tried stone."—Tried, in the days of his humanity, by all the vehemence of temptations, and all the weight of afflictions; yet, like gold from the furnace, rendered more shining and illustrious by the fiery scrutiny. Tried, under the capacity of a Saviour, by millions and millions of depraved, wretched, and ruined creatures, who have always found him perfectly able, and as perfectly willing, to expiate the most enormous guilt—to deliver from the most inveterate corruptions—and save, to the very uttermost, all that come unto God through him.

"A corner stone."—Which not only sustains, but unites the edifice, incorporating both Jews and Gentiles, believers of various languages, and manifold denominations—here, in one harmonious bond of brotherly love—hereafter, in one common participation of eternal joy.

"A precious stone."—More precious than rubies; the pearl of great price, and the desire of all nations.—Precious, with regard to the divine dignity of his person, and the unequalled excellency of his mediatorial offices. In these, and in all respects, greater than Jonah—wiser than Solomon—fairer than all the children of men—chiefest among ten thousand—and to the awakened sinner, or enlightened believer, "altogether lovely." Cant. v. 16.

"A sure foundation."—Such as no pressure can shake; equal, more than equal to every weight, even to sin, the heaviest load in the world. "The Rock of Ages," such as never has failed, never will fail, those humble penitents who cast their burden upon the Lord Redeemer! who roll* all their guilt, and fix their whole hopes, on this immoveable basis; or, as the original words may be rendered, "a foundation! a foundation!" There is a fine spirit of vehemency in the sentence, thus understood. It speaks the language of exultation, and expresses an important discovery. That which mankind infinitely want; that which multitudes seek, and find not; it is here! it is here! This, this is the foundation for their pardon, their peace, their eternal felicity.

"Whosoever believeth," though pressed with adversities, or surrounded by dangers, "shall not make haste:"† but, free from tumultuous and perplexing thoughts, preserved from rash and precipitate steps, he shall possess his soul in patience; knowing the sufficiency of those merits, and the fidelity of that grace, on which he has reposed his confidence, shall quietly, and without perturbation, wait for an expected end. And not only amidst the perilous or disastrous changes of life, but even in the day of everlasting judgment, such persons shall stand with boldness. They shall look up to the grand Arbitrator—look round on all the solemnity of his appearance—look forward to the unalterable sentence—and neither feel anxiety, nor fear damnation.

Such, in that day of terrors, shall be seen
To face the thunders with a godlike mien.

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* Roll.—This is the exact sense of the sacred phrase, גֹּל אֶל יְהוָה, Psal. xxii. 8; xxxvii. 5. Prov. xvi. 3. I am not ignorant, that some people have presumed to censure, and many have been shy of using this bold and vigorous metaphor: which nevertheless appears to me, of all others, the most just, the most significant, and therefore the most truly beautiful.

† "Shall not make haste." This metaphorical expression, though it might be very intelligible to a Hebrew, is, to an English reader, like some fine picture placed in a disadvantageous light. We may possibly illustrate the prophet's meaning, and exemplify his assertion, if we compare the conduct of Moses with that of the Israelites, on viewing the fatal catastrophe of Dathan and Abiram. When the earth trembled under their feet, when the ground opened its horrid jaws, when the presumptuous sinners went down alive into the pit, when the tremendous chasm closed upon the screaming wretches; the children of Israel, it is written, "fled at the cry of them, fled in wild and hasty confusion; for they said, lest the earth swallow us up also." But Moses, who denounced the dreadful doom, Moses, who was sure of the divine protection! Moses made no such precipitate or disorderly haste. He stood calm and composed; saw the whole alarming transaction, without any uneasy emotions of fear, or any unnecessary attempts to escape. So that his behaviour seems to be a clear and apposite comment on Isaiah's phrase. See Numb xvi.

The planets drop: their thoughts are fix'd above:
The centre shakes; their hearts disdain to move.

This portion of Scripture, which I hope will both delight and edify my friend, recalls our attention to the subject of my present letter—to those propitiatory sufferings, and that justifying righteousness, which, imputed to sinners, are the ground of their comfort, and the bulwark of their security. And what say the writers of the New Testament upon this point? they, whose understandings were opened by the "Wonderful Counsellor," to discern the meaning of the ancient oracles; who must therefore be the most competent judges of their true import, and our surest guides in settling their sense. Do they patronize our interpretation of the prophets? do they set their seal to the authenticity of our doctrine?

St. Luke, in his ecclesiastical history, has preserved this weighty declaration of the apostles: "We believe, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they. Acts. xv. 11. Here the thing is implied.—St. Peter, in the introduction to one of his theological epistles, thus addresses his happy correspondents: "To them that have obtained like precious faith, in the righteousness* of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. i. 1. Here the point is expressly asserted.—With equal clearness is the doctrine delivered by Matthew the evangelist: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Matt. vi. 33. What can the "kingdom of God" mean? An experience of the power, and an enjoyment of the privileges of the gospel. What are we to understand by "his righteousness?" Surely, the righteousness which is worthy of this grand appellation, and peculiar to that blessed institution.

Would we learn what is the great and distinguishing peculiarity of the gospel? St. Paul informs us: "Therein the righteousness of God is revealed, from faith to faith." As this text leads us into the Epistle to the Romans; as this epistle is, for the propriety of its method, as well as for the importance of its doctrine, singularly excellent; it may not be amiss to examine its structure, and inquire into its design.

The apostle writes to a promiscuous people, who had been converted, partly from Judaism, partly from Gentilism. His aim is, to strike at the very root of their former errors respectively—to turn them wholly to the superabundant grace of God, and establish them solely on the all-sufficient merits of Christ.

The Gentiles were, for the most part, grossly ignorant of God, and stupidly negligent of invisible interests. If any among them had a sense of religion, their virtues, they imagined, were meritorious of all that the Deity could bestow. If they fell into sin, sin they supposed might easily be obliterated by repentance, or compensated by a train of sacrifices.* A few of their judicious sages taught, that the most probable means of securing the divine favour, was a sincere reformation of life.

The Jews, it is well known, placed a mighty dependence on their affinity to Abraham, and the covenant made with their fathers, on their adherence to the letter of the moral law, and their scrupulous performance of ceremonial institutions; Gentiles and Jews agreeing in this mistake, that they looked for the pardon of guilt, and the attainment of happiness, from some services done, or some qualities acquired by themselves.

Against these errors the zealous apostle draws his pen. He enters the lists like a true champion of Christ, in the most spirited and heroic manner imaginable. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ;" for, however it may be deemed foolishness by the polite Greeks, or prove a stumbling-block to the carnal Jews, "it is the power of God unto salvation," Rom. i. 16, it is the grand instrument, which he has ordained for this blessed purpose, and which he will certainly crown with the desired success. Whence has the gospel this very peculiar power? because therein a righteousness is revealed, a true and perfect righteousness, which obliterates all guilt, and furnishes a solid title to eternal life. What righteousness is this? the righteousness, not of man but of God; which was promised by God in the scriptures, was introduced by God in the person of his Son, and on account of its

* The phrase is πιστιν εν δικαιοσυνη. If we retain the common translation, it proves another very momentous truth: "that the righteousness of our God, even of our Saviour Jesus Christ," is the one meritorious procuring cause of all spiritual blessings; of faith, as well as of fruition; of grace, as well as of glory.

* See Witsii Animadversiones Irenicæ, cap. 7—A choice little piece of polemical divinity; perhaps the very best that is extant; in which the most important controversies are fairly stated, accurately discussed, and judiciously determined, with a perspicuity of sense, and a solidity of reasoning exceeded by nothing but the remarkable conciseness, and the still more remarkable candour of the sentiments.

The Oeconomia Fœderum, written by the same hand, is a body of divinity, in its method so well digested, in its doctrines so truly evangelical, and (what is not very usual with our systematic writers,) in its language so refined and elegant, in its manner so affectionate and animating, that I would venture to recommend it to every young student of divinity. I would not scruple to risk all my reputation upon the merits of this performance; and I cannot but lamen it, as one of my greatest losses, that I was not sooner acquainted with this most excellent author. All whose works have such a delicacy of composition, and such a sweet savour of holiness, that I know not any comparison more proper to represent their true character, than the golden pot which had manna; and was outwardly, bright with burnished gold, inwardly rich with heavenly food.

consummate excellency, is both acceptable and available in his sight.

This righteousness is "from faith to faith," Rom. i. 17; held forth, as it were, by a promising God, and apprehended by a believing soul, who first gives a firm assent to the gospel—then cordially accepts its blessings, from a conviction that the doctrine is true, passes to a persuasion that the privileges are his own. When this is effected, a foundation is laid for all happiness, a principle is wrought, to produce all holiness.

But why was it requisite that such a righteousness should be provided by God, and revealed in the gospel? Because both Gentile and Jew neither possessed, nor could attain, any righteousness of their own; and this righteousness, though so absolutely necessary for their fallen state, was infinitely remote from all human apprehensions. The latter assertion is self-evident; the former is particularly demonstrated.—First, with regard to the Gentiles; the generality of whom were abandoned to the most scandalous excesses; and they who had escaped the grosser pollutions, fell short in the duties of natural religion. Next, with regard to the Jews; many of whom lived in open violation of the external commandment; and not one of them acted up to the internal purity required by the Mosaic precepts. From which premises this conclusion is deduced—that each of them had trangressed even their own rule of action; that all of them were, on this account, utterly inexcusable: therefore by the works of the law, whether dictated by reason or delivered by Moses, "no mortal can be justified, Rom. iii. 20, in the sight of God.

Lest any should imagine, that righteousness may be obtained, if not by a conformity to the law of nature, or the law of Moses, yet by an observation of evangelical ordinances, he farther declares, that sinners are justified freely, without any regard to their own endowments, "through the redemption, the complete redemption of Jesus Christ, Rom. iii. 24, after such a manner, as may lay them low in humiliation, even while it exalts them to the kingdom of heaven; after such a manner, as may bring life and salvation to their souls, while all the glory reverts to God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

In the prosecution of this very momentous subject, our sacred disputant removes an objection which is as common as it is plausible. "Do we make void the law through faith?" Do we render it a vain institution, such as never has been, never will be fulfilled? "God forbid!" This were a flagrant dishonour to the divine Legislator and his holy commandments; such as we would abhor, rather than countenance. On the contrary, "we establish the law,"* Rom. iii. 31; not only as we receive it for a rule of life, but as we expect no salvation without a proper, without a perfect conformity to its injunctions. How can this be effected? by qualifying its sense, and softening it into an easier system? This were to vacate the law, to deprive it of its honours; and hinder it from attaining the due end, either of obedience or condemnation. No; but we establish the law, by believing in that great Mediator, who has obeyed its every precept, sustained its whole penality, and satisfied all its requirements in their utmost extent.

Farther to corroborate his scheme, he proves it from the renowned examples of Abraham and David. The instance of Abraham is so clear, that it wants no comment: Any paraphrase would rather obscure, than illustrate it. The other, derived from the testimony of the Psalmist, may admit the commentator's tool; yet not to hammer it into a new form, but only to clear away the rubbish; to rescue it from misrepresentation, and place it in a true light. "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they, whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sins are covered: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Rom. iv. 6. 7. Here is imputation asserted—the imputation of righteousness—of righteousness without works; without any respect to, or any co-operation from any kind of human works. It is a blessing vouchsafed to the ungodly; not founded on a freedom from sin, but procuring a remission of its guilt.

Some, I know, have attempted to resolve all the force of this passage into an argument for the sameness of pardon and justification; whereas the apostle undertakes to prove, not that forgiveness and justification are indentically the same, but that both are absolutely free. To maintain which position he argues: "This doctrine is as true, as it is comfortable. It agrees with the experience, and has received the attestation of David. When he speaks of the blessed and happy man, he describes him, not as an innocent, but guilty person; not as having any claim to the divine favour, on account of deserving performances, or recommending properties; but as owing all his acceptance to that sovereign grace, which forgives iniquities and blots out sin. Such is the case with regard to that evangelical justification which we preach; even as it is, in the manner of its vouchsafement perfectly similar to the blessedness celebrated by the Psalmist." The apostle's eye is not so directly upon the nature of the privilege, as upon the freeness with which it is granted:

* An incontestible proof that the apostle treats of the moral law.

Nor can any infer from the tenor of his reasoning, that to be forgiven, is the same as to be justified; only that both are acts of infinitely rich mercy, designed for sinners; promised to sinners, bestowed on sinners; who have nothing, nothing of their own, either to boast or to plead.

In the fifth chapter, from verse the twelfth to the end, the sacred penman points out the cause, and explains the method of justification: Of which this is the sum—That Christ, in pursuance of the covenant of grace, fulfilled all righteousness in the stead of his people: That this righteousness being performed for them, is imputed to them: That by virtue of this gracious imputation they are absolved from guilt and entitled to bliss; as thoroughly absolved, and as fully entitled, as if in their own persons they had undergone the expiatory sufferings and yielded the meritorious obedience. Lest it should seem strange in the opinion of a Jew or a Gentile, to hear of being justified by the righteousness of another, the wary apostle urges a parallel case, recorded in the Jewish revelation, but ratified by universal experience;* namely, our being condemned for the unrighteousness of another. In this respect, he observes, Adam was a type of our Lord, or "a figure of him that was to come." Rom. v. 14. The relation is the same, but the effect is happily reversed. Adam the head of his posterity; Christ the head of his people. Adam's sin was imputed to all his natural descendants; Christ's righteousness is imputed to all his spiritual offspring. Adam's transgression brought death into the world, and all our wo; Christ's obedience brings life, and all our happiness.† The whole closes with this very obvious and no less weighty inference: "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v. 18.

I do not recollect any other similitude which the apostle so minutely sifts, and so copiously unfolds. He explains it, he applies it, he resumes it, he dwells upon it, and scarcely knows how to desist from it. I am sure you will not blame me if I imitate the sacred author, revert to the subject, and quote another passage from the same paragraph. "Much more shall they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Rom. v. 17. Here I am ready to think, the inspired writer puts a difference between the two grand blessings purchased by Emanuel—remission and righteousness. For who are the persons which receive abundance of grace? They, I apprehend, that, having sinned much, have much forgiven. Who are the persons which receive abundance of the gift of righteousness? They that, having in their own conduct wrought out none which will bear the test of God's impartial scrutiny, have one placed to their account which the all-seeing eye of heaven approves. However, whether the distinction I have ventured to propose be fanciful or substantial, of this I am persuaded, that the gift of righteousness* must signify a righteousness not originally their own, but another's; not what they themselves have acquired, but what was fulfilled by their Surety; and is, by an act of heavenly indulgence, consigned over to them. Accordingly it is represented, not as a work, but as a gift; and those who are interested in it are styled, not workers, but receivers.

I should but faintly copy the apostolic example, if I did not once again avail myself of this important topic. Suffer me, therefore, to transcribe one more verse from this admirable chapter. "As by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 19. The "disobedience of one," is the disobedience of Adam, his actual transgression of the divine law. Hereby "many were made sinners;" sinners in such a sense as to become obnoxious unto condemnation and death. All this, I think, is, from the apostle's own words, indisputable. And if we would preserve the propriety of his antithesis, or the force of his reasoning, we must allow, that the obedience of one is the obedience of Christ; his actual and complete performance of the whole law. Hereby "many are made righteous;" righteous in such a sense, as to be released from condemnation, and vested with a title to life eternal. How clear and easy is this meaning! how just and regular this argumentation! What subtilty of evasion must be used, to give a different turn to the instructive text!

This is the most consistent sense in which I can understand Rom. viii. 5. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" That the righteousness required by the holy, but broken law, might be thoroughly accomplished; accomplished by our public Representative, and in our hu-

* By the pains and death which infants in every nation endure, which are unquestionably punishments, and to which they are doomed by the righteous judgment of God.

† "As the sin of Adam," says Bengelius, "without any concurrence of the sins which we ourselves respectively commit, occasioned our ruin; so the righteousness of Christ, abstracted from all consideration of our personal obedience, procures our recovery."

* I cannot but wonder at the assertion of a late writer, who roundly declares, "That there is not one word in this whole chapter relating to the antecedent obedience of Christ's life, but expressing only his passive obedience." Must then this group of expressions —δικαιοσυνη—δικαιωμα—υπακοη—be confined barely to the sufferings of our Lord? To put such a sense upon the words of the apostle, is, according to my apprehension, not to hear his voice, but to gag his mouth; not to acquiesce in the sacred oracles, but to make them speak our own meaning.

man nature; so as to be deemed, in point of legal estimation, fulfilled for us and by us.* This, I say, is most consistent with the tenor of St. Paul's arguing, and with the exact import of his language.—With the tenor of his arguing; for he undertakes to demonstrate the impossibility of our justification by any personal conformity to the law; whereas, if we could satisfy its penalty, and obey its precepts, or, in other words, fulfil its righteousness, this impossibility would cease.—With the exact import of his language; for the original phrase denotes not a sincere, but a complete obedience; not what we are enabled to perform, but what the law has a right to demand; which every one must acknowledge, is not fulfilled in any mere man since the fall, but was fulfilled by Jesus Christ for our good and in our stead. This interpretation preserves the sentences distinct, and makes a very natural introduction for the following clause, where the persons interested in this privilege are described by their fruits, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" implying, that justification and sanctification are like the ever-corresponding motion of our eyes, inseparable concomitants; and we vainly pretend to the former, if we continue destitute of the latter.

We have produced positive proofs of our doctrine: we have heard an apostle declaring the assured happiness and complete justification of true believers. Let us now observe the same sagacious judge of men and things discovering the danger of those self-justiciaries who reject the Redeemer's righteousness.

He is filled with the darkest apprehensions, concerning his brethren the Jews. He is impressed with melancholy presages, relating to their eternal state. Rom. ix. 2. What was the cause of this tender solicitude? Had they cast off all religion, and given themselves over to gross immoralities? On the contrary, they were worshippers of the true God; and had, in their way, not only a regard, but a zeal for his honour. Rom. x. 2. Wherefore, then, does this compassionate father in Israel feel the same trembling uneasiness for his kinsmen according to the flesh, as Eli felt for the endangered ark? Himself assigns the reason: Because "they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God," Rom. x. 3. Not knowing that immaculate holiness, which the perfect nature, and equally perfect law of the most high God require; being wilfully ignorant of that consummate obedience, which an incarnate God vouchsafed to perform for the justification of his people; they sedulously, but foolishly endeavoured to establish their own righteousness; to make it, scanty and decrepit as it was, the basis of their hopes. Thus were they resting their everlasting all on a bottom, not precarious only, but irreparably ruinous. A boundless eternity the fabric: yet they build (wonder, O heavens!) on the foam of the waters! and (which added stubbornness to their folly) in avowed contempt of that strong and sure foundation, laid by God's own hand in Zion. For this the good apostle was afflicted with "great heaviness and continual sorrow." For this he made the prophet's pathetic complaint his own: "O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might bewail day and night," Jer. ix. 1, the incorrigible perverseness of my people! "For my people have committed two evils," in not thankfully submitting to the righteousness of God, "they have forsaken the fountain of living waters," in attempting to establish their own righteousness, "they have hewed themselves out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jer ii. 13.

Having showed their fatal error, he strengthens his representation by displaying the happy success of the Gentiles. "What shall we say then?" This, however improbable it may seem, we confidently affirm, "That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness," who had no knowledge of it, and no concern about it; even "they have attained to righteousness."* Strange assertion! how is this possible? Doubtless, the righteousness which they attained, could not be any personal righteousness; of this they were totally destitute. Instead of practising moral virtues, or religious duties, they were immersed in sensuality, and abandoned to idolatry. It must therefore be the evangelical, the imputed righteousness, "even that which was wrought by Christ, and is received by faith."†

Israel, in the mean time, the nominal Israel, who with great pretensions to sanctity, and many costly oblations, "followed after

* It is remarked by a judicious critic and very valuable expositor, that the preposition ἐκ sometimes signifies *by* or *for*, and is so translated. Matt. v. 34; Heb. i. 1. See Dr. Guyse's Exposition of the New Testament.

* Surely, this must signify more than "attaining to the profession of a religion, whereby they may be justified and saved. To this multitudes attain, who continue as the prophet speaks, "stout hearted and far from righteousness: who derive no real benefit from their profession; but are rendered utterly inexcusable, and liable to more aggravated condemnation.

† Surely the righteousness, which is by faith, cannot consist "in humbly committing the soul to Christ in the way that he hath appointed." According to this notion, the justifying righteousness would spring from ourselves—would be constituted by an act of our own, and not by the perfect obedience of our Lord.

I am sorry to see this, and the preceding interpretation, in the works of an expositor, whose learning I admire, whose piety I reverence, and whose memory I honour. Yet I must say on this occasion, with one of the ancient philosophers, "Amicus, Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica, Veritas."

the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." "Attained!" they have done nothing less. They are fallen vastly short of it; they are pronounced guilty by it; they stand condemned before it.* Wherefore did they so grossly mistake, and so greviously miscarry? Because they forsook the good old way, in which Abraham, David, and their pious ancestors walked. They adopted a new scheme; and would fain have substituted their own, instead of relying on a Saviour's righteousness. They sought for justification, not "by faith," but as it were "by the works of the law," Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32. A method which their fathers knew not; which their God ordained not; and which proved, as it always will prove, not only abortive but destructive. At this stone they stumbled, on this rock they split. Let their ruin be a way-mark, and the apostle's observation a light-house to my Theron.

Our zealous writer tries every expedient: He mingles hope with terror. Having pointed out the rock on which the Israelites suffered shipwreck, he directs us to the haven in which sinners may cast anchor and find safety. He gives us a fine descriptive view of the Christian's complete happiness. He opens (if I may continue the metaphor) a free and ample port for perishing souls; not formed by a neck of land or a ridge of mountains, but by a magnificent chain of spiritual blessings; all proceeding from, and terminating in, that precious corner-stone, Jesus Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30; "wisdom," to enlighten our ignorant minds; "righteousness,"† to justify our guilty persons; "sanctification,"† to renew our depraved natures; "redemption," to rescue us from all evil, and render us, both in body and soul, perfectly and eternally happy. Let it be remarked, how carefully our inspired writer sets aside all sufficiency, as well as all merit, in man. He represents the whole of our salvation, both in its procurement and application, as a work of freest grace. Christ is, and not we ourselves, the author of this glorious restoration, the cause of this great felicity. He is made all this unto us. How? Not by our own resolution and strength; but of God, by the agency of his mighty power and blessed Spirit. He shows us the all-sufficient fulness of Christ. He brings us by ardent longings to Christ. He implants us into Christ, and makes us partakers of his merits.

In the process of the same epistle, the sacred penman enumerates the constituent parts of that great salvation which the Son of God has procured for ruined sinners. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Ye are washed;" cleansed from the filth, and discharged from the guilt of all your iniquities. "Ye are sanctified;" delivered from the death of sin, and endued with a living principle of holiness. "Ye are justified;" restored to a state of acceptance with God, and invested with a title to eternal glory. All which inestimable prerogatives are conferred upon the true believer, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," in consideration of his atoning blood and meritorious righteousness. "By the Spirit of our God;" through the efficacy of his operation, revealing Christ, and working faith in the heart.

Some gentlemen have talked of a new remedial law; whereas the apostle declares, "that Christ is the end of the" old, the unalterable, the Mosaic "law, for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. Follow the course of a river, it will constantly lead you to the ocean. Trace the veins of the body, they invariably unite in the heart. Mark likewise the tendency of the law, it no less constantly and invariably conducts you to Christ, as the centre of its views, and the consummation of its demands. The moral law aims at discovering our guilt, and demonstrating our inexpressible need of a Saviour. The ceremonial points him out as suffering in our stead, making reconciliation for iniquity, and purging away every defilement with his blood. They both direct the wretched transgressor to renounce himself, and fly to the Redeemer, who alone has paid that perfect obedience, and brought in that everlasting righteousness, which the sinner wants, and the law exacts; who is therefore the only proper accomplishment of the one, and the only suitable supply for the other.

What is the grand design of the whole scriptures? St. Paul, displaying their sublime origin, and enumerating the gracious

* This, I apprehend, is the purport of the apostle's speech, when he tells us, that his countrymen "had not attained unto the law of righteousness." He uses the figure μειωσις, and means more than he expresses. Somewhat like the prophet in the close of this chapter who assures the believers in Jesus, "they shall not be ashamed," that is, "they shall be encouraged, emboldened, established."

† "Righteousness and sanctification;" the former imputed, the latter inherent. This preserves a distinction between the noble articles, and assigns to each a grand share in the economy of salvation. To say, that if one of the blessings is communicated in the same manner, seems to be cavilling, rather than arguing: because the subjects are of a different nature, and therefore must be enjoyed in a different way. The cocoa-tree is, to the American, food and clothing, a habitation and domestic utensils: but must we suppose it administering to all those uses in one and the same unvaried method? Because in one respect it is eaten, in another it is wore, must it be thus applied in all? I believe, the illiterate savage who enjoys the several gifts, need not be taught the absurdity of such a supposition.

purposes they are intended to serve, writes thus: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine," to declare and establish religious truth; "for reproof," to convince of sin, and to refute error; "for* correction," or renovation of the heart and reformation of the life; "for instruction in righteousness," in that righteousness which could never have been learned from any other book, and in which alone sinful men may appear with comfort before their God.

We have seen the principal scope of the law and the leading design of the scriptures; let us add one inquiry more. What is the chief office of the Spirit? If all these coincide, and uniformly terminate in the imputed righteousness of Christ, we have a confirmation of its reality and excellence, great as man can desire, I had almost said, great as God can impart. What says our Lord upon this point? "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall convince† the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged," John xvi. 8—11. Is it possible for words to be more weighty and comprehensive? Here is a summary of Christian faith, and of Christian holiness. Not that superficial holiness which is patched up of devotional forms, and goes no farther than external performances; but that which is vital, and springs from the heart; consists in power, not in mere profession; whose praise, if not of men who are smitten with pompous outsides, is sure to be of God, who distinguishes the things which are excellent.

"He shall convince the world of sin," of original and actual sin, the sin of their nature, as well as the sin of their life, the sin of their best deeds, no less than the sin of their criminal commissions and blamable omissions. Above all, of their sinning against the sovereign, the only remedy, by unbelief, "because they believe not on me." He shall convince "of righteousness," of the divine Redeemer's righteousness, which the foregoing conviction must render peculiarly welcome; convince them, that it was wrought out in behalf of disobedient and defective mortals; that it is absolutely perfect, and sufficient to justify even the most ungodly. Of all which, an incontestible proof is given, by his resurrection from the dead, his triumphant ascension into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of his Father: "Because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more."* He shall convince "of judgment." Those who are humbled under a sense of guilt, and justified through an imputed righteousness, shall be taught by happy experience, that the prince of this world is condemned and dethroned in their hearts, that their souls are rescued from the tyranny of Satan, are made victorious over their corruptions, and restored to the liberty, the glorious liberty, of the children of God.

You wonder, perhaps, that I have not strengthened my cause by any quotation from the Epistle to the Galatians. What I design, my dear Theron, is not to accumulate, but to select arguments. However, that I may not disappoint an expectation so reasonable, I proceed to lay before you a very nervous passage from that masterful piece of sacred controversy. Only let me just observe, that the epistle was written to persons who had embraced Christianity, and professed an affiance in Christ; but would fain have joined circumcision, would fain have superadded their own religious duties to the merits of their Saviour, in order to constitute, at least, some part of their justifying righteousness. Against which error, the vigilant and indefatigable assertor of "the truth as it is in Jesus," remonstrates: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law,† but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," Gal. ii. 15, 16. "We who are Jews by nature," the descendants of Abraham, and God's peculiar people, have the tables of his law, and the ordinances of his worship; we who in point of privileges are greatly superior to the Gentile nations, and have all possible advantages for establishing (if such a thing were practicable) a righteousness of our own, what have we done? "We have believed on Jesus Christ;" we have renounced ourselves, disclaimed whatever is our own, and depended wholly on the righteousness of Christ. For what end? That by this "faith in Christ," which receives his righteousness, pleads his righte-

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Πρὸς ἐπανορθωσιν.

† "He shall convince,' seems to be the most proper translation of ἐλεγξει, as it implies the sure success which attends the operation of the divine Spirit. Man may reprove, and no conviction ensue; whereas that Almighty Agent not only reproves, but reproves with power; so as to determine the judgment, and sway the affections.

* For if the work had been imperfect in any degree, our Redeemer, instead of taking up his stated and final residence in the regions of glory, must have descended again into this inferior world, to complete what was deficient.

† Observable, very observable, is the zeal of our apostle in this determined stand against the most specious, and therefore the most dangerous encroachments of error. To express his ardent concern for the truth and purity of the gospel, the works of the law are mentioned no less than three times, by the apostle, and as often excluded from the affair of justification. The faith of Christ likewise is thrice inculcated, and as often asserted to be the only method of becoming righteous before God.

ousness, and presents nothing but his righteousness before the throne, "we might be justified." What motive has induced us to this practice? A firm persuasion, that by "the works of the law," by sincere obedience, or personal holiness, "no man living has been, and no man living can be, justified before God."

Are you tired, Theron? have I fatigued your attention, instead of convincing your judgment? I will not harbour such a suspicion. It is pleasing to converse with those who have travelled into foreign countries, and seen the wonders of creation. We hearken to their narratives with delight. Every new adventure whets our curiosity, rather than palls our appetite. Must it not then afford a more sublime satisfaction to be entertained with the discourses of a person, who had not, indeed, sailed round the world, but made a journey to the third heavens? who had been admitted into the paradise of God, and heard things of infinite importance, and unutterable dignity? This was the privilege of that incomparable man, whose observations and discoveries I have been presenting to my friend. And I promise myself, he will not complain of weariness, if I enrich my epistle with one or two more of those glorious truths.

"God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might," not be put into a capacity of acquiring a righteousness of our own, but "be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. In this text the double imputation of our sin to Christ, and of Christ's righteousness to us, is most emphatically taught and most charmingly contrasted. Most emphatically taught: For we are said, not barely to be righteous, but to be made righteousness itself; and not righteousness only, but (which is the utmost that language can reach) the righteousness of God. Most charmingly contrasted: For one cannot but ask, in what manner Christ was made sin? In the very same manner we are made righteousness. Christ knew no actual sin; yet upon his mediatorial interposition on our behalf, he was treated by divine justice as a sinful person. We likewise are destitute of all legal righteousness, yet upon our receiving Christ, and believing in his name, we are regarded by the divine Majesty as righteous creatures. This, therefore, cannot, in either case, be intrinsically, but must be, in both instances, imputatively. Gracious, divinely-gracious exchange! pregnant with amazing goodness, and rich with inestimable benefits. The incessant triumph of the strong and sovereign consolation of the weak believer.

Cease your exultation, cries one, and come down from your altitudes. The term used in this verse denotes, not so properly sin, as an offering for sin.—This is a mere supposal, which I may as reasonably deny as another affirm. Since the word occurs much more frequently in the former signification than in the latter; and since, by giving it the latter signification in the passage before us, we very much impair, if not totally destroy, the apostle's beautiful antithesis.

However, not to contend, but to allow the remark; I borrow my reply from a brave old champion* for the truths of the gospel: "This text," says he, "invincibly proveth, that we are not justified in God's sight by righteousness inherent in us, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us through faith." After which he adds, what I make my answer to the objection, "that Christ was made sin for us, because he was a sacrifice for sin, we must confess; but therefore was he a sacrifice for sin, because our sin was imputed to him, and punished in him." The poor delinquents under the Mosaic dispensation, who brought their sin-offering to the altar of the Lord, were directed to lay their hand on the devoted beast; signifying, by this usage, the transferring of guilt from the offerer to the sacrifice. Conformably to the import of this ceremony, Christ assumed our demerit; like a true piacular victim, suffered the punishment which we had deserved; and which, without such a commutation, we must have undergone. So that our Lord's being made a sin-offering for us, does by no means invalidate, but very much confirm our doctrine. It necessarily implies the translation of our iniquity to his person; and, on the principles of analogy, must infer the imputation of his righteousness to our souls.

One passage more permit me to transcribe into my paper, and, at the same time to wish that it may be written on both our hearts; written not with ink and pen, no, nor with the point of a diamond, but with the finger of the living God. "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith." Phil. iii. 8. 9.

Be pleased to observe, that in this confession of faith, and with reference to the case of justification, the apostle renounces all

* See Dr. Fulk's annotation on the place, in that valuable piece of ancient controversy and criticism, "The Examination of the Rhemish Testament." Which, though not altogether so elegant and refined in the language, nor so delicate and genteel in the manner, as might be wished, is nevertheless full of sound divinity, weighty arguments, and important observations.—Would the young student be taught to discover the very sinews of Popery, and be enabled to give an effectual blow to that complication of errors, I scarce know a treatise better calculated for the purpose.

those acts of supposed righteousness which were antecedent to his conversion. Nor does he repudiate them only, but all those more excellent services by which he was so eminently distinguished, even after his attachment to Christ, and engagement in the Christian ministry. As though he should say, "The privilege of being a Hebrew by birth; the prerogative of being a Pharisee by profession; together with a behaviour exemplary, and a reputation unblamable; all these, which were once reckoned my highest gain, as soon as I became acquainted with the glorious perfections of Christ, 'I counted* loss for him.' And now, though I have been a disciple many years; have walked in all holy conversation and godliness; have endured for my divine Master's name tribulations above measure; have laboured more abundantly, and more successfully, than all the apostles; yet even these, and all other attainments, of what kind or of what date soever, I count† but loss, for the transcendent excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord. 'Yea doubtless;'‡ it is my deliberate and steadfast resolution; what I have most seriously adopted, and do publicly avow, that, specious as all these acquirements may seem, and valuable as they may be in other respects, I reckon them but dung, that I may win Christ.§ They fade into nothing, they dwindle into less than nothing, if set in competition with his matchless obedience; and were they to supersede my application to his merits, or weaken my reliance on his mediation, they would not be contemptible only, but injurious—irreparably injurious—lose itself."

You will ask, If he rejects all his own righteousness, on what are his hopes fixed? On a foundation, extensive as the obedience of the Redeemer's life and death, unshaken as the dignity of his eternal power and Godhead. They are fixed on "the righteousness which is of God;" the righteousness which God the Father, in unsearchable wisdom, provided; and which God the Son, in unutterable goodness wrought. Do you inquire how he came to be invested with this righteousness? The answer is ready and satisfactory. It was by the application of the divine Spirit, and the instrumentality of faith. Lest any should imagine that this faith might be substituted instead of his own obedience to the law, he puts an apparent difference between the righteousness which justifies, and the faith by which it is received; not the righteousness which consists in, but is "through the faith of Christ." To show the great importance of this distinction, how earnestly he insisted upon it as a preacher, how much it tended to his consolation as a Christian, he repeats the sentiment, he reinculcates the doctrine, "the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Will you now, Theron, or shall I, poor unprofitable creatures, presume to rely on any performances or any accomplishments of our own, when that distinguished saint,—a perfect prodigy of gifts, of graces, and of zeal,—indefatigable in labours, unconquerable by afflictions, and of whose usefulness there is neither measure nor end;—when he denies himself in every view, depreciates all, disavows all, and makes mention of nothing but the incomparable righteousness of his "obedient, dying, interceding Saviour?"

What shall I say more? Shall I attempt to play the rhetorician, and borrow the insinuating arts of persuasion? This, after all the cogent testimonies produced, and all the great authorities urged, would be a needless parade. When our pen is a sunbeam, there is but little occasion to dip it in oil.

Instead of such an attempt, give me leave to make a frank and honest confession. I would conceal nothing from my friend. He should have a sash to my breast: throw it up at his pleasure; and see all that passes within.—Though I never had any temptation to that pernicious set of errors, which passes under the character of Socinianism, yet I had many searchings of heart, and much solicitous inquiry, how far we are indebted to Christ's active righteousness. Thoroughly persuaded, that "other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, even Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 11, and that "there is no other name give,n under heaven, whereby men can be saved" Acts iv. 12, yet, whether we were not to confine our believing regards to a dying Saviour, was matter of considerable doubt. At first, I was inclined to acquiesce in the affirmative. After long consideration and many prayers, my faith fixed upon the whole of Christ's mediatorial undertaking; which

* Ηγημαι, "I have counted."

† Ηγεμαι, relates to the present time, and comprehends present attainments, "I do count."—Not some, or the greatest part, but "all things." What? Is a course of sobriety, and the exercise of morality, to be reckoned as dung? All things, says the apostle. What? Is our most elevated devotion, and enlarged obedience to be degraded at this monstrous rate? All things, says the apostle. This is his invariable reply. And we may venture to affirm, that he had the mind of Christ.

‡ Perhaps αλλα μενουνγε may be translated, "but truly." As if he had said, "But why should I mention any more particulars? In truth, I count all things," &c.

§ Δια Χριστον—δια το υπερ εχον—ινα Χριστον κερδηθω—plainly imply this comparative or relative sense. Virtues, which are the fruits of the Spirit, and labours, which are a blessing to mankind, must not be reckoned absolutely or in all respects despicable; but only in a limited and qualified acceptation: despicable not in themselves, but as compared with the divinely perfect righteousness of Christ, or as referred to the infinitely important article of justification.

That Aspasio, in this whole paragraph, speaks the sense of our church, will appear from the following extract:—"For the apostle, St. Paul, saith, He doth glory in what? In the contempt of his own righteousness, and that he looketh for the righteousness of God by faith."—*Homily of Salvation, part* 2.

begun in his spontaneous submission to the law, was carried on through all his meritorious life, and issued in his atoning death. This is now the basis of my confidence, and the bulwark of my happiness. Hither I fly; here I rest; as the dove, after her wearisome and fruitless rovings, returned to Noah, and rested in the ark.

This scheme first recommended itself to my affections, as making the most ample provision for the security and repose of a guilty conscience; which, when alarmed by the accusations of sin, is very apprehensive of its condition; and will not be comforted, till every scruple is satisfied, and all the obstructions to its peace are removed. Thus I reasoned with myself: "Though there is undoubtedly something to be said for the other side of the question, yet this is evidently the safest method. And, in an affair of infinite consequence, who would not prefer the safest expedient? Should the righteousness of Jesus Christ be indispensably requisite as a wedding-garment, what will they do, when the great immortal King appears, who have refused to accept it? whereas, should it not prove so absolutely necessary, yet such a dependence can never obstruct our salvation. It can never be charged upon us as an article of contumacy or perverseness, that we thought too meanly of our own, too magnificently of our Lord's obedience. So that, let the die turn either way, we are exposed to no hazard. This scheme takes in all that the other systems comprehend, and abundantly more. In this I find no defect, no flaw, no shadow of insufficiency. It is somewhat like the perfect cube, which, wherever it may be thrown, or however it may fall, is sure to settle upon its base. Supposing, therefore, the important beam should hang in equilibrium with respect to argument, these circumstances cast into the scale may very justly be allowed to turn the balance."

Upon a more attentive examination of the subject, I perceived, that this is the doctrine of our national church; is enforced by the attestation of our ablest divines; and has been in all ages the consolation of the most eminent saints: That it is the genuine sense of scripture, and not some inferior or subordinate point, incidentally touched upon by the inspired writers, but the sum and substance* of their heavenly message; that which constitutes the vitals of their system, and is the very soul of their religion. On which account, the whole gospel is denominated from it, and styled "the ministration of righteousness." I was farther convinced, that this way of salvation magnifies, beyond compare, the divine law; is no less honourable to all the divine attributes; and exhibits the ever-blessed Mediator in the most illustrious and the most delightful view. All these considerations, under the influence of the eternal Spirit, have determined my judgment, and established my faith. So that, I trust, neither the subtilties of wit, nor the sneers of ridicule, nor any other artifice, shall ever be able to separate me from the grace and righteousness which are in Jesus Christ.

Let me now, by way of conclusion, review that awful subject which introduced the letter. Let me suppose the Judge, who "is at the door," actually come; the great and terrible day, which is hasting forward, really commenced.—Hark! the trumpet sounds the universal summons. The living are struck with a death-like astonishment; the dead start from their silent abodes. See, the whole earth takes fire; the sun is turned into darkness; and the stars fall from their spheres! Behold, the Lord Jesus comes with myriads of his angels! The judgment is set, and the books are opened.

Observe those exemplary Christians, whose sentiments I have been collecting. They renounce themselves, and rely on their glorious Surety. Methinks I hear them say, each as they quit their beds of dust: "I will go forth from the grave in thy strength, O blessed Jesus; and at the decisive tribunal will make mention of thy righteousness only." At the same time will you, Theron, or shall I, stand forth and declare, before the innumerable multitude of anxious sinners and adoring seraphs, "Let those pusillanimous creatures fly for refuge to their Saviour's righteousness. We will confide in works, in accomplishments of our own. We are the men who have personally kept the divine law, and want no supposititious obedience from another. Let the eye that glances through immensity, and penetrates the recesses of the heart; let that holy and omniscient eye, examine our temper, and sift our conduct. We are bold to risk our souls, and all their immortal interests, on the issue of such a scrutiny."

Perhaps, your mind is impressed with this solemn scene, and your thoughts recoil at such daring presumption. If so, it will be proper for me to withdraw, and leave you to your own meditations. At such mo-

* This doctrine runs through St. Paul's writings, like a golden warp. While privileges, blessings, and evangelical duties are like a woof, (if I may allude to the ornaments of the sanctuary,) of blue, of purple, of scarlet, and indeed of every pleasant colour. The righteousness of God, Rom i. 17. The righteousness from God, Phil. iii. 10. Righteousness by faith, Rom iii. 22. Righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11. Righteousness without the law, Rom. iii. 21. Righteousness without works, Rom. iv. 6. Righteousness in the blood of Christ, Rom. v. 9. Righteousness by the obedience of Christ, Rom. v. 19. Righteousness not our own, Phil. iii. 9. Righteousness imputed by God, Rom. iv. 6, 10, 22.

but accomplish and "bring in righteousness;"* that it may be presented both to God and man: to God, for the reparation of his violated law; to man, for the justification of his obnoxious person:—That this righteousness should be everlasting; not such as may be compared to the morning-cloud, which passeth away; or to the early dew, which is soon dried up; but such as will outlast the hills, on which the latter shines; and outlast the skies through which the former sails: A righteousness, whose merits extend to every period, and every action of our lives; and when once made ours by imputation, remains, and will remain our unalienable property. To this all the saints, who in ancient generations pleased God, owe their acceptance; on this, all the children of men who in future ages hope for his mercy, must rely; by this the whole assembly of the blessed will be invariably and eternally precious in his sight. Exalted character! Can it be applicable to any thing less than the righteousness of the incarnate God? Surely none can imagine that Daniel would speak in such a magnificent strain of any human righteousness, since, in this very chapter, he professedly depreciates himself, his fellow-saints, and all human performances whatever.

I forgot, in the proper place, to consult the prophet Jeremiah. Let us now refer ourselves to his determination. Celebrating the Saviour of Judah and Israel, he says, "This is his name, whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness;" a determination so clear and satisfactory, as not to leave, one would almost conclude, any room for appeal. Should the sense of the passage be questioned, I think there cannot be a more authentic explication, than the preceding extracts from Isaiah and Daniel. And having the unanimous attestation of two inspired penmen, we may venture to abide by such authority, even in opposition to some respectable names. In the verse immediately foregoing, the essential holiness of the Redeemer is displayed, under the character of the righteous branch. The sanctity which he will impart to his subjects, is intimated by his "executing judgment and justice in the earth." In the clause we have quoted, his imputed righteousness is foretold and promised. Thus the several sentences are distinct; the description of the Saviour is complete; and he appears perfectly suited to the exigencies of a wretched world; in their worst estate enslaved to Satan, and in their best falling short of the glory of God. This, therefore, I take to be the grand and extensive meaning of the prophet: the righteous Lord; not barely, the Lord who infuses righteousness into sinful souls; but the incarnate Jehovah,* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, whose mediatorial righteousness is, by an act of gracious imputation, ours, to all the intents of justification and salvation; ours, as much ours, for these blessed purposes, as if we had wrought it out each in his own person.

Foreseeing and contemplating these blessings, the enraptured Zechariah cries out, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass," Zech. ix. 9. He addresses himself to Zion and Jerusalem, to the ecclesiastical and civil community. Persons of all ranks, and of every character, are exhorted to "rejoice;" to rejoice "greatly;" nay, to express the joy of their heart, by loud hallelujahs, and triumphant exclamations. What is the cause of this general delight? what can fill both church and state with such high satisfaction? "Thy King cometh unto thee;" even that glorious King who rules in heaven, and rules in the heart; whose service is freedom, and whose laws are love. "He is just," divinely righteous in his nature, and he cometh to fulfil all righteousness in thy stead. "Having salvation;" hereby procuring salvation for his people; deliverance from sin, from death and hell; from every evil thou deservest, and from every misery thou fearest. That none may be discouraged, and none deterred, from applying to this Prince of Peace, he is, amidst all the honours of his sovereignty, "lowly; does not abhor the basest, will not despise the meanest; to the poor his gospel is preached, and for the guilty his benefits are intended. As an emblem, as a proof of this most amiable and condescending goodness, "he will ride;" not like the conquerors of old, in a triumphal chariot, or on a richly caparisoned steed; but upon the most mean and despicable of all animals, "an ass;" nay, what is still more despicable, on a rude undisciplined "colt, the" wayward "foal of an ass."†

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* לחכרא, I think, must signify more than to *publish* or *preach*. Had this been all that the angel was commissioned to declare, לבשף, or לכרר, would probably have been used. The word implies such *a bringing in*, (the original is the same) as when Abel brought his sacrifice to the altar for the divine acceptance, and Esau brought his venison into the chamber, for his father's use. Gen. iv. 4, xxvii. 31.

In these golden, infinitely better than golden verses, are characterised the divine and human natures of Christ, together with his mediatorial office. The divine nature, in that he enjoys the honours of the Godhead, and possesses the incommunicable name Jehovah. The human nature, in that he was to be raised up unto David, and spring as a branch from his root. The mediatorial office, in that he is the righteousness of his people, and the salvation of sinners.

† Because profane scoffers have presumed to ridicule this very remarkable incident of our Lord's life, some interpreters of note have endeavoured to rescue it from their abusive attempts, by observing, "That the eastern asses are much larger and more

And now, since my Theron confesses himself to be miserable, and poor and naked; since the eyes of his understanding are enlightened to see the impurity of his heart, the imperfection of his righteousness, and that he is in himself a lost undone sinner; what advice, cheering and salutary, shall I suggest? O! let him listen to an Adviser infinitely more able and compassionate; listen to Him who is the Ancient of days, and the wisdom of God: "I counsel thee," says the blessed Jesus, "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." Rev. iii. 18. Gold! what can this denote, but all those spiritual treasures which are hid in Christ? which are in measure unsearchable, in value inestimable, in duration eternal. "White raiment!" Surely this must signify the righteousness of our Redeemer, which is all purity, and all perfection; which clothes the soul, as a most suitable and commodious garment; which covers every deformity and every sin; and presents the believer, free from shame and free from blemish, before the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

This, to use the delicate language and amiable images of Isaiah—this doctrine, embraced by a realizing faith, is the only pillow of rest, "wherewith we may cause the weary and heavy laden soul to find repose;" and this is the sovereign cordial prepared by infinite mercy for the refreshment of anxious and desponding transgressors. O! let us not be in the number of those proud and refractory creatures, who, though they infinitely needed, "yet would not hear" the gracious news, Isaiah xxviii. 12, nor receive the unspeakable benefit. In this respect, and in this most eminently, is that other saying of the sublime teacher true; "The Lord of hosts shall be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, to the residue of his people. Isa. xxviii. 5. Shall we tear from our temples, or reject with disdain, this unfading and heavenly ornament, in order to substitute a mean and tawdry chaplet of our own.

Let me add a pertinent passage from one of our celebrated dramatic writers, which, if proper in his sense, will be incomparably more so, according to our manner of application:

> ——————It were contemning,
> With impious self-sufficient arrogance,
> This bounty of our God, not to accept,
> With every mark of honour, such a gift.

I might proceed to urge this expostulation of the poet, as I might easily have multiplied my quotations from holy writ. But, studious of brevity, I leave both, without further enlargement, to your own meditation. Yet, more studious of my friend's happiness, I cannot conclude without wishing him an interest, a clear and established interest, in this everlasting righteousness of Christ. For so, and so only, can he have "everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace."—I am, my dear Theron,

Inviolably yours,

ASPASIO.

P. S.—Opposite to the room in which I write, is a most agreeable prospect of the gardens and the fields; these, covered with herbage, and loaded with corn; those, adorned with flowers and abounding with esculents; all appearing with so florid and so beautiful an aspect, that they really seem, in conformity to the Psalmist's description, even to "laugh and sing." Let me just observe, that all these fine scenes, all these rich productions, sprung—from what? From the dissolution of the respective seeds. The seeds planted by the gardener, and the grain sowed by the husbandman, first perished in the ground, and then the copious increase arose.

Much in the same manner a true faith in Christ and his righteousness arises—from what? From the ruins of self-sufficiency, and the death of personal excellency. Let me therefore entreat my Theron still to take the diary for his counsellor; still to keep an eye on the depravity of his nature, and the miscarriages of his life. The more clearly we see, the more deeply we feel our guilt and our misery, the more highly shall we value the obedience of our blessed Surety. In such a heart faith will flourish as a rose,

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graceful than ours; that patriarchs and judges thought it no disgrace to ride upon them. This observation has, I fear, more of false delicacy, than of real truth, or Christian simplicity. In the patriarchal ages, I acknowledge, persons of high distinction thought it no dishonour in their journeys and processions, to appear on this animal. But I very much question, whether the same fashion subsisted, or the same way of thinking prevailed, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. See James iii. 3. Nay, I am strongly inclined to suspect, that this plain primitive custom was superseded, even in the days of Zechariah. For long before this time I find, that Solomon had four thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; and that horses were brought to him out of Egypt, and divers other countries, 1 Kings iv. 26, x. 28, 29. From this period, it is probable, none but the poor and inferior sort of people rode upon asses. When Isaiah prophesied, the land was full of horses, Isaiah ii. 7. Under the Persian monarchy, when Zechariah flourished, horses were in still greater repute. Well, therefore, might the prophet say, with wonder and delight, lowly, and riding upon an ass!

Was it a mean attitude? exceedingly mean, mean even to contempt, I make no scruple to grant it: nay, I make my boast of it! It is for the honour of our Lord's condescension, it is for the utter confusion of all worldly pomp and grandeur, and it is for the unspeakable comfort of my sinful soul. Most charming humility, most endearing gentleness! "He who rideth upon the heavens as it were upon a horse, and maketh the clouds his chariot, to atone for my pride, and to encourage my hope, disdained not in the days of his flesh, to ride upon an ass.

They who would dignify this action, any otherwise than from its ever-to-be-admired abasement, seem to have forgotten the stable and the manger. They who are offended at this circumstance, and ashamed to own their Lord in his deep humiliation, have but very imperfectly learned the apostle's lesson, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus, my Lord."

ments to obtrude on your company, would render me the troublesome and officious, rather than

The respectful and affectionate
ASPASIO.

LETTER VI.

THERON TO ASPASIO.

DEAR ASPASIO.—THE last evening was one of the finest I ever saw. According to my custom, I made an excursion into the open fields, and wanted nothing to complete the satisfaction, but my friend's company. I could not but observe how much your improving conversation heightened the charms of nature. When religion applied philosophy, every thing was instructive, as well as pleasing. Not a breeze swept over the plains, to clear the sky and cool the air, but it tended also to disperse our doubts, and enliven our faith in the supreme all-sufficient good. Not a cloud tinged the firmament with radiant colours, or amused the sight with romantic shapes, but we beheld a picture of the present world—of its fading acquisitions and fantastic joys—in the mimic forms and the transitory scene. Even the weakest of the insect tribe, that skim the air in sportive silence, addressed us with the strongest incitements, and gave us the loudest calls to be active in our day, and useful in our generation. They cried, at least when you lent them your tongue,

> Such is vain life, an idle flight of days,
> A still delusive round of sickly joys;
> A scene of little cares, and trifling passions,
> If not ennobled by the deeds of virtue.

How often, at the approach of sober eve, have we stole along the cloisters of a sequestered bower, attentive to the tale of some querulous current, that seemed to be struck with horror at the awful gloom, and complained with heavier murmurs, as it passed under the blackening shades, and along the root-obstructed channel! Or else, far from the babbling brook, and softly treading the grassy path, we listened to the nightingale's song; while every gale held its breath, and all the leaves forbore their motion, that they might neither drown nor interrupt the melodious wo. From both which pensive strains, you endeavoured to temper and chastise the exuberant gaiety of my spirits. You convinced me, that true joy is a serious thing, is the child of sedate thought, not the spawn of intemperate mirth; nursed, not by the sallies of dissolute merriment, but by the exercise of serene contemplation.

Sometimes, at the gladsome return of morn, we have ascended an airy eminence, and hailed the new-born day; and followed, with our delighted eye, the mazes of some glittering stream. Here, rushing with impetuous fury from the mountain's side, foaming over the rifted rocks, and roaring down the craggy steep; impatient, as it were, to get free from such rugged paths, and mingle with the beauties of the lower vale: There, slackening its headlong career, and smoothing its eddies into an even flow: While, deep embosomed in the verdant mead, it glides through the cherished and smiling herbage; sometimes lost amidst closing willows; sometimes emerging with fresh beauty from the leafy covert; always roving with an air of amorous complacency, as though it would caress the fringed banks, and flowery glebe. Reminded by this watery monitor, of that constancy and vigour with which the affections should move towards the great centre of happiness, Christ Jesus; of that determined ardour with which we should break through the entanglements of temptation, and obstacles of the world, in order to reach our everlasting rest; and of the mighty difference between the turbulent, the frothy, the precipitate gratifications of vice, and the calm, the substantial, the permanent delights of religion.

Or else, with eager view, we have surveyed the extensive prospect, and wandered over all the magnificence of things—an endless variety of graceful objects and delightful scenes! each soliciting our chief regard; every one worthy of our whole attention; all conspiring to touch the heart with a mingled transport of wonder, of gratitude, and of joy. So that we have returned from our rural expedition, not as the spendthrift from the gaming table, cursing his stars, and raving at his ill luck, gulled out of his money, and the derided dupe of sharpers; not as the libertine from the house of wantonness, surfeited with a rank debauch, dogged by shame, goaded by remorse, with a thousand recent poisons tingling in his veins. But we returned as ships ofcommerce from the golden continent, or the spicy islands, with new accessions of sublime improvement and solid pleasure; with a deeper veneration for the Almighty Creator; with a warmer sense of his unspeakable favours; and with a more inflamed desire "to know him now by faith, and after this life to have the fruition of his glorious Godhead."

Sometimes, with an agreeable relaxation, we have transferred our cares from the welfare of the nation to the flourishing of the farm; and instead of enacting regulations for the civil community, we have planned schemes for the cultivation of our ground and the prosperity of our cattle. Instead of attending to the course of fleets, and the destination of armies, we have directed the plough where to rend the grassy turf, or taught the honeysuckle to wind round the

arbour, and the jessamine to climb upon the wall. Instead of interposing our friendly offices to reconcile contending kingdoms, we have formed a treaty of coalition between the stranger scion, and the adopting tree; and, by the remarkable melioration of the ensuing fruit, demonstrated (would contending empires regard the precedent!) what advantages flow from pacific measures and an amicable union. Instead of unravelling the labyrinths of state, and tracing the finesses of foreign courts, we have made ourselves acquainted with the politics of nature, and observed how wonderfully, how mysteriously, that great projectress acts. In this place she rears a vast trunk, and unfolds a multiplicity of branches from one small berry. She qualifies, by her amazing operations, a few contemptible acorns, that were formerly carried in a child's lap, to bear the British thunder round the globe, and secure to our island the sovereignty of the ocean. In another place she produces, from a dry grain, "first the green blade; then the turgid ear; afterwards the full grown and ripened corn in the ear," Mark iv. 28; repaying, with exact punctuality, and with lavish usury, the husbandman's toil, and the husbandman's loan; causing, by a most surprising resurrection, the death of one seed to be fruitful in the birth of hundreds.

But I forget your caution, Aspasio; forget how kindly you have checked me, when I have been haranguing upon, I know not what, powers and works of nature; whereas it is God who "worketh hitherto," John v. 17, who to this day exerts, and to the end of time will exert, that secret but unremitted energy, which is the life of this majestic system, and the cause of all its stupendous operations. Let this show you how much I want my guide, my philosopher, and friend. Without his prompting aid, my genius is dull, my reflections are awkward; and my religious improvements jejune; somewhat like the bungling imitations of the tool, compared with the masterly effects of vegetation. However, I will proceed; yet not from any view of informing my Aspasio, but only to draw a bill upon his pen, and lay him under an obligation to enrich me with another letter upon the grand and excellent subject of his last.

Art is dim-sighted in her plans, and defective even in her most elaborate essays. But Nature, or rather Nature's sublime Author, is indeed a designer, and "a workman that need not be ashamed." 2 Tim. ii. 15. His eye strikes out ten thousand elegant models, and his touch executes all with inimitable perfection. What an admirable specimen is here of the divine skill and of the divine goodness! This terraqueous globe is intended not only for a place of habitation, but for a storehouse of conveniences. If we examine the several apartments of our great abode, if we take a general inventory of our common goods, we shall find the utmost reason to be charmed with the displays, both of nice economy, and of boundless profusion.

Observe the surface of this universal messuage. The ground, coarse as it may seem, and trodden by every foot, is nevertheless the laboratory where the most exquisite operations are performed; the shop, if I may so speak, where the finest manufactures are wrought. Though a multitude of generations have always been accommodated, and though a multitude of nations are daily supplied by its liberalities, it still continues inexhausted—is a resource that never fails, a magazine never to be drained.

The unevenness of the ground, far from being a blemish or a defect, heightens its beauty, and augments its usefulness. Here it is scooped into deep and sheltered vales, almost constantly covered with a spontaneous growth of verdure, which, all tender and succulent, composes an easy couch, and yields the most agreeable fodder for the various tribes of cattle. There it is extended into a wide, open, champaign country, which, annually replenished with the husbandman's seed, shoots into a copious harvest; a harvest, not only of that principal wheat which is the staff of our life, and strengthens our heart, but of the "appointed barley," Isaiah xxviii. 25, and various other sorts of grain, which yield an excellent food for our animals, and either enable them to despatch our drudgery, or else fatten their flesh for our tables.

The furrows, obedient to the will of man, vary their produce. They bring forth a crop of tall, flexile, slender plants,* whose thin filmy coat, dried, attenuated, and skillfully manufactured, transforms itself into some of the most necessary accommodations of life, and genteelest embellishments of society. It is wove into ample volumes of cloth, which, fixed to the mast, gives wings to our ships, and wafts them to the extremities of the ocean. It is twisted into vast lengths of cordage, which add nerves to the crane, and lend sinews to the pulley; or else, adhering to the anchor, they fasten the vessel even on the fluctuating element, and secure its station even amidst driving tempests. It furnishes the duchess with her costly head-dress, and delicately fine ruffles. No less strong than neat, it supplies the ploughman with his coarse frock, and the sailor with his clumsy trowsers. Its fibres, artfully arranged by the operations of the loom, cover our tables with a graceful elegance, and surround our bodies with a cher-

* Flax and hemp.

ishing warmth. On this the painter spreads the colours which enchant the eye; in this the merchant packs the wares which enrich the world.

Yonder the hills, like a grand amphitheatre, arise. Amphitheatre! All the pompous works of Roman magnificence are less than mole-banks, are mere cockle-shells, compared with those majestic elevations of the earth. Some clad with mantling vines; some crowned with towering cedars; some ragged with misshapen rocks, or yawning with subterraneous dens, whose rough and inaccessible crags, whose hideous and gloomy cavities, are not only a continual refuge for the wild goats, but have often proved an asylum to persecuted merit,* and a safeguard to the most valuable lives.

At a greater distance, the mountains lift their frozen brows, or penetrate the clouds with their aspiring peaks. Their frozen brows arrest the roving, and condense the rarified vapours. Their caverned bowels collect the dripping treasures, and send them abroad in gradual communications by trickling springs; while their steep sides precipitate the watery stores, rolling them on with such a forcible impulse,† that they never intermit their unwearied course till they have swept through the most extensive climes, and regained their native seas.

The vineyard swells into a profusion of clusters, some tinged with the deepest purple, and delicately clouded with azure; some clad with a whitish transparent skin, which shows the tempting kernels, lodged in luscious nectar. The vine requires a strong reflection of the sunbeams, and a very large proportion of warmth. How commodiously do the hills and mountains minister to this purpose! May we not call those vast declivities the garden-walls of nature? which, far more effectually than the most costly glasses, or most artful green-houses, concentrate the solar heat, and complete the maturity of the grape, distending it with liquor of the finest scent, the most agreeable relish, and the most exalted qualities‡ such as dissipate sadness, and inspire vivacity; such as make glad the heart of man, and most sweetly prompt both his gratitude and his duty to the munificent Giver. I grieve and I blush for my fellow-creatures, that any should abuse this indulgence of heaven, that any should turn so valuable a gift of God into an instrument of sin—turn the most exhilarating of cordials into poison, madness, and death.

The kitchen-garden presents us with a new train of benefits. In its blooming ornaments, what unaffected beauty! In its culinary productions, what diversified riches! It ripens a multitude of nutrimental esculents, and almost an equal abundance of medicinal herbs, distributing refreshments to the healthy and administering remedies to the sick. The orchard, all fair and ruddy, and bowing down beneath its own delicious burden, gives us a fresh demonstration of our Creator's kindness; regales us first with all the delicacies of summer-fruits; next, with the more lasting succession of autumnal dainties.

What is nature but a series of wonders, and a fund of delights! That such a variety of fruits, so beautifully coloured, so elegantly shaped, and so charmingly flavoured, should arise from the earth, than which nothing is more insipid, sordid, and despicable, I am struck with pleasing astonishment at the cause of these fine effects, and no less surprised at the manner of bringing them into existence. I take a walk in my garden, or a turn through my orchard, in the month of December: There stand several logs of wood fastened to the ground. They are erect, indeed, and shapely, but without either sense or motion: No human hand will touch them, no human aid will succour them; yet, in a little time they are beautified with blossoms, they are covered with leaves, and at last are loaded with mellow treasures, with the downy peach and the polished plumb; with the musky apicrot, and the juicy pear, with the cherry, and its coral pendents, glowing through lattices of green;

> ——and dark
> Beneath her ample leaf, the luscious fig.

I have wondered at the structure of my watch; wondered more at the description of the silk-mills; most of all at the account of those prodigious engines invented by Archimedes. But what are all the inventions of all the geometricians and mechanics in the world, compared with these inconceivably nice automata* of nature! These self-operating machines despatch their business with a punctuality that never mistakes, with

* To David from Saul's malice; to Elijah from Jezebel's vengeance; to many of the primitive Christians from the rage of persecuting emperors; "They wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth." Heb. xi. 38.

† It is observed, that the largest rivers in the world, those which roll the heaviest burden of waters, and perform the most extensive circuit through the nations, generally take their rise from the mountains. The Rhine, the Rhone, and the Po, all descend from the Alps. The Tigris derives its rapid flood from the everlasting snows and steep ridges of Niphates. And to mention no more instances, the river Amazones, which pours itself through a multitude of provinces, and waters near eighteen hundred leagues of land, has its urn in the caverns, and its impetus from the precipices of that immense range of hills, the Andes.

If the reader is inclined to see the origin and formation of rivers described in all the sublimity of diction, and with all the graces of poetry, he may find this entertainment in Mr. Thomson's autumn, line 781, last edit.

> Amazing Scene! behold the glooms disclose,
> I see the rivers in their infant beds!
> Deep, deep I hear them, lab'ring to get free, &c.

* *Automata*, or self-operating machines; not meant to set aside the superintendency of Providence, but only to exclude the co-operation of man.

a dexterity that cannot be equalled. In spring they clothe themselves with such unstudied, but exquisite finery, as far exceeds the embroidery of the needle, or the labours of the loom. In autumn, they present us with such a collation of sweetmeats, and such blandishments of taste, as surpass all that the most critical luxury could prepare, or the most lavish fancy imagine. So that those coarse and senseless logs first decorate the divine creation, then perform the honours of the table.

If, amidst these ordinary productions of the earth, God appears so "great in counsel, and mighty in work," Jer. xxxii. 19, what may we expect to see in the palaces of heaven, in the hierarchies of angels, and in that wonderful Redeemer who is, beyond all other objects, beyond all other manifestations, the "wisdom of God, and the power of God?" 1 Cor. i. 24.

The forest rears myriads of massy bodies, which, though neither gay with blossoms, nor rich with fruit, supply us with timber of various kinds, and of every desirable quality. But who shall cultivate such huge trees, diffused over so vast a space? The toil were endless. See, therefore, the all-wise and ever-gracious ordination of Providence. They are so constituted, that they have no need of the spade and the pruning-knife. Nay, the little cares of man would diminish, rather than augment their dignity and their usefulness. The more they are neglected, the better they thrive, the more wildly grand and magnificent they grow.

When felled by the axe, they are sawed into beams, and sustain the roofs of our houses; they are fashioned into carriages, and serve for the conveyance of the heaviest loads. Their substance so pliant, that they yield to the chisel of the turner, and are smoothed by the plane of the joiner; are wrought into the nicest diminutions of shape, and compose some of the finest branches of household furniture. Their texture so solid, that they form the most important parts of those mighty engines which, adapting themselves to the play of mechanic powers, despatch more work in a single hour than could otherwise be accomplished in many days. At the same time, their pressure is so light that they float upon the waters, and glide along the surface, almost with as much agility as the finny fry glance through the deep. Thus, while they impart magnificence to architecture, and bestow numberless conveniencies on the family, they constitute the very basis of navigation, and give expedition, give being, to commerce.

Amidst the inaccessible depths of the forests, a habitation is assigned for those ravenous beasts, whose appearance would be frightful, and their neighbourhood dangerous to mankind. Here the sternly majestic lion rouses himself from his den, stalks through the midnight shades, and awes the savage herd with his roar. Here the fiery tiger springs upon his prey, and the gloomy bear trains up her whelps. Here the swift leopard ranges, and the grim wolf prowls, and both in quest of murder and blood. Were these horrid animals to dwell in our fields, what havoc would they make? what consternation would they spread? But they voluntarily bury themselves in the deepest recesses of the desert; while the ox, the horse, and the serviceable quadrupeds, live under our inspection, and keep within our call; profiting us as much by their presence, as the others oblige us by their absence.

If at any time those shaggy monsters make an excursion into the habitable world, it is when man retires to his chamber, and sleeps in security. The sun, which invites other creatures abroad, gives them the signal to retreat. "The sun ariseth, and they get them away, and lay them down in their dens." Psalm civ. 22. Strange! that the orient light, which is so pleasing to us, should strike such terror on them! should, more effectually than a legion of guards, put them all to flight, and clear the country of those formidable enemies!

If we turn our thoughts to the atmosphere, we find a most curious and exquisite apparatus of air, which, because no object of our sight, is seldom observed, and little regarded; yet is a source of innumerable advantages; and all these advantages (which is almost incredible) are fetched from the very jaws of ruin. My meaning may be obscure, therefore I explain myself.

We live plunged, if I may so speak, in an ocean of air, whose pressure, upon a person of moderate size, is equal to the weight of twenty thousand pounds. Tremendous consideration! Should the ceiling of a room, or the roof of a house, fall upon us with half that force, what destructive effects must ensue! Such a force would infallibly drive the breath from our lungs, or break every bone in our bodies. Yet so admirably has the divine wisdom contrived this aerial fluid, and so nicely counterpoised its dreadful power, that we receive not the slightest hurt—we suffer no manner of inconvenience—we even enjoy the load. Instead of being as a mountain on our loins, it is like wings to our feet, or like sinews to our limbs. Is not this common ordination of Providence, thus considered, somewhat like the miracle of the burning bush, whose tender and combustible substance, though in the midst of flames, was neither consumed nor injured? Exod. iii. 2. Is it not almost as marvellous as the prodigy of the three Hebrew youths, who walked in the fiery furnace without having a hair of their heads

singed, or so much as the smell of fire passing on their garments? Dan. iii. 27. Surely we have reason to say unto God, "O! how terrible," yet how beneficent, "art thou in thy works."

The air, though too weak to support our flight, is a thoroughfare for innumerable wings. Here the whole commonwealth of birds take up their abode. Here they lodge and expatiate beyond the reach of their adversaries. Were they to run upon the earth, they would be exposed to ten thousand dangers, without proper strength to resist them, or sufficient speed to escape them; whereas, by mounting the skies, and "lifting themselves up on high, they are secure from peril; they scorn the horse and his rider." Job xxxix. 18. Some of them perching upon the boughs, others soaring amidst the firmament, entertain us with their notes; which are musical and agreeable when heard at this convenient distance, but would be noisy and importunate, if brought nearer to our ears. Here many of those feathered families reside, which yield us a delicious treat, yet give us no trouble, put us to no expense, and, till the moment we want them, are wholly out of our way.

The air, commissioned by its all-bountiful Author, charges itself with the administration of several offices, which are perfectly obliging, and no less serviceable to mankind. Co-operating with our lungs, it ventilates the blood, and refines our fluids. It qualifies and attempers the vital warmth, promotes and exalts the animal secretions. Many days we might live, or even whole months, without the light of the sun, or the glimmering of a star; whereas, if we are deprived, only for a few minutes, of this aerial support, we sicken, we faint, we die. The same universal nurse has a considerable share in cherishing the several tribes of plants. It helps to transfuse vegetable vigour into the trunk of the oak, and a blooming gaiety into the spread of the rose.

The air undertakes to convey to our nostrils the extremely subtile effluvia which transpire from odoriferous bodies. Those detached particles are so imperceptibly small, that they would elude the most careful hand, or escape the nicest eye. But this trusty depositary receives and escorts the invisible vagrants, without losing so much as a single atom: entertaining us, by this means, with the delightful sensations which arise from the fragrance of flowers; and admonishing us, by the transmission of the offensive smells, to withdraw from an unwholesome situation, or beware of any pernicious food.

The air, by its undulating motion, conducts to our ear all the diversities of sound, and thereby discharges the duty of a most seasonable and faithful monitor. As I walk across the streets of London, with my eye engaged on other objects, a dray, perhaps, with all its load, is driving down directly upon me; or, as I ride along the road, musing and unapprehensive, a chariot and six is whirling on, with a rapid career, at the heels of my horse. The air, like a vigilant friend in pain for my welfare, immediately takes the alarm; and, while the danger is at a considerable distance, despatches a courier to advertise me of the approaching mischief. It even thunders in my ear; and with a clamorous but kind importunity, urges to be upon my guard, and provide for my safety.

The air wafts to our sense the modulations of music, and the more agreeable entertainments of refined conversation. When Myrtilla strikes the silver strings, and teaches the willing harpsicord to warble with her Creator's praise; when her sacred sonata warms the heart with devotion, and wings our desire to heaven:—when Cleora tunes her song, or the nightingale imitates her enchanting voice; when she heightens every melodious note with her adored Redeemer's name; and so smooths her charming tones, so breathes her rapturous soul, "that God's own ear listens delighted:" when wisdom takes its seat on Mitio's tongue, and flows in perspicuous periods and instructive truths, amidst the chosen circle of his acquaintance;—when benevolence, associated with persuasion, dwell on Nicander's lips, and plead the cause of injured innocence or oppressed virtue:—when goodness, leagued with happiness, accompany Eusebius into the pulpit, and reclaim the libertine from the slavery of his vices, disengage the infidel from the fascination of his prejudices, and so affectionately, so pathetically invite the whole audience to partake the unequalled joys of pure religion;—in all these cases, the air distributes every musical variation with the utmost exactness, and delivers the speaker's message with the most punctual fidelity! Whereas without this internuncio, all would be sullen and unmeaning silence. We should lose both the pleasure and the profit; neither be charmed with the harmonious, nor improved by the articulate accents.

The breezes of the air, when vague and unconfined, are so very gentle, that they sport with the most inoffensive wantonness amidst Ophelia's locks, and scarce disajust a single curl. But, when collected and applied by the contrivance of man, they act with such prodigious force, as is sufficient to whirl round the hugest wheels, though clogged with the most encumbering loads; They make the ponderous millstones move as swiftly as the dancer's heel, and the massy beams play as nimbly as the musician's finger.

If we climb in speculation the higher re-

gions, we find an endless succession of clouds, fed by evaporations from the ocean. The clouds themselves are a kind of ocean, suspended in the air with amazing skill. They travel in detached parties, and in the quality of itinerant cisterns, round all the terrestrial globe. They fructify, by proper communications of moisture, the spacious pastures of the wealthy, and gladden, with no less liberal showers, the cottager's little spot. Nay, so condescending is the benignity of their great Proprietor, that they "satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and cause, even in the most uncultivated wilds, the bud of the tender herb to spring forth," Job xxxviii. 27, that the natives of the lonely desert, those savage herds which know no master's stall, may nevertheless experience the care, and rejoice in the bounty of an all-supporting parent.

How wonderful! that the water, which is much denser and far heavier than the air, should rise into it, make its way through it, and take a station in the very uppermost regions of it! This, one would imagine, were almost as impossible as for the rivers to run back to their source. Yet Providence has contrived a way to render it not only practicable, but matter of continual occurrence.

How wonderful! that pendent lakes should be diffused, or fluent mountains heaped over our heads; and both sustained in the thinnest parts of the atmosphere? We little think of that surprising expedient, which, without conduits of stone, or vessels of brass, keeps such loads of water in a buoyant state. Job and Elihu considered this, and were struck with holy admiration. "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?" how such ponderous bodies are made to hang with an even poise, and hover like the lightest down? "These are the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge," Job xxxvii. 16. "He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud," though nothing is more loose and fluid, becomes, by his almighty order, strong and tenacious as casks of iron: it "is not rent," Job xxvi. 8, under all the weight.

When the sluices are opened, and the waters descend, we might reasonably suspect that they should burst forth in cataracts, or pour out themselves in torrents. Whereas, instead of such a disorderly and precipitate effusion, which would be infinitely pernicious, they coalesce into globules, and are dispensed in gentle showers. They are often attenuated into the smallness of a hair,* they spread themselves, as if they were strained through the orifices of the finest watering-pot, and form those "small drops of rain, which the clouds distil upon man abundantly," Job xxxvi. 28. Thus, instead of drowning the earth, and sweeping away its fruits, they cherish universal nature, and in conformity to the practice of their great Master, distribute their humid stores to men, to animals and vegetables, "as they are able to bear them," Mark iv. 33.

Besides the reservoirs of water, here are cantoned various parts of winds, mild or fierce, gentle or boisterous, furnished with breezy wings, to fan the glowing firmament, and diffuse refreshment on a fainting world; or else fitted to act as an universal besom, and, by sweeping the chambers of the atmosphere, to preserve the fine aerial fluid free from feculencies. Without this wholesome agency of the winds, the air would stagnate, become putrid, and surround us, in the literal sense of the words, "with darkness that might be felt." Exod. x. 21. London, Paris, and all the great cities in the world, instead of being the seats of elegance, would degenerate into sinks of corruption.

At sea, the winds swell the mariner's sails, and speed his course along the watery way; speed it far more effectually than a thousand rowers, bending to their strokes, and tugging at the oar. By land, they perform the office of an immense seedman, and scatter abroad the reproductive principles of a multitude of plants, which, though the staff of life to many animals, are too small for the management, or too mean for the attention of man. "He bringeth the winds out of his treasuries," Psalm cxxxv. 7, is a very just observation, whether it relate to God's absolute and uncontrollable dominion over this most potent meteor, or to its welcome and salutary influence on all the face of nature.

Here are lightnings stationed. Though dormant at present, they are in act to spring, and launch the livid flame, whenever their piercing flash is necessary to destroy the sulphureous vapours, or dislodge any other noxious matter which might be prejudicial to the delicate temperature of the ether, and obscure its more crystalline transparency.

Above all is situate a radiant and majestic orb, which enlightens the tracts, cheers the inhabitants, and colours all the productions of this habitable globe. While the air, by a singular address in managing the rays, amplifies their usefulness, its reflecting power* augments that heat, which is the life of

* The Hebrew words, which convey the idea of gentle rain, signify a portion of water, made small as a hair, or divided into millions of parts, Deut. xxxii. 2.

* The air is a curious cover, which, without oppressing the inhabitants of the earth with any perceivable weight, confines, reflects, and thereby increases the vivifying heat of the sun. The air increases this kindly heat, much in the same manner as our garments by day, or bedclothes by night, give

nature, its refracting power prolongs that splendour which is the beauty of the creation. These emanations of light, though formed of inactive matter, yet (astonishing apparatus of almighty wisdom!) are refined almost to the subtilty of spirit, and are scarce inferior even to thought in speed. By which means they spread themselves, with a kind of instantaneous swiftness, through the circumference of a whole hemisphere; and though they fill, wherever they pervade, yet they straiten no place, embarrass no one, encumber nothing.

These give the diamond its brilliancy, and the velvet its gloss: to these, the cheerful eye is obliged for its lively sparkle, and the modest cheek for its rosy blush. These, attending the judicious touches of the pencil, bid the drapery flow, and the embodied figure arise; bid the countenance wear the calm serenity of thought, or be agitated with the wild transports of passion.—Without this circumstance of colour, we should want all the entertainments of vision, and be at a loss to distinguish one thing from another. We should hesitate to pronounce, and must take a little journey to determine, whether yonder enclosure contains a piece of pasturage, or a plot of arable land. We should question, and could not very expeditiously resolve, whether the next person we meet be a soldier in his regimentals, or a swain in his holiday-suit; a bride in her ornaments, or a widow in her weeds. But colour, like a particular livery, characterises the class to which every individual belongs. It is the label which indicates, upon the first inspection, its respective quality. It is the ticket which guides our choice, and directs our hand.*

We have cursorily surveyed the upper rooms of our great habitation, and taken a turn along the ground-floor; if we descend into the subterraneous lodgments, the cellars of the stately structure, we shall there also find the most exquisite contrivance acting in concert with the most profuse goodness. Here are various minerals of sovereign efficacy in medicine, which rectify the vitiated blood, and quicken the languid spirits; which often rekindle the fading bloom in the virgin's complexion, and re-invigorate the enfeebled arm of manhood. Here are beds fraught with metals of the richest value: From hence come the golden treasures, from hence the silver ores, which are the very life of traffic, and circulate through the body politic as the vital fluid through the animal frame, which, in the refining hand of charity, are feet to the lame, and eyes to the blind, and make the widow's heart sing for joy. Here are mines, which yield a metal of meaner aspect, but of a firmer cohesion, and of superior usefulness: A metal that constitutes almost all the implements with which art executes her various designs. Without the assistance of iron, trade would be reduced to the lowest ebb; commerce would feel her wings clipped, and every species of mechanic skill either utterly fail, or be miserably baffled. Without the assistance of iron, it would be almost impossible to rear the steady mast, to display the daring canvass, or drop the faithful anchor. Destitute of this ever-needful commodity, we should have no plough to furrow the soil, no shuttle to traverse the loom, scarce any ornament for polite, or any utensil for ordinary life.

Here is an inexhaustible fund of combustible materials,* which supply the whole nation with fuel. These present their ministrations in the kitchen; and yielding themselves as aliment to the flame, render our food both palatable and healthy. These offer their service at the forge, and with their piercing heat molify the most stubborn bars, till they become pliant to the stroke of the hammer. The coals pour themselves likewise into the glass-houses: They rage, amidst those astonishing furnaces with irresistible but useful fierceness. They liquefy even the obdurate flint, and make the most rigid substances far more ductile than the softest clay, or the melting wax; make them obsequious, not only to the lightest touch, but to the impressions of our very breath.

By this means we are furnished, and from

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additional warmth to our bodies. Whereas, when the aerial vestment grows thin, or, to speak more philosophically, when the air becomes less in quantity, and more attenuated in quality, the solar warmth is very sensibly diminished. Travellers on the lofty mountains of America sometimes experience, to their terrible cost, the truth of this observation. Though the clime, at the foot of those prodigious hills, is hot and sultry, yet, on their summits, the cold rages with such excessive severity, that it is no unusual calamity, for the horse and his rider to be frozen to death. We have, therefore, great reason to bless the Supreme Disposer of things, for placing us in the commodious concavity, or rather, under the cherishing wings of an atmosphere.

* This, I believe, suggests the true sense of those noble metaphors used by the divine speaker: "It is turned as clay to the seal, and they stand as a garment;"—It, the earth and all its productions, receive from the rising sun both colour and beauty; just as the soft clay and the melting wax receive an elegant impression from the seal.—"They (the morning and the day-spring, mentioned in a preceding verse,) stand as a garment;" they act the part of a magnificent and universal clothing: give all visible objects their comely aspect and graceful distinctions. Job xxxviii. 14.

What bold and fine images are here. The sea had been described as an infant, changeable, froward, and impetuous, with thick darkness for its swaddling-band. The light is represented as an handmaid, attending to dress the creation; and executing the Creator's orders, with a punctuality that never fails, with a speed that cannot be equalled.

* As for the earth, says Job, out of it cometh bread-corn, vegetables, and whatever is good for food, spring from its surface. While under it is turned up as it were fire; its lower parts, its deeper strata, yield combustible materials, which are easily enkindled into fire, and administer the most substantial fuel for the flame. Job xxviii. 5.

the coarsest ingredients, with the most curious, beautiful, and serviceable manufacture in the world: A manufacture which transmits the light and warmth of the sun into our houses; yet excludes the annoyance of the rains, and violence of the winds. Which gives new eyes to decrepit age, and vastly more enlarged views to philosophy and science; which leads up the astronomer's discernment even to the satelites of Saturn, and carries down the naturalist's observation as far as the animalcule race; bringing near what is immensely remote, and making visible what, to our unassisted sight, would be absolutely imperceptible.

We have also, when the sun withdraws his shining, an expedient to supply his place. We can create an artificial day in our rooms, and prolong our studies, or pursue our business, under its cheering influence. With beaming tapers and ruddy fires, we chase the darkness, and mitigate the cold; we cherish conversation, and cultivate the social spirit. We render those very intervals of time some of the most delightful portions of our life, which otherwise would be a joyless and unimproving void.

These obscure caverns are the birth-place of the most sparkling gems; which, when nicely polished, and prodigal of their lustre, stand candidates for a place on the royal crown, or a seat on the virtuous fair one's breast; and, I will not with our men of gallantry say, emulate the living brilliancy of her eyes, but serve as a foil to set off the loveliness and excellency of her accomplished mind, and amiable conversation; "whose price," according to the unerring estimate of inspiration, is superior to sapphires, "is far above rubies," Prov. xxxi. 10.

Here are quarries stocked with stones, inferior in beauty to the jeweller's ware, but much more eminently beneficial; which, when properly ranged, and cemented with a tenacious mortar, form the convenient abodes of peace, and build the strongest fortifications of war; defending us from the inclemencies of the weather, and the more formidable assaults of our enemies. These constitute the arches of the bridge which convey the traveller, with perfect security, over the deep and rapid stream. These strengthen the arms, the stupendous arms, of the mole; which stretch themselves far into the ocean, break the impetuosity of the surge, and screen the bark from tempestuous seas. These stony treasures are comparatively soft, while they continue in the bowels of the earth, but acquire an increasing hardness when exposed to the open air. Was this remarkable peculiarity reversed, what difficulties would attend the labours of the mason? His materials could not be extracted from their bed, nor fashioned for his purpose, without infinite toil. Were his work completed, it could not long withstand the fury of the elements; but, insensibly mouldering, or incessantly decaying, would elude the expectations of the owner; perhaps might prove an immature grave, instead of a durable dwelling.

Here are various assortments or vast layers of clay; which, however contemptible in its appearance, is abundantly more advantageous than the rocks of diamond, or the veins of gold. This is moulded, with great expedition and ease, into vessels of any shape, and of almost every size. Some so delicately fine, that they compose the most elegant and ornamental furniture for the tea-table of a princess. Others so remarkably cheap, that they are ranged on the shelves, and minister at the meals of the poorest peasant. All so perfectly neat, that no liquid takes the least taint, nor the nicest palate any disgust, from their cleanly services.

A multiplicity of other valuable stores are locked up by Providence, in those ample vaults. The key of all is committed to the management of industry; with free permission to produce each particular species, as necessity shall demand, or prudence direct.

Which shall we most admire—the bountiful heart, the liberal hand, or the all-discerning eye of our great Creator? How observable and admirable is his precaution, in removing these useful but cumbrous wares from the superficies; and stowing them in proper repositories, beneath the ground? Were they scattered over the surface of the soil, the earth would be embarrassed with the enormous load; our roads would be blocked up, and scarce any portion left free for the operations of husbandry. Were they buried extremely deep, or sunk to the centre of the globe, it would cost us immense pains to procure them; or rather they would be quite inaccessible. Were they uniformly spread into a pavement for nature, the trees could not strike their roots, nor the herbs shoot their blades, but universal sterility must ensue. Whereas, by their present disposition, they furnish us with a magazine of metallic, without causing any diminution of our vegetable, treasures. Fossils of every splendid and serviceable kind enrich the bowels, while bloom and verdure embellish the face of the earth.

So judicious is the arrangement of this grand edifice; so beneficent the destination of its whole furniture!* in which all is regulated with consummate skill, and touched into the highest perfection! All most

* No notice is taken of the ocean, in this little rent-roll of nature's wealth; because a distinct sketch is given of that grand receptacle, and its principal services, in Letter IX.

exactly adapted to the various intentions of Providence, and the manifold exigencies of mankind; to supply every want we can feel, and gratify every wish we can form.

Insomuch that the whole system affords a favourite and exalted topic of praise, even to those distinguished beings who "stand on the sea of glass, and have the harps of God in their hands." They lift up their voice and sing, "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty,"* Rev. xv. 3. And is there not reason, my Aspasio would say, infinite reason for us to join this triumphant choir, and add gratitude to our wonder, love to our hallelujahs; since all these things are to us, not merely objects of contemplation, but sources of accommodation; not only a majestic spectacle, bright with the display of our Creator's wisdom, but an inestimable gift, rich with the emanations of his goodness? The earth hath he set before the inhabitants of glory, "but the earth hath he given to the children of men," Psal. cxv. 16. Having given us ourselves, given us a world; has he not a right, most unquestionable and unrivalled right, to make that tender demand, "My son, give me thy heart? Prov. xxiii. 26.

Shall I add another passage, which, viewed with any but the last paragraph, will be like the head of gold, eminent and conspicuous, on feet of iron and clay? It is taken from the finest philosophical oration that ever was made. I never read it but with a glow of delight, and with impressions of awe. It is, in short, inimitably spirited and sublime. You think, perhaps, I act an impolitic part in being so lavish of my praise; and that the quotation must suffer by such an aggrandizing introduction. But I am under no apprehensions of this kind: Forbear to be delighted, if you can; cease to admire, if you can; when you hear Omniscience itself declaring, that on the sight of this universal fabric emerging out of nothing, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," Job xxxviii. 7. The system was so graceful, so magnificent, and in all respects so exquisitely finished, that the most exalted intelligences were charmed, were transported. They knew not how to express themselves on the great occasion, but in shouts of exultation and songs of praise. Is it possible for imagination to conceive an encomium so just, so high, so beautifully noble?—I am sure, after so much delicacy and majesty of sentiment, any thing of mine must be intolerably flat; unless you will except this one profession, that I am, with the most cordial sincerity, my dear Aspasio, inviolably yours, THERON.

* "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!"—The first part seems to mean, what the inspired writer calls, The song of Moses. The second contains what he styles, The song of the Lamb. The first, I should imagine, relates to the stupendous works of creation. The second alludes to the far more wonderful scheme of redemption. The former, describing the system of nature, is recorded by Moses; the latter, comprehending the salvation of the saints, is accomplished by Christ.

LETTER VII.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

MY DEAR THERON,—If you write with such a view, and from such a motive, as are mentioned in your last, expect no more free-will offerings from my pen. In this one instance I shall think it my duty to be covetous. I shall act the miser out of principle; and hardly persuade myself to part with a single line, till it is become an undeniable debt. I must turn your own artifice on yourself, and lay you under a necessity of obliging, entertaining, and edifying me by your correspondence.

For, give me leave to assure you, that I am always delighted, and always improved by your epistles. They show me a multitude of beauties in the creation which I should not otherwise have discerned. They point out the infinite power, the unsearchable wisdom, and the charmingly rich goodness of the glorious Maker. Such a philosophy turns all nature into a school of instruction, and is an excellent handmaid to true religion. It makes every object a step, better than a golden step, to raise both our knowledge and our affections to the adorable and immortal Cause of all.

While I am roving heedlessly along, your remarks often interpose, like some intelligent faithful monitor who claps his hand upon my breast, and says, Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God," Job xxxvii. 14. Willingly I obey the admonition: the Christian may, with peculiar complacency, consider this grand magazine of wonders, this copious store-house of blessings, and, conscious of an interest in Jesus, has a right to call them all "his own," I Cor. iii. 2. He may look round upon present things, look forward unto future things, and, trusting in his Saviour's merit, may confidently say—"Not one only, but both these worlds are mine. By virtue of my Redeemer's righteousness, I possess the necessary accommodations of this life; and, on the same unshaken footing, I stand entitled to the inconceivable felicity of a better."

Surely then, it will be as pleasing an employ, and as important a search, to examine the validity of our title to future things, as

to estimate the value of our present possessions: You have executed the one, let me attempt the other: You have surveyed material nature. It appears to be a fair and stately mansion, void of all defect; and, for the purposes which it is intended to answer, completely finished. Is not our Saviour's obedience, the provision made for indigent and guilty souls, equally rich, and equally perfect? Since this is everlasting and immutable; since the other is transient and perishable; doubtless we may argue with the judicious apostle; If "that which is to be done away," which will soon be consigned over to dissolution, "is glorious; much more that which remaineth," whose blessed effects continue to eternal ages, "is glorious," 2 Cor. iii. 11.

We are every one "as an unclean thing," Isa. lxiv. 6. Our very nature is contaminated. Even sanctification, though it destroys the reigning, does not wholly supersede the polluting power of iniquity; so that, whatever graces we exercise, whatever duties we perform (like the rays of light transmitted through coloured glass, or like generous wine streaming from a defiled cask,) they receive some improper tinge, or contract some debasing taint. But Christ was entirely free from this innate contagion. He had no erroneous apprehensions in his mind, no corrupt bias upon his will, nor any irregular concupiscence in his affections.

Being thus perfectly undefiled, "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," 1 Pet. ii. 22. All his thoughts were innocent, all his words were irreproachable, and every action blameless. The most accomplished among the children of men, when surprised in some unguarded moment, or assaulted on some weak side, have been betrayed into error, or hurried into sin. Even Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips, and Aaron, the saint of the Lord, warped to idolatrous practices. They were like some stagnating lake, in which, the dregs being subsided, the waters appear clean; but when stirred by temptation, or agitated by affliction, the sediment rises, and the pool is discoloured. Whereas Christ may be compared to a fountain that is all transparency, and pure to the very bottom; which, however shaken, however disturbed, is nothing but fluid crystal, permanently and invariably clear.

It was a small thing for the blessed Jesus to have no depraved propensity: he was born in a state of consummate rectitude, and adorned with all the beauties of holiness. "Holiness to the Lord" was inscribed, not on the mitre, but on the heart of our great High-Priest: Therefore he is styled, by the angelic harbinger of his birth, "That Holy Thing," Luke i. 35.* In the prophecy of Zechariah, the dignity of our Redeemer's nature, and the perfection of his obedience, are displayed by the similitude of a stone,* adorned with exquisite engraving, wrought not by Bezaleel or Aholiab, though divinely inspired artists, but by the finger of Jehovah himself; and more highly finished than it is possible for human skill to equal, or human thought to conceive.

The whole tenor of our Lord's conduct was a living exemplification of piety and morality, in their most extensive branches and most amiable forms. Saints of the highest attainments have fallen short of the glory of God; have been far from reaching the exalted standard of his precepts: But Christ failed in no point, came short in no degree. We formerly observed the great sublimity and vast extent of the divine law; from whence appears the extreme difficulty, nay the utter impossibility of our justification on account of any duties performed by ourselves. How should we rejoice then to contemplate the vicarious righteousness of our condescending and adorable Surety! As the mercy-seat was exactly commensurate to the dimensions of the ark, so did our Lord's obedience most fully quadrate with all and every demand of the divine law. It flowed from those best of principles—supreme love to God, and unfeigned affection to mankind.

From these two capital sources, let us trace our Lord's obedience through some little part of its illustrious progress. His delight in God was conspicuous, even from his early years. The sacred solemnities of the sanctuary were more engaging to his youthful mind, than all the entertainments of a festival. When he entered upon his ministry, whole nights were not too long for his copious devotions. The lonely retirements of the desert, as affording opportunity for undisturbed communion with God, were more desirable to Christ than the applauses of an admiring world.

So ceaseless and transcendent was his love to God, that he never sought any separate pleasure of his own, but always did those things which were pleasing in his Father's sight. His own will was entirely absorbed in the will of the Most High, and "it was his meat and drink," refreshing and delightful as the richest food, or as royal dain-

* Which is spoken in contradistinction to the state of all other births, and implies the universal prevalence of original corruption, this one instance only excepted. For, if other infants were holy at their first formation, and made after the image of God, this remark had been trivial and impertinent, if not droll and burlesque; like saying with great solemnity "The child shall have a mouth and a head; aye, and eyes in the one, and lips to the other."

* Zech. iii. 9. Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

ties, "to finish the work that was given him to do." John iv. 34.

So entirely devoted to the honour of God, that a zeal for his house, and for the purity of his ordinances, is represented by the evangelical historian, as "eating him up." John ii. 17. Like a heavenly flame glowing in his breast, it sometimes fired him with a graceful indignation, sometimes melted him into godly sorrow, and, by exerting itself in a variety of vigorous efforts, consumed his vital spirits.

So active and unremitted was the obedience of the blessed Jesus, that the sun did not enter upon his race with a more constant assiduity, nor despatch his business with greater expedition; and sure I am, that radiant luminary never dispensed beams half so bright, or a thousandth part so beneficial. Short was his span, but how grand and extensive were his services! So grand, that they bring more glory to God than all the administrations of Providence, and all the phenomena of nature. So extensive, that they spread, in their gracious efficacy, to the ends of the earth, and to the closing period of time. Nay, they will diffuse their blessed influence even to the celestial world, and have no other limits of their duration than the ages of eternity.

Most affectionately concerned for the welfare of mankind, he spent his strength, not barely in relieving them when his aid was implored, but in seeking the afflicted, and offering his assistance. With great fatigue, John iv. 6, he travelled to remote cities; and with no less condescension he visited the meanest villages,—that all might have the benefit and comfort of his presence. Though multitudes of miserable objects were brought to him from every quarter, yet he was pleased even to prevent the wishes of the distressed, and "went about doing good."

He gave sight, and all the agreeable scenes of nature, to the blind; health, and all the choice comforts of life, to the diseased. He expelled malevolent raging demons, and restored, what is more precious than the light of the body, or the vigour of the constitution, the calm possession of the intellectual faculties. What greatly surpassed all the preceding blessings, he released the wretched soul from the dominion of darkness and from the tyranny of sin. He made his followers partakers of a divine nature, and prepared them for a state of never-ending bliss.

Such priceless treasures of wisdom and beneficence flowed from his tongue, and were poured from his hands! How different these triumphs of mercy, from the trophies erected by wild ambition in the bloody field! If heathens celebrated those mighty butchers who made cities their slaughter-house, made half the globe their shambles, and measured their merit by the devastations they spread, how should Christians admire this heavenly Benefactor, who rose upon a wretched world "with healing under his wings!" who distributed far and near the unspeakably rich gifts of knowledge and holiness, of temporal happiness and eternal joy!

Nor were these righteous acts his strange work, but his repeated, his hourly, his almost incessant employ. Sometimes we hear him preaching in the temple, or publishing his glad tidings in the synagogues. Sometimes we see him teaching in private houses, or bringing forth the good things of his gospel on the deck of a ship. At other times he takes a mountain for his pulpit; the heavens are his sounding-board; and "all that have ears to hear" are invited to be his audience. Does he lay aside this solemn office, it is only to carry on the same design in a more condescending and familiar manner.—If he meets with the Pharisees, he discovers their errors and reproves their vices; he confutes their objections, and (in case they are not absolutely inaccessible to wise counsel) rectifies their mistakes. If he vouchsafes to be present at a feast, he furnishes the richest, incomparably the richest part of the treat. "Honey and milk are under his tongue," Cant. iv. 11. He inculcates lowliness of mind on the vain, Luke xiv. 8. he recommends disinterested charity to the selfish, Luke xiv. 12; and promises pardon to the weeping penitent, Luke vii. 48. Is he retired from other company, and surrounded only by his chosen attendants? His conversation is a sermon. Whether he sit in the inner-chamber, or travel on the public road, or walk through the corn-fields, he is still prosecuting his great work, training up his disciples for their sacred function, and imparting to them what they may communicate to others. Is he retired from all company? Even then he does not discontinue his labours of love, but adds the fervent intercessions of the night to the charitable toils of the day. Yes; when all but himself lay sunk in soft repose, this Advocate for a guilty world was engaged in an exercise of benevolence, which, though secret and unobserved as the falling dews, was far more beneficial to our best interests, than those pearly drops to the languishing herbs.

Most charming and unparalleled benignity! He forgot his daily food, neglected his necessary rest, to spend and be spent for the salvation of mankind. Neither the hardships of continued self-denial, nor the calumnies of envenomed tongues, could divert him from pursuing this favourite business. He sought none of your honours, coveted none of your rewards, O ye children of men! What he sought, what he coveted

was to wear out his life in your service, and lay it down for your ransom. This was all his desire, and this, indeed, he desired earnestly. He longed (beneficent, blessed Being!) he longed, for the fatal hour. He severely rebuked one of his disciples who would have dissuaded him from going as a volunteer to the cross. He was even straitened,* under a kind of holy uneasiness, till the dreadful work was accomplished; till he was baptized with the baptism of his sufferings, bathed in blood and plunged in death.

By this most meritorious obedience and death, what did he not deserve? what did he not procure? He procured those inestimable blessings, the pardon of sin and reconciliation with God; procured them (O love unmerited and unmeasurable!) for prodigals, for traitors, for rebels! To this it is owing that we, who were enemies against God, may call the king of heaven our father, may have free access to him in all our difficulties; and may hope to reign with him in everlasting glory.

Was ever goodness like this goodness?† were ever blessings comparable to these blessings, or purchased with such a price? Hide, hide your diminished heads, ye little transitory donations of silver and gold. The riches of a thousand mines, bestowed to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, are the most contemptible trifles, if mentioned with the charity of the teaching, the healing, the bleeding Jesus! Kingdoms given away in alms, if viewed with this infinitely noble beneficence, would make just the same figure as a spark from the summer hearth, under the potent and boundless blaze of noon. This is indeed "love that passeth knowledge."‡ Eph. iii. 19.

Amidst all these miracles of power and of love, (any one of which would have entitled him to universal admiration and everlasting honour), how humble was our Saviour! O humility—virtue dear to the most high God, and peculiarly amiable in men—never didst thou appear in so charming a dress, or so striking a light!

At his birth, not accommodated with a magnificent palace, but lodged in a stable, and laid in a manger. As he advanced in years, not attended with a royal equipage, or supplied from a royal revenue, but labouring with his own hands, and earning his bread by the sweat of his brow. When he entered upon his ministerial office, not the least ostentatious parade appeared in the performance of all his wonderful works. So far, so very far from affecting the acclamations of the populace, that he often imposed silence on those unspeakably indebted lips which were ready to overflow with praise, and would fain have been the trumpets of his fame.

Though a voice from heaven proclaimed him the Beloved of his Almighty Father, he disdained not to own the ignoble character of the carpenter's son. Matth. xiii. 55. Though Prince of the kings of the earth, he condescended to wash the feet of mean fishermen and vile sinners. John xiii. 14. Though proprietor and lord of the whole world, he was content to be more destitute than the fowls of the air, or the foxes of the desert; Matth. viii. 20; more destitute (astonishing abasement!) than the most insignificant and most hated animals.

Grandeur, we find, is apt to beget expectations of superior regard; consequently gives a keener edge to every affront, and renders the mind more tenderly sensible of every disrespect. But our Lord's meekness was as great as his dignity; and that throughout a series of such unsufferable provocations, as were equalled by nothing but the sweetness of his forgiving grace.

When rudely affronted, he calmly bore, and kindly overlooked the insult. When contradicted by petulant and presumptuous sinners, he endured, with the utmost serenity of temper, their unreasonable cavils and their obstinate perverseness. When his invitations, his most endearing invitations, were ungratefully and stubbornly rejected, instead of remitting, he renewed them; and, with still warmer affection, importuned his hearers not to forsake their own mercies, not to forego their own felicity. When all the winning arts of persuasion were ineffectual, he added his tears to his slighted entreaties, and lamented as a brother when scornfully repulsed as a teacher.

Though his disciples slept, stupidly slept, when his bitter cries pierced the clouds, and were enough to awaken the very stones into

* Luke xii. 50. The original word συνεχομαι seems to express the condition of a person wedged in on every side by a tumultuous throng of people.

† Codrus, it is true, devoted himself to death, for the Athenians; and Curtius threw himself into the yawning gulph for the preservation of the Romans. But these died being mere creatures, and guilty creatures; whereas, the dying Jesus was perfectly innocent, and supremely glorious. These died only a little before their time: but Christ died, though he had life in himself, and none could have taken it from him, had he not voluntarily resigned it. These died for their valuable friends, for their affectionate relations, for their native country; but Christ died for slaves, for enemies, for the ungodly. They died an honourable death, but Christ submitted to the most ignominious execution; Christ died under the imputation of horrid crimes, and in the form of an execrable malefactor. In all these instances, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is Christ's love greater than their love, his philanthropy than their patriotism.

‡ This expression, as also the principal circumstance of superiority hinted in the preceding note, are founded on the divinity of our Lord; and indeed the expression is scarce justifiable, the assertion is hardly true, upon any other supposition. A creature dying for a creature, is, though great, yet not incomprehensible goodness. But, when we view the sufferings of Christ, and the blessings of redemption, surrounded with all the splendour of the Deity, they dazzle our understanding, and fill us with holy astonishment. They appear to be the effects of a love never to be spoke of but in the language of wonder, never to be thought of but with an ecstacy of delight.

compassion, did their divine but slighted Master resent the unkindness? Did he refuse to admit an excuse for their neglect? yea, he made their excuse, and that the most tender and gracious imaginable: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matth. xxvi. 41. When his enemies had nailed him to the cross, as the basest slave and most flagitious malefactor; when they were glutting their malice with his torments and blood, and spared not to revile him even in his last expiring agonies; far, very far from being exasperated, this Hero of heaven repaid all their contempt and barbarity with the most fervent and effectual supplications in their behalf: "Father, forgive them," was his prayer; "for they know not what they do," was his plea. Luke xxiii. 34.

Nor was his resignation less exemplary than his meekness. He went out to meet afflictions, when they came in his Father's name, and commissioned from his Father's hand. He gave, without the least reluctance, his back to the smiters, "and hid not his face from shame and spitting." Though his soul, his very soul, was penetrated with the keenest sensations of anguish, yet no impatient thought discomposed his mind, no murmuring word forced its way from his lips. "Father, not my will, but thine be done," Luke xxii. 42, was his language, when the sorrows of death compassed him, and pains inexpressibly severer than the pains of dissolution, came upon him. "When they gaped upon him with their mouth, and smote him upon the cheek reproachfully: When his face was foul with spitting, and on his eyelids was the shadow of death: When God delivered him to the ungodly, and turned him over into the hands of the wicked: Yea, when the Almighty set him for the mark of his arrows, and brake him with breach upon breach: When the weapons of his wrath cleft his very reins asunder, and poured his gall upon the earth:"*—Amidst all this exquisite distress, he sinned not by the least irregular perturbation; but bowed his head, and dutifully kissed the divine rod, and cordially blessed his very murderers.

Thus did the whole choir of active and passive virtues abound and shine in our Lord; abound with the richest variety, and shine with the highest lustre, infinitely surpassing that curious assemblage of costly gems which studded the Aaronic breastplate, Exod. xxviii. 17—20. and, as far as earthly things can represent heavenly, typified the splendour and perfection of our Redeemer's righteousness.

In all this, he acted and suffered as God's righteous servant, and as his people's righteous surety. By all this, he fulfilled every jot and tittle of the divine law; nay, he more than fulfilled, he magnified it. He gave it (if I may apply the most beautiful allusion that ever was used, to the most momentous subject that ever was discussed) "good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." Luke vi. 38.

He defied the most vigilant of his enemies to convince him of sin. A more malignant, a far more sagacious adversary than the Scribes and Pharisees, could detect no blemish in our Lord Jesus. "The prince of this world," that infernal tyrant who had deceived and enslaved all the nations of the earth, "came and found nothing in him," John xiv. 30, not the least corruption in his nature, not the least defect in his obedience.

"He hath done all things well," Mark vii. 37. was the general acclamation of all mankind; or, as the words may be rendered, "he hath done all things finely and gracefully (καλως,) with every circumstance that can constitute the propriety and dignity, the utility and beauty of action.

"I have glorified thee on earth," John xvii. 4, was his own profession before the most high God. I have glorified thee in all that I acted, in all that I uttered, in all that I suffered. I have displayed the magnificence of thy Majesty, the riches of thy grace, and the honour of all thy attributes. Insomuch, that "whoso seeth me, seeth the Father," John xii. 45: whoever is properly acquainted with my person and my work of redemption, sees the invisible, and knows the incomprehensible Deity; sees his venerable, his amiable, his adorable perfections, in the clearest mirror, and in the brightest light.

God also, who is the supreme standard, and unerring judge of excellency, bore his testimony to our blessed Mediator. He spoke it once, yea twice, and with a voice from heaven. In the constitution of the material world, when it came forth from the Creator's hand, Omniscience itself could discern no flaw. Neither could Justice itself, upon the strictest inquiry, discover any failure in the obedience of our Surety. As, therefore, it was said concerning the works of creation, "They are all very good," Gen. i. 31, so it was said concerning our Saviour, and by the same Almighty Majesty, "In him I am well pleased." Matth. iii. 17.

You took notice, and very justly, how much the productions of nature exceed and eclipse the attempts of human skill. We are pleased with the performances of the painter; but do they equal the native blush

* These tragical images are borrowed from the book of Job, who was an eminent type of a suffering Saviour; and though they are the very eloquence of wo, they do not exaggerate, they cannot express that inconceivable anguish which wrung a bloody sweat from our blessed Master's body, and forced from his lips that melancholy exclamation—"My soul is sorrowful—exceeding sorrowful—sorrowful even unto death." See Job xvi.

of the rose, or the artless glow of a pea-blossom? We are charmed with a fine piece of enammelling; but is it fit to be compared with the natural polish of a thousand shells which are formed in the ocean, or a thousand seeds which spring from the earth? We admire the virtues of the ancient saints, men "that were honoured in their generations and the glory of their times, Eccles. xlv. 7. We admire the meekness of Moses, and the magnanimity of Elijah; the exalted piety of Isaiah, and the enlarged wisdom of Daniel; the active spirit of Joshua, and the passive graces of Jeremiah. But what proportion, put them all together—what proportion do they all bear to his obedience, "who is gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him," 1 Pet. iii. 22. "who is called the Holy One and the Just," Acts iii. 14. not only by way of emphasis, but by way of exclusion; because no person is worthy of the character, no duties deserve to be mentioned, when Christ and his merits are under consideration.

If then we talk of merit, what merit must there be in such immaculate sanctity of soul, and such exemplary holiness of conduct; such ardent zeal for God, and such compassionate good-will to men; such consummate worthiness and extensive usefulness; such as were utterly unknown before, have been absolutely unequalled since, and never will, nor can be paralleled throughout all ages!—O my Theron! what is the drop of a bucket to the unfathomable waves of the ocean? What is a grain of sand to the unmeasurable dimensions of the universe? What is an hour or a moment to the endless revolutions of eternity? Such are all human endowments, and all human attainments, compared with his righteousness, who is "fairer than the children of men," Psal. xlv. 2. "the chiefest among ten thousand, Cant. v. 10.; "and who receiveth not the Spirit by measure," John iii. 34.

Think not, that what I have written is the language of rant. It is a paraphrase, though, I must confess, but a scanty paraphrase, on David's practice and David's faith. "My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof," Psal. lxxi. 15.* The glorious righteousness of Christ, and the great salvation obtained thereby, he declares shall be the chosen, the principal subject of his discourse. And not on a Sabbath only, but on every day of the week, of the year of his life. And not barely at the stated returns of solemn devotion, but in every social interview, and "all the day long." Why will he thus dwell, perpetually and invariably dwell on this darling theme? Because "he knew no end thereof. It is impossible to measure the value, or exhaust the fulness of these blessings. The righteousness is unspeakable, the salvation is everlasting. To compute the duration of the one, numbers fail; to describe the excellency of the other, words are at a loss.

And is this righteousness designed for us? Is this to be our wedding-dress, this our beautiful array, when we enter the regions of eternity? Unspeakable privilege! Is this what God has provided to supply, more than supply, our loss in Adam? Boundless benignity! Shall we be treated by the Judge of the world as if we had performed all this unsinning and perfect obedience? Well might the prophet cry out, like one lost in astonishment "How great is his goodness? Is not your heart enamoured, my dear Theron, with a view of this incomprehensibly rich grace? What so excellent, what so comfortable, what so desirable, as this gift of a Saviour's righteousness! Though delineated by this feeble pen, methinks it has dignity and glory enough to captivate our hearts, and fire our affections; fire them with ardent and inextinguishable desires after a personal interest and property in it. O! may the eternal Spirit reveal our Redeemer's righteousness, in all its heavenly beauty and divine lustre! Then, I am sure, we shall esteem it above every thing; we shall regard it as the "one thing needful:" we shall count all things, in comparison of it, worthless as chaff and empty as the wind.

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* I cannot but observe, that righteousness and salvation are frequently connected by the author of the psalms, and by the prophet Isaiah, in order to intimate that the one is founded on the other; the latter derives its origin from the former. There can be no salvation without a righteousness, a real, proper, lawfulfilling righteousness. At the same time, I am sensible, that the word righteousness may signify God's goodness in making, and faithfulness in performing his promises unto David. Salvation may likewise denote the delivery of that afflicted hero from all his persecutors, and his establishment on the throne of Israel.

But, if we should confine the sense to these narrow limits, how comfortless the favour even to David himself, considered as an immortal being! How much more insignificant to us and others, on whom the ends of the world are come! And how very unworthy of that infinite God, who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh; who sees at one view whatever is or has been, or shall exist; who therefore, when he speaks, speaks to all his children in every period of time, and in every nation under heaven. As much as a tutor, when delivering his lectures, addresses himself to all his pupils, whether they sit at his right hand or his left, before him or on every side.

Whereas, if righteousness signifies the meritorious obedience of Christ, and salvation implies the benefits of his redemption, the sense is no longer shrivelled, impoverished, and mean; but rich, august, and magnificent. It pours consolation among all people, kindreds and tongues. It is worthy of that God, who seeth the things, and regardeth the persons, which are not as though they were. It comports exactly with that revelation in which Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the sum total.

This note is already too long, otherwise I should take leave to gratify my inclination, and give a sanction to my sentiment, by transcribing Vitringa's exposition of Isa. xlv. 8.

To an immortal and fallen soul every thing else is empty as the wind; but here sinners may "suck and be satisfied with this breast of consolation;" yea, thousands and thousands of millions may "milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of its glory." Isa. lxvi. 11. Here we shall find the doctrine of supererogation no longer a chimera, but a delightful reality. Here indeed is an immense surplusage, an inexhaustible fund of merit,* sufficient to enrich a whole world of indigent and miserable creatures; sufficient to make their cup run over with a superabundant fulness of peace and joy, so long as time shall last, and when time shall be no more. For, to use the apostle's weighty argument, "If, by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 17. If, one offence, committed by one mere man, made all his posterity chargeable with guilt, and liable to death; how much more shall the manifold instances of our divine Redeemer's obedience; of his long, uninterrupted, consummate righteousness;—how much more shall they absolve all his people from condemnation and punishment, and entitle them to the honours and joys of immortality!

Which will appear in a clearer light, if, to the perfection of his obedience, we add the majesty of his person. A proper subject this for some future letter.—In the mean time, let me desire my friend, the friend of my bosom, to contemplate our Lord Jesus under that lovely and august character, "Glorious in holiness." Exod. xv. 11. And, for my part, I will not cease to pray, that a sense of this supereminently grand and precious righteousness may be written on my Theron's heart. On those living tables, may it be like figures cut on a rock of solid marble, or inscribed on the bark of a growing tree; be lasting in its duration as the former, and spreading in its influence as the latter. It will then be a sure proof, that his name is written in the book of life; and it shall then be a pleasing pattern for the affection, the gratitude, and the friendship of his ASPASIO.

P. S.—You give a most astonishing account of the pressure of the atmosphere. Astonishing, indeed! that we should be continually surrounded, continually overwhelmed, with such a tremendous load, and not be crushed to death; no, nor be sensible of the least weight. This, I think, may serve to represent the state of a sinner unawakened from carnal security. Loads, more than mountainous loads of guilt, are upon his soul, and he perceives not the burden. For this reason, he is under no apprehensions of the vengeance and fiery indignation which he deserves: he has no superlative esteem for the atonement and merits of the Redeemer, which alone can deliver him from the wrath to come. But if once his conscience feels, what his lips, perhaps, have often repeated, "We do earnestly repent us of these our misdoings, the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable; then how will he prize such a text, "The Lord laid on Christ the iniquity of us all!" How will he long for an interest in the Lamb of God, "which taketh away the sin of the world!" Then that Jesus who has "finished the transgression, and brought in everlasting righteousness," will be all his salvation, and all his desire.

* Yet here is no rich fund, (as a learned writer asserts) no fund at all, for the Pope's treasury of meritorious supererogating actions; unless Christ and the Pope are to be placed upon the same footing; unless the ineffably excellent obedience of a divine Redeemer, and the miserably defective duties of sinful men, are to be deemed equally valuable. Since this will hardly be admitted by Protestants, I believe, Aspasio may safely call the obedience of Christ, "the true supererogation;" as Mr. Ambrose has called the blood of Christ, "the true purgatory."

LETTER VIII.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,—I HAVE just been reading that exquisitely fine piece of sacred history, the life of Joseph: a history filled with surprising incidents and unexpected revolutions; adorned with the most heroic instances of triumphant virtue, both amidst all the allurements of temptation and under the pressures of affliction; animated with such tender and pathetic, such melting and alarming touches of natural eloquence, as every reader must feel, and every true critic will admire.

When I came to that remarkable injunction with which the generous viceroy dismissed his brethren, "Ye shall tell my Father of all my glory in Egypt," Gen. xlv. 13;—I paused—I pondered—I was struck. Certainly this was enjoined, not by way of ostentation, but on account of the pleasure, which he knew it would yield the good old patriarch. Was it some kind prompting angel, or the voice of gratitude and devotion, that whispered in my ear, "Should not the children of men likewise tell one another of all the glory,* which

* To see the glory of Christ, is the grand blessing which our Lord solicits and demands for his disciples, in his last solemn intercession, John xvii. 24. It is that which will complete the blessedness of heaven, and fill its inhabitants with joy unspeakable and glorious. Surely then we should endeavour to anticipate, in some degree, that celestial bliss, and habitu-

their Redeemer possesses in heaven and on earth? Will not this afford them the sublimest pleasure here, and be a source of the most refined satisfaction for ever and ever?"

Though I had almost determined to write no more, till you could make a demand upon the foot of value received, willingly I recede from my intended resolution, and obey this pleasing hint. But "who can declare the noble acts of the Lord Jesus Christ, or show forth all his praise?"—However, if I may but lisp out his adorable name, and present my friend with a glimpse, or a broken view of his divine perfections, even this will be desirable and delightful; far more desirable and delightful than to behold Rome in its magnificence, St. Paul in the pulpit, or King Solomon on his throne.*

Let me take the lark for my pattern; which, as I was lately returning from an evening ramble, attracted my observation. Warbling her Creator's praise, she mounted in the serene sky. Still she warbled, and still she mounted, as though she meant to carry her tribute of harmony unto the very gates of heaven. Having reached at last her highest elevation, and perceiving herself at an immense distance from the starry mansions, she dropped on a sudden to the earth, and discontinued at once both to sing and to soar. Now the morning appears, and is awakening the world, our little songster retunes her throat, and re-exerts her wings. As I have endeavoured, very imperfectly endeavoured, to strike out a shadowy draught of our Lord's complete obedience; I would, though unequal to the task, once more resume my pen, and attempt —nothing like a display, but only a faint sketch of his essential dignity.

First let me observe, that for some time past we have been visited with the most uncomfortable weather, dewless nights and sultry days. The firmament was more like a glowing furnace than the region of refreshing rain. The earth lay parched with thirst, and chapped with heat. The meadows were drained of their humidity, and all the flowers hung their fading heads. The streams, which used to flow parallel with the verdant margin, abandoned their banks, and sunk diminished and discoloured, to the bottom of their oozy channels. Nature in general seemed to be resigning the "robe of beauty for the garment of heaviness." Drought was in all our borders, and famine we feared was not far behind. Though clouds of dust obscured the air, tarnished the hedges, and almost smothered the traveller, yet not one cloud of fleecy white appeared, to variegate the blue expanse, or give us hopes of a reviving shower.*

It reminded me of that awful threatening, denounced by Moses on a wicked people: "The heaven, that is over thy head, shall be brass: and the earth, that is under thee, shall be iron." Deut. xxviii. 23. It made me apprehensive of that terrible state which the prophet so emphatically describes: "The field is wasted, and the land mourneth. The seed is rotten under the clods, and the harvest perisheth. The garners are laid desolate, and the barns are broken down. The new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth, and all the trees of the field are withered. How do the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate: Because the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness." Joel i. 10, &c. But, blessed be the divine Providence, our fears are vanished, and a most joyful change has taken place. The Lord hath "sent a gracious rain upon his inheritance, and refreshed it when it was weary." Psalm lxviii. 9.

Yesterday, in the afternoon, the wind, shifting to the south, roused the dormant clouds, and brought some of those agreeable strangers on its wings. At first they came sailing in small, and thin, and scattered parties. Anon, the flying squadrons advanced in larger detachments, more closely wedged, and more deeply laden; till at last, the great rendezvous completed, they formed into a body of such depth, and extended their wings with such a sweep, as darkened the sun, and overspread the whole hemisphere.

Just at the close of day, the gales which escorted the spongy treasures retired, and consigned their charge to the disposal of a profound calm. Not a breeze shook the most tremulous leaf: Not a curl ruffled the smooth expansive lake: All things were still, as in attentive expectation. The earth seemed to gasp after the hovering moisture. Nature, with her suppliant tribes, in expressive pleading silence, solicited the falling fruitfulness, nor pleaded long, nor solicited in vain.

The showers, gentle, soft and balmy, descend. The vessels of heaven unload their precious freight, and enrich the penurious glebe. Through all the night, the liquid sweetness, incomparably more beneficial than trickling silver, distils; shedding herbs, and

ate our souls to this sacred exercise, which will be our business and our reward to endless ages.

* These, if I remember right, are the three things which St. Augustine declared, would, of all others, most eminently gratify his curiosity.

* At such a juncture, how pertinent is the question proposed by the Almighty Majesty? Job xxxviii. 37, 38. Who can number, muster, or arrange the clouds in wisdom, so as to have them ready at hand on any emergency? And who can empty those bottles of heaven, in copious but seasonable effusions upon the earth! when, as in the case described above, the dust of the roads is attenuated into powder, and the clods of the valley are glued fast together?

fruits, and flowers,—Now the sun, mild and refulgent, issues through the portals of the east. Pleased, as it were, to have emerged from the late aggravated darkness, he looks abroad with peculiar gaiety and the most engaging splendours. He looks through the disburdened air, and finds a gladdened world, that wants nothing but his all-cheering beams, to render its satisfaction complete.

> The glory comes!—Hail to thy rising ray,
> Great lamp of light, and second source of day!
> Who robe the world, each nipping gale remove,
> Treat every sense, and beam creating love.—
> KIRKPATRICK.

At his auspicious approach, the freshened mountains lift their heads, and smile. The garden opens its aromatic stores and breathes, as from a fuming altar, balm to the smell, and incense to the skies. The little hills, crowned with springing plenty, clap their hands on every side. The moistened plains, and irriguous valleys, "laugh and sing:" While their waters, lately exhausted, again "are made deep, and their rivers run like oil," Ezek. xxxii. 14.

The whole earth, saturated with the bounty of heaven, and flushed with humid life, wears a thousand marks of gratitude and complacency. Washed by the copious rain, how bright and vivid is the universal verdure! The green carpet below may almost vie with the blue canopy above. The forest, and every tree, burnish their colours, and array themselves in their finest apparel; which, as on a day of general festivity, is delicately decked with gems—gems of unsullied lustre, and of genial moisture. From every pasture, and from all the grove, the voice of pleasure and of melody resounds; while the officious zephyrs waft the floating harmony, blended with native perfumes—gently waft them to the senses, and touch the very soul with transport.

Could there be a more brilliant appearance, or more exuberant demonstrations of joy, even to celebrate the anniversary of nature's birth? With what admirable propriety has the Psalmist compared yonder orient sun, in all his sparkling grandeur, to a young exulting "bridegroom," Psal. xix. 5, who comes forth, with every heightened ornament, from his chamber, to show himself in the most distinguished period of his life, and to receive the blessing which consummates his happiness!

This most charming and equally majestic scene recalls to my memory that fine description of the Messiah, extant in the last lovely strains of the Israelitish swan:* —He shall be welcome and salutary, "as the light of the morning; when the sun ariseth," to chase the malignant shades, and pour day through the reviving world. He shall be as the light of a morning that is most serenely fair, without either storms to disturb, or clouds to obscure the glorious, the delightful dawn. Yea, his appearance shall be "more beautiful," and his influence "more beneficial,* than the clear shining" of that grand luminary, after a night of settled gloom, and showers of incessant rain; when his beams shed animating warmth, and vital lustre, on the tender grass impearled with dews, and on all the green treasures of the teeming earth.

As we have already contemplated the blessed Jesus under the amiable character of the Just One, the foregoing passage of Scripture represents him to our faith, in the more majestic quality of the Lord of Glory; or rather unites the two grand peculiarities which render him unparalleled in his personal, and all-sufficient in his mediatorial capacity.

Great, unspeakably great and glorious, would our Saviour appear, if we had no other manifestations of his excellency, than those which preceded his mysterious incarnation. In the ancient scriptures, he stands characterised as the supreme object of God's ineffable complacency; vested with a glory, prior to the birth of time, or the existence of things; even "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." John xvii. 5. He is everywhere exhibited as the ultimate desire of all nations, the sole hope of all the ends of the earth, the seed of inestimable and universal importance, in whom all people, nations, and languages, should be blessed. In those royal, or rather divine acts and monuments, he is publicly recognised as the Ruler of God's people; whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation. And how august, how venerable, is this sovereign! since it was the highest honour of the most eminent saints, and renowned monarchs,† to act as harbin-

* *Israelitish Swan*—In allusion to those well known lines of the poet,

"Multa Dircæum levat aura cygnum."

And not without a reference to the popular notion, that the swan sings the most melodious notes in its last moments. "Fuit hæc facundi senis quasi cygnea vox."—TULLY.

* More beautiful, more beneficial, than the clear shining, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.—Thus we have ventured to translate, or rather to paraphrase the words מִנְּגֹהָ. That the prefix often occurs in the acceptation of comparative pre-eminence, is plain from a very remarkable passage in Psalm xix. 10. Where our inspired author, quite ravished with the love of the sacred oracles, declares, "They are desirable beyond gold, even beyond the droppings of the honey-comb."

If this sense is admitted, we shall have a fine comparison, and a grand advance upon it; acknowledging the insufficiency even of the strongest and brightest images, to represent the glory of Christ's kingdom, and the benignity of his administration. Perhaps the translation may be too free and daring, and not approve itself to the exact critic. The sense, however, is unquestionably just; agreeable to the whole tenor of scripture; and can want no recommendation to the intelligent Christian.

† Moses, for instance, and Joshua, David, and Solomon, were types, strongly marked types, of our great Lawgiver and Deliverer, of our divine Ruler and Preacher.

gers. The splendour of the temple, the richness of its ornaments, and the solemnity of its services, were the ensigns of his grandeur—were his sacred regalia, intended to usher him into the world with becoming state.

Every inspired prophet was his herald; deputed to blazon his perfections, or foretell his coming. Let us hear one speaking the sentiments of all:—"God the Saviour came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paron. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise."* Thunders sounded his trumpet, and lightnings waved his banners. "Before him went the pestilence," for the destruction of his enemies; but, for the deliverance of Israel, "he rode upon his horses and chariots of salvation. The mountains saw him, and they trembled; the everlasting hills, and they bowed their heads. The abyss uttered her voice," and acknowledged his sovereignty through her deepest caverns, "the towering surges lifted up their hands," and remained in a suspended posture while his people passed through the opening lines. Indeed, both depth, and height, and every creature, have paid him homage, and done him service. And shall not we, my dear Theron, "submit to his righteousness?" Submit! Shall we not embrace it; rely on it; and, with joyful hearts, with triumphing tongues, say, "There is none, there is nothing like it!" 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

Does not all mankind agree to estimate the merit of the practice according to the dignity of the person? If a neighbour of inferior rank visit some poor afflicted wretch in a coarse garret, and on a tattered bed, it is no very extraordinary favour; but if a lady of the first distinction, or a nobleman of the highest order, perform the same office, it is a much more remarkable, a much more admired instance of self-denying charity. On the foot of this calculation, to what a supereminent height will the worthiness of our Lord's obedience rise? It will rise, like some magnificent edifice, whose basis rests upon the centre, whose dimensions fill the hemisphere, and whose turrets glitter in the sky: or rather, it will extend itself to immensity; where length, and breadth, and all dimensions are lost. Especially if we consider the names he bears, and the honours he receives; the works he has done, and those mightier works he is appointed to do.

The names he bears.—The title by which Jesus of Nazareth is distinguished in the heavenly world; the name written on his vesture, and on his thigh, is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Rev. xix. 16. The description which the incomprehensible Jehovah gives of the Surety for sinful men, runs in this exalted strain: "The Man that is my fellow,"* Zech. xiii. 7, which the apostle explains in that memorable and majestic clause: "He thought it no robbery to be equal with God."† Phil. ii. 6. The Holy Ghost speaking, by the great prophet Isaiah, of the virgin's son, enumerates several grand distinctions, both of his person and his office. He styles the child that should be born, "the Wonderful Counsellor, the Everlasting Father, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace," Isaiah ix. 6. The same inspired writer, though eloquent above all orators, and more sublime than the loftiest poet, cries out in rapturous astonishment, "Who can declare his generation?" Isaiah liii. 8. What pencil can portray, what language can express, his matchless excellencies? And may we not with equal propriety demand, Who can declare the meritorious perfection of his righteousness? It is precious beyond comparison; beyond imagination precious.

The honours which our Lord receives are proportioned to the illustrious characters which he sustains. John the Baptist, than whom a greater prophet or a better judge was not born of woman, professes himself unworthy "to stoop down and unloose the latchet of his shoes," Mark i. 7; unworthy, though a burning and shining light in his generation, to perform the meanest service to this prince of heaven. Stephen, who leads the van in the noble army of Christian martyrs, beheld such a representation of his crucified Master's glory, as enabled him to exult with divine delight, even amidst the

* See Hab. iii. The greatest part of which sublime ode refers to the wonderful works recorded by Moses and Joshua. It seems, especially in the oxordium, to be an imitation of that grand and majestic description, with which the Jewish legislator introduces his last solemn benediction. Deut. xxxiii.—These works are, by Aspasio, ascribed to Christ, and I think it is demonstrably certain, that Jesus Christ is the Jehovah celebrated in the books of Moses, and in the writings of the prophets. It is Christ, who dwelt in the burning bush, and walked in the burning fiery furnace. It is Christ, who wrought the miracles in Egypt, and the wonders in the field of Zoan. The temporal deliverer, and the eternal Redeemer of Israel, are one and the same. He is that Captain of the hosts of the Lord, who gave the nations as dust to their sword, and as driven stubble to their bow. Josh. v. 14. He is that Mighty One who punished the stout heart of the King of Assyria, who cut down the thickest of his forest, and lopped his bough with terror. Isa. x. 34. He gave Moses his commission; gave Moses his law; and was both the Lord, and the end, of that sacred, significant, mysterious economy. Compare 1 Cor. x. 9, with Numb. xxi. 6, 7. See Dan. iii. 25; Heb. iii. 3, 4.

* מועדחו "Contribulis vel coequalis," my fellow, or my equal. The original expression occurs nowhere but in this verse of Zechariah, and in the book of Leviticus. In one text, it is explained by brother, or partaker of the same nature. In every other place, I believe it would be found to signify not barely a neighbour, but an equal; one who stands upon the same level with regard to the claims of equity, and the common rights of life. In either sense, it militates strongly for the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

† Some writers, I am aware, have endeavoured to interpret away this evidence of our Lord's divine nature: but I think with great injury to the context, and no less violence to the phrase.

furious assaults of his persecutors, and under the violent blows of his murderers, Acts vii. 56. Assured that Jesus has all power in heaven and earth, by an act of the most solemn worship, he commits his departing soul, that most important of all trusts, to his Redeemer's hand, Acts vii. 59. Nor by the first martyr alone, but in all churches of the saints, and in every age of Christianity, has the Lord Jesus been addressed as the constant object of his people's adoration, and acknowledged as the ever-faithful depository of their eternal interests.

When Isaiah beheld a visionary manifestation of Christ,* the first-born sons of light were waiting around him in postures of dutiful submission. These celestial beings, whose very feet are too bright for mortals to view, veil their faces before his infinitely superior effulgence. The seraphs, who are all zeal and all love, celebrate his perfections, and cry one to another, "The whole earth is full of his glory." And is not heaven also filled with his glory? does not heaven likewise resound with his praise? The beloved disciple, in a vision no less clear, and far more magnificent, beholds the Lamb that was slain, standing in the midst of a resplendent throne, most beautifully adorned with a circling rainbow, and terribly dignified by the blaze of lightnings, and the sound of thunders. Before this august throne, and at the disposal of the once slaughtered Saviour, are "seven lamps of burning fire," expressive of the Divine Spirit in all the variety of his miraculous gifts and sanctifying graces, Rev. iv. 5. Four-and-twenty elders, clothed in white raiment, with crowns on their heads, and the harps of God in their hands, fall prostrate in deepest homage before the Lamb. They strike the golden strings, and sing that sublime eucharistic hymn, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us, unto our God, kings and priests, Rev. v. 9, 10.

Behold the hierarchies of angels: they are in number ten thousand times ten thousand. —Hark! they raise their voice, and awaken all the powers of harmony. Who is the subject, and what is the burden of their song? "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and blessing." Nor these alone, but every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, join the immense chorus. They cry, in loud responsive strains of melody and devotion, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.

This, you observe, is the devout acknowledgment, not only of the cherubim, the seraphim, and the spirits of just men made perfect, but of every creature. The sun, the moon, and the stars, which garnish the heavens;—beasts and creeping things, mountains and hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, which replenish the earth;—metals and minerals, gems and fossils, the subterraneous riches of nature, or things which are under the earth;—even all those objects which my Theron lately contemplated, do, in their way, magnify the Lord Jesus. They bear witness to his power, as their Creator; they are subservient to his interests, as our Mediator; and in this manner they glorify his sacred name.

Under such views of the blessed Redeemer, enlarged and elevated even to astonishment, is it possible to overrate the worth of his mediatorial obedience? Is it possible to lay too much stress on his expiatory sacrifice, or ascribe too much efficacy to his vicarious righteousness.

To the honours which he receives, let us add the works which he has done. By these, in the days of his flesh, were displayed the greatness of his glory, and the might of his Majesty.

"Behold!" says the Almighty Father, "my servant,"—he who condescends to become my servant in the matchless work of redemption—"shall deal prudently," shall conduct himself with all the dignity and all the sanctity of wisdom. In consequence of which, "he shall be exalted, be extolled, and be very high." Isa. lii. 13. The paraphrase of the Jewish commentators on this beautiful climax is, though inadequate, not contemptible. "The Messiah," they say, "shall be higher than Abraham, more illustrious than Moses, and exalted above the angels of light, even above the prime ministers* of heaven." What follows, is an attempt to render this exposition somewhat less defective.

Here, could you open my chamber-door, and peep upon your friend, you would find him in the same attitude, and under the same perplexity which were formerly observed in Phocion. Sitting one day amidst an assembly of the people, and preparing to make a public oration, he appeared uncommonly thoughtful. Being asked the reason, "I am considering," said he, "how I may shorten what I shall have occasion to speak." The compass of my subject would demand many volumes; whereas the limits of my letter will allow but a few paragraphs.

Our Lord gave sight to the blind. He poured day upon those hopeless and be-

* Isa. vi. 1, 2, &c. compared with John xii. 41.

* Prime ministers; this is almost a literal translation of the original words.

mental eyes which had never been visited with the least dawning ray.—The dumb, at his command, found a ready tongue, and burst into songs of praise.—The deaf were all ear, and listened to the joyful sound of salvation.—The lame, lame from their very birth, threw aside their crutches, and full of transport and exultation leaped like the bounding roe.* He restored floridity and beauty to the flesh emaciated by consuming sickness, or incrusted with a loathsome leprosy. All manner of diseases, though blended with the earliest seeds of life, and rivetted in the constitution by a long inveterate predominancy—diseases that baffled the skill of the physician, and mocked the force of medicine—these he cured, not by tedious applications, but in the twinkling of an eye; not by csotly prescriptions or painful operations, but by a word from his mouth or a touch from his hand: nay, by the fringe of his garment, or the bare act of his will.

Any one of these miracles had been enough to endear the character, and eternize the memory of another person: But they were comrcon things, matters of daily occurence with our divine Master. The years of his public ministry were an unintermitted series of such healing wonders; or if any intermission took place, it was only to make way for more invaluable miracles of spiritual beneficence.

Behold him exercising his dominion over the vegetable creation. A fig-tree, adorned with the most promising spread of leaves, but unproductive of the expected fruit, withers away at his rebuke. It is not only stripped of its verdant honours, but dried up from the very roots, Mark xi. 20, and perishes for ever: A fearful, yet significant intimation of that final ruin which will overtake the specious hypocrite, who, while lavish in outward profession, is destitute of inward piety.

His eye pierced through the whole world of waters, discerned the fish that had just swallowed a piece of silver coin, and guided its course to Peter's hook.* It is true, when the gatherers of the sacred tax came to collect his share for the reparation of the temple, he had not a sufficiency of money to satisfy so small a demand;† yet he takes occasion, from this most abject poverty, to manifest the immensity of his riches. He makes the great deep his revenue, and bids the scaly nations bring him their tribute. Never was such indigence associated with such magnificence! And never, never let us forget, that the indigence was ours, the magnificence all his own!

The waters themselves, it may be said, are far more unmanageable than their inhabitants. Who can control that outrageous element, which has destroyed so many gallant fleets, with the armies they bore; and which would laugh at the opposition of the united world? The Lord Jesus walks upon its rolling surges,‡ and speaks its most tempestuous agitations into a calm. "The waves of the sea are mighty and rage terribly;" but "yet the Lord," who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, "is mightier," Psalm xciii. 5.

The winds are yet more ungovernable than the maddening ocean. When these are hurled abroad § to shatter the forests, and shake the shores, who can curb their rage? what can withstand their impetuosity? Even the boisterous winds hear the Saviour's voice; and as soon as they hear, obey. His voice, more powerful to restrain than brazen dungeons to confine, chides the furious whirlwind. The furious whirlwind is awed into immediate‖ silence. That

* We have the finest representation of this event, given us by the inspired historian, Acts iii. 8. And he leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple; walking, and leaping, and praising God. The very language seems to exult, in a redundant flow of expressive phrases; just as a poor cripple, who never knew either the comfort of bodily vigour, or the pleasure of local motion, may be supposed to do, when suddenly and unexpectedly blessed with both. He would exert his new acquired powers again and again, first in one attitude, then in another; sometimes to try whether he was really healed, and not under the pleasing delusion of a dream, sometimes from a transport of conscious delight, and to express the sallies of joy that sprung up in his heart.

Though I acknowledge Mr. Pope's description to be extremely beautiful,

"The lame their crutch forego,
And leap, exulting, like the bounding roe;"

yet I cannot persuade myself, that it is to be compared with St. Luke's draught, either in the variety of figures, in the richness of colouring, or in that exuberance of style, which, on this occasion, is so happily significant, and so perfectly picturesque.

* Matth. xvii. 27. How wonderful is this seemingly little miracle! or rather, what a cluster of wonders is comprised in this single act! That any fish with money in its mouth, should be catched—with money just of such a value,—and in the very first fish that offered itself! What a pregnant display of omniscience to know, of omnipotence to overrule, all these fortuitous incidents!

† About fourteen-pence.

‡ He treadeth upon the waves of the sea, is one of the prerogatives ascribed to the most high God, Job. ix. 8. The original word בָּמֳתֵי signifies "a sea that rolls mountain high;" and such, we have reason to suppose, were the waves on which our Lord walked, since the vessel to which he bent his course, was βασανιζομενον, "lashed, battered, tormented," by their vehement concussions, Matth. xiv. 24.

§ This is a literal translation of that beautiful Hebrew phrase which occurs Jonah i. 4. The sacred writer, describing the stormy messenger, which was despatched to arrest a fugitive servant, says, חִכְּוֹל "The Lord hurled forth a great wind." The same expression is applied to Saul, 1 Sam. xviii. 11. when he darted his javelin at David, with a design to transfix and nail him to the wall. What an elegant, and how awful an image! Storms and tempests, with all their irresistible fury, and dreadful ravages, are like missive weapons in the hands of Jehovah, which he launches with greater ease, and surer aim, than the most expert warrior emits the pointed steel.

‖ Immediate—This circumstance, as very much aggrandizing the miracle, is with great historical propriety, remarked by the evangelist. The sea is known to have a prodigious swell, and very tremendous agitations, for a considerable time after the tempestuous wind ceases. On this occasion, and in obedience to its Maker's will, it departs from the established laws of

which a moment ago heaved the billows to the clouds, and filled with outrage the howling firmament, now gently whispers among the shrouds, and scarcely curls the smooth expanse.

Something there is, even within the narrow compass of our own breasts, which affords room for more signal exertions of Deity, than the turbulent billows or the resistless storm. Agreeably to the suggestion of a prophet, "For lo! he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind;", and as a more pregnant proof of divine perfection, "declareth unto man what is his thought, the God of hosts is his name," Amos. iv. 13; the possessor of such surpassing power and wisdom, must unquestionably be the supreme Lord. And who is this, but Jesus Christ? "He knew what was in man,"* John. ii. 25. He discerned the secrets of the heart; discerned the latent purpose before it disclosed itself in action; even before it was uttered in speech; nay, while it lay yet an unformed embryo in the mind.

His glance pierced into futurity; espied events in all their circumstances,† and with the greatest perspicuity, before they came into being. The hidden things of darkness were open, and the contingencies of to-morrow were present, to his all-pervading eye. Nay, the unthought of revolutions even of distant ages, the astonishing catastrophe of dissolving nature, and the awful process of everlasting judgment, he clearly foresaw, and particularly foretold.

Nor does he only penetrate the recesses, but over-rule the operations of the soul. He so intimidated a multitude of sacrilegious wretches, that they fled, not before his drawn sword or bent bow, but at the shaking of his scourge, ‡ John ii. 14. He so awed, by one short remonstrance, John viii. 7, an assembly of conceited and ostentatious Pharisees, that they could neither gainsay, nor endure the energy of his discourse; though not to endure, was a tacit acknowledgment of guilt, and must cover them with public confusion. With a word the most mild and gentle imaginable, John xviii. 6, he flung such terror into a band of armed men, as blasted all their courage, and laid them stunned and prostrate on the ground.

"All hearts are in his hand. He turneth them as the rivers of water, whithersoever he will," Prov. xxi. 1; with as much ease, and with the same efficacious sway, as the current of the rivers is turned by every inflection of the channel. "Follow me," was his call to James and John; "Follow me,"* Mark ii. 14, was all he said to Levi the publican. Though the first were engaged in all the ardour of business; though the last was sitting at the very receipt of custom, yet both he and they, without any demur, or the least delay, left their employ, left their nearest relations, and resigned their earthly all, to attend a poor and despised master. Their acquaintance, no doubt, would remonstrate a thousand inconveniences, their enemies would not fail to censure them as rash enthusiasts: but all these considerations were lighter than dust, were less than nothing, when set in competition with two words only from Jesus of Nazareth. Impressed, deeply impressed by his powerful summons, such loss they counted gain, and such obloquy glory.

He planted bowels of compassion in the unfeeling avaricious wretch, and elevated, beyond the height of the stars, desires that lay grovelling even below the mire of the swine. The slaves of sin he restored to the liberty of righteousness; and unhappy creatures who were degenerated into the likeness of the devil, he renewed after the image of the blessed God. These were the effects

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motion. No sooner is the word spoken, but there is a film; not an advancing, but an instantaneous calm; not a partial, but a perfect calm, Matth. viii. 26; Mark iv. 39.

* This all-discerning intelligence of the Deity is very emphatically expressed by the psalmist, Psal. cxxxix. 1, 2. &c. though the sentiment in one clause seems to be somewhat weakened by our version. There is not a word in my tongue would have a nobler turn, and more extensive meaning, if rendered, "Before the word is on my tongue, thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether."

† In all their circumstances.—See a very remarkable exemplification of this particular, Mark xiv. 13. There shall meet you—not barely a person, but the sex and age are both specified—not two, or several, but one man;—not within any given space of time, but at the very instant of your arrival;—not empty-handed, but bearing a vessel;—not of wood or metal, but an earthen pitcher;—filled, not with wine or milk, but with water;—carrying it into that very house, where the preparation was made, and the passover was to be celebrated. What a multitude of contingencies! all minutely foretold by our Lord.

‡ St. Jerome looks upon this miracle as one of the greatest which our Saviour wrought. And indeed, the circumstances are very extraordinary. That one man should undertake to hold and execute so hazardous a task;—one man, without a commission from Cæsar, without any countenance from the Jewish rulers, without any arms, either to terrify the multitude or defend himself. That he should cast out the whole tribe of mercenary traffickers, wrest from those worshippers of wealth their darling idol, and trample under foot their great Diana. And all, without tumult or opposition; not one of the sacrilegious rabble daring to "move the hand, or open the mouth, or peep." Whoever reflects on the fierce and ungovernable nature of an incensed populace, or considers the bitter and outrageous zeal of Demetrius and the craftsmen, on a less irritating occasion, may possibly find himself almost, if not altogether, of the Latin father's opinion.

* He said in the beginning, "Let there be light;" there was light: Let there be a firmament;" it was spread abroad: "Let there be a world;" it arose of nothing. In the days of his flesh, likewise, he speaks, and it is done. His word is a work. He says to the disciples, "Follow me;" they come: To the leper, "Be clean;" he is cleansed: To the paralytic "Arise, take up thy bed and walk;" It is all performed as soon as commanded. Surely then we must confess, this is the voice of a God, not of a man! Γενηθητω is our Lord's usual word, when he grants a miraculous cure, which exactly correspond with that admired and magnificent expression in the original, Gen. i. 3.

of his personal preaching; these are still the conquests of his glorious gospel: And do not these declare his dominion over the intellectual economy? that the world of minds, as well as of material nature, is open to his inspection, and subject to his control?

The dead seem to be more remote from human cognizance than the secrets of the breast; less liable to any human jurisdiction than the warring elements. What potentate can issue a writ of release to the grave? or cite the dislodged soul to re-enter the breathless corpse? Yet this, even this, our mighty Mediator executed. He opened the eyes which were sunk in their sockets, and sealed in the tomb. He bid the heart that had forgot its vital motion, spring into renewed and vigorous life. The crimson flood, long congealed by the icy hand of death; which had not only lost its pulse by stagnation, but likewise changed its very texture by "putrefaction," John xi. 39, circulates at his order, all florid and mantling with health, through the wondering veins. The spirit, which had taken its flight into the invisible state, had taken its place in eternal habitations, returns at our Redeemer's signal to the tenement of mouldering clay: and, by the amazing visit, proclaims his sovereignty over those unknown realms and their mysterious inhabitants.

As he recalls from, so he admits into the abodes of future happiness. In the very lowest depths of his humiliation, he disposed of the seats of bliss, and the thrones of glory. His hands, when swollen with wounds, and nailed to the tree, evidently sustained "the keys of hell and of death," Rev. i. 18. Then, even then, he opened and he shut either the gates of the grave or the portals of paradise. What he speaks to the penitent thief is the language of supreme authority: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43. It is a royal mandamus, not a humble petition.

Does our Lord's superiority extend to those malignant beings, the devil and his angels? Even these, in spite of all their formidable strength,* and inextinguishable rage, he makes his footstool. He brake the teeth of those infernal lions, and rescued the helpless prey on which their bloody jaws were closing. At his command they abandon their conquests, and relinquish, however indignant, however reluctant, their long accustomed habitations. His single command, more forcible than ten thousand thunderbolts, dispossesses a whole legion, Mark v. 9, of those fierce and haughty spirits; drives them, all terrified and deprecating severer vengeance, to seek rest in solitary deserts, or to herd with the most sordid brutes.

As the blessed Jesus treads upon the necks of those powers of darkness, he receives the willing services of the angels of light. They that excel* in strength, and are active as flames of fire, even they fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words. They graced the solemnity of his birth; they attended him after his temptation in the wilderness; they were the first joyful preachers of his triumphant resurrection; and, now he is seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the highest,—

——They stand with wings outspread,
Listening to catch their Master's least command,
And fly through nature, ere the moment end.

Behold him now doing according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; swaying the sceptre over the legions of hell, and the powers of nature; exercising dominion in the hearts of men, in the territories of the grave, and mansions of disembodied spirits. Then let my Theron determine—under such views of our Saviour's unequalled majesty and unbounded sovereignty, let him determine—whether it be safer to rest our infinite and eternal interests on our own righteousness rather than on his.

We have selected some few manifestations of our Redeemer's excellent greatness. Even the evangelical historians give us no larger a proportion of his astonishing deeds, than the first fruits bear to a copious harvest. Yet, were they all particularly enumerated, and circumstantially displayed, they would appear inconsiderable, compared with those far more distinguished trophies of almighty power which he has decreed in some future period to erect.†

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* Milton, describing the power of the apostate angels, says,

——— The least of whom could wield
These elements: and arm him with the force
Of all their regions.—*Book* vi. l. 221.

* Would any one see a sketch of the glory and excellence of the angelic nature? Let him see it in that inimitably fine stroke of the sacred pencil: I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory. Rev. xviii. 1. The last clause is, I think, one of the most masterly touches of descriptive painting extant in history, poetry, or oratory. Milton gives us a stricture of the same kind, and on the same subject. But the poetic flight, though very sublime, is absolutely inferior to the apocalyptic vision.

——On he led
His radiant files, dazzling the moon.

In this case, we have a whole brigade of celestial warriors; in the former, only a single angelic being. Those are represented as irradiating the night, and outshining the moon; this, as exceeding the brightness of the sun; diffusing additional splendours on the day; and illuminating, not a vast plain, not a vaster kingdom, but the whole face of the globe. If such be the lustre of the servant, what images can display the majesty of the Lord? who has thousand thousands of these glorious attendants ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him? Dan. iii. 10.

† The dignity of our Lord, considered as the Creator and Preserver of all things, is not mentioned here; because something of this kind is professedly attempted in the "Descant upon Creation," subjoined to the "Meditations among the Tombs,"

He will gather to his sacred fold the people of his ancient church, though they are dispersed into all lands, and most inveterately prejudiced against the truth of his gospel. How mighty was his hand, how illustriously outstretched his arm, when he made a path through the surges of the ocean, drove the torrent of Jordan backwards, and fetched rivers of water from the flinty rock! Far more mighty will be its operations, when he shall remove the seemingly insurmountable obstructions to the general restoration of the Jews; shall throw all their religious apprehensions into a new channel; and cause tears of penitential sorrow to start from their stony eyes, confessions of unfeigned faith to issue from their blaspheming lips.—Yet thus it will assuredly be. In the volume of the divine book it is written, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn." Zech. xii. 10. They shall adore as the Messiah the once despised Galilean, and fix all their hopes of final felicity on that very person whom their fathers slew and hanged on a tree.

Amazing revolution in the religious world! Yet this, together with the destruction of Antichrist, and the illumination of the benighted Gentiles, may pass for small incidents, compared with those stupendous events, which will dignify and signalize the closing scene of affairs.

Then shall the Lord Jesus be manifested in unspeakable glory, and exert such acts of omnipotence as will be the terror of hell, the joy of heaven, the wonder of eternity. Then will he put an end to time, and bid the springs of nature cease to operate. Then shall his tremendous trumpet rend the universal vault, and pierce the dormitories of the dead. Then will he "shake the earth out of its place," Job ix. 6, and before his majestic presence the "heavens shall flee away."* Then shall, not a nation only, but multitudes, multitudes of nations, "be born in a day," Isa. lx. 8, yea, rather, in an hour, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. All that are asleep in the beds of death; even those who, perishing in tempests, are sunk to the bottom of the ocean, or, swallowed up by earthquakes, are buried at the centre of the globe—all shall hear his voice; and hearing, shall awake; and awaking, shall come forth. Every human body, though ages have revolved since it gave up the ghost; though worms have devoured the flesh, and dissolution moulder-ed the bones; though its parts have been grinded by the teeth of beasts, or consumed by the rage of fire; dissipated in viewless winds, or scattered over the boundless globe; lost to our senses, and lost even to our imagination—yet will every human body then be restored; its limbs re-assembled, and not an atom wanting; its frame rebuilt, and never be demolished more.

Then shall the unnumbered myriads of departed spirits return from their separate abodes; and, commissioned by him "who is the resurrection and the life," reanimate each his organized system. Then shall Satan and his accomplices, those execrable and horrid criminals, be dragged from their dungeons of darkness, and receive their doom at the Redeemer's tribunal. Then will misery and happiness, both consummate, and both everlasting, be awarded by the Saviour's sentence. Then will he consign over the ungodly world, and the rebellious angels, to the flames of hell, and to agonies of despair. Then will he invest the righteous with the inheritance of heaven, and instate them in the fulness of joy. His word is fate; immutability seals, and eternity executes, whatever he decrees.

And has this Jesus, so glorious so majestic, so adorable—has he vouchsafed to take our nature, and become our righteous-

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&c. To which I beg leave to refer my readers; and shall more than make amends for the present omission, by transcribing a passage from the "Night Thoughts," which presents us with a magnificent display of this great truth.

——Thou, by whom all worlds
Were made, and one redeem'd; whose regal power
On more than adamantine basis fix'd,
O'er more, far more than diadems and thrones
Inviolably reigns; beneath whose foot,
And by the mandate of whose awful nod,
All regions, revolutions, fortunes, fates,
Of high, of low, of mind and matter, roll
Through the short channels of expiring time,
Or shoreless ocean of eternity.
Night Thoughts, No. 9.

* How grand is the idea, when David prays, "Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke." Much grander is the image, when he says, "The springs of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered, at thy chiding, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy displeasure." Transcendently and inimitably grand is this description, though given us by the most plain and artless writer in the world: "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away, and there was no place found for them." Rev. xx. 11.

In Virgil's admired representation, Jupiter hurls his thunder, and a mountain falls at the stroke:—

—— "Ille flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit." *Georg. I. 331.*

In Homer's more terror-striking piece, Neptune shakes the wide extended earth. The mountains tremble to their centre; the ocean heaves its billows and cities reel on their foundations;—

—— Αυταρ ενερθε Ποσειδαων ετιναξε
Γαιαν απειρετιην, ορεων τ' αιπεινα καρηνα.
Παντες δ' εσσειοντο ποδες πολυπιδακος Ιδης,
Και κορυφαι, Τρωωντε πολις, και νηες Αχαιων
Iliad Y. 57.

Here the son of the eternal God appears only, and all nature is alarmed; nor heaven nor earth can keep their standing; they flee away, like the frighted roe. How grovelling are the loftiest flights of the Grecian and Roman muse, compared with this magnificence and elevation of the prophetic spirit!

ness? was he made under the law? did he fulfil all its demands? give perfect satisfaction to the penal, and yield perfect obedience to the preceptive? on purpose that the merit of all might be made over to us? Astonishing condescension! ineffable grace! What thanks are due to such infinitely rich goodness! What a remedy is here, for the impotence and guilt of fallen man! What a sure foundation of hope, and what an abundant source of joy, to every one that believeth!

It is declared by the Oracle of God, "That such an high Priest became us," was absolutely necessary for our obnoxious and ruined condition, "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners—and made higher than the heavens." Heb. vii. 26. It appears, I flatter myself, from the letter already in your hand, that Christ fully answered the former character; and from this epistle I hope it will appear that he is the very person described in the latter clause.

Estimate now, my dear friend, estimate if you can, the glory and excellency of this sublime Person. Then may you learn how to state the worth of his righteousnesss, and the degree of affiance suited to his merits. Rather you will perceive, that his spotless birth, his perfectly obedient life, his exquisitely bitter death, are a satisfaction of unknown dignity; precious,* far beyond all the graces of men, and all the duties of angels; able to save to the uttermost all that rely on them, and come unto God through them.

Consonant to this are the sentiments of that penetrating critic and profound scholar, Dr. Lightfoot, who, treating of our Saviour's obedience, says—"Add to all this, the dignity of his person who performed this obedience; that he was God as well as man: and his obedience is infinite; such as in its validity subdued Satan, and in its all-sufficiency satisfied the justice of God. After which, our celebrated author makes this important and delightful improvement: "Think, Christian, what a stock of obedience and righteousness here is for thee, to answer and satisfy for thy disobedience and unrighteousness, if thou become a child of the covenant. Here is enough for every soul that comes to him, be they never so many. Like the widow's oil in the book of Kings, there is enough and enough again, and as long as any vessel is brought to receive it."†

We need not wonder that Gentiles, who are ignorant of the Redeemer; that Jews, who treat him with contemptuous scorn; that professors of religion, who deny his eternal Godhead; place little, if any confidence in his righteousness. But it is strange that Christians, who know the Saviour, who acknowledge his divinity; and believe him to be exalted above all blessing and praise—it is exceedingly strange, that they do not rejoice in him, make their boast of him, and say, with a becoming disdain, of every other dependence, "Get ye hence!" Isaiah xxx. 22.

Such an assemblage of divine perfections must warrant, must demand, the most undivided, and the most unbounded confidence. There never was, no, not in all ages, nor in all worlds, any thing greater or richer, more dignified or exalted, than the obedience of our Lord. Nay, it is impossible to imagine what could be so suited to our wants, so proper for our reliance, or so sure to answer, more than answer, all our expectations.

Remember what the apostle affirms, and you will not wonder at my assertion: "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." How comprehensive and exalted is this description! It collects into a point all the rays of majesty and honour. It expresses in a sentence, I say, not whatever this pen has written, but whatever of dignity and excellence the Bible itself contains,—"The Godhead," the nature and essence of the Deity: "the fulness of the Godhead," unerring wisdom, almighty power, and whatever the great Jehovah challenges as his own: "all the fulness;" every adorable attribute, in the most ample measure, and in the highest degree: All this "dwells," not visits occasionally, but statedly, invariably, eternally resides; "dwells in Christ Jesus bodily," with an union inconceivably close and intimate; insomuch that the Godhead inhabiting, and the manhood inhabited, make but one and the same Person.

Therefore, adds the sacred disputant, "Ye are complete in Him," Col. ii. 9, 10. Never was any conclusion more weighty in itself, or founded on more solid principles. Ye are not only pardoned, but reconciled; and not only reconciled, but justified; nay, ye are—and what can be said or desired more?—"ye are complete:" And not barely before men or angels, but before infinite purity, and omniscience itself, "Ye are made," (amazing and charming truth!) "the righteousness of God," 2 Cor. v. 21. in this wonderful Saviour. What a fountain is this, or rather what a sea of fathomless depth, to obliterate all sins, and supply all wants? What a mirror of God's stupendous grace, and ever to be adored loving kindness.

Here let our meditations fix, and here let all our expectations centre. From this, not from any thing of our own, let us derive our peace, our joy, our supreme compla-

* This is expressed by the sacred historian with an energy which no translation can equal, την τιμην τε τετιμημενε, ον ετιμησαντο απο υιων Ισραηλ. Matth. xxvii. 9.

† Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 1253.

ceney. Into this subject we can never dive too deeply. Of this subject we can never think too magnificently. The righteousness of Christ is the master-pillar, on which our eternal welfare rests. Nay, it is the only support which preserves us from sinking into endless perdition.

> There hangs all human hope; that nail supports
> Our falling universe.

This renders his intercession prevalent. He is an advocate, a successful advocate with the Father. Why? Because he is "Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John ii. 1.—From hence results his ability to justify. "He shall justify many," saith the Lord Jehovah. On what consideration? Because he "is my righteous servant." Isaiah liii. 11. This, and no other, is the meritorious cause of our salvation. "Judah shall be saved;" shall escape damnation, and inherit glory. On what account? On account of "the righteous Branch raised up unto David."* Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.—Since, then, our acceptance, justification, and salvation; since our comfort in time, and our happiness to eternity, all depend upon the righteousness of Christ; how should we delight in contemplating its faultless, its matchless, its transcendent excellency?—Grand! all-sufficient! in every respect perfect! Nothing equal to it, on earth, in heaven, throughout the universe! surpassing the enormity of our guilt! surpassing the reach of our imagination! surpassing all that we can express or conceive! being truly, properly, absolutely divine!

And is this righteousness mine? is this righteousness yours, Theron? is this righteousness free for every sinner? Pleasing, captivating, rapturous thought? Who can forbear exulting and triumphing in this boundless, this infinite blessing? On such an occasion, methinks, some sallies of enthusiasm, or even starts of tautology, are the language of sensibility, of propriety, of nature. "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord, the Lord himself hath done it." Our justifying righteousness is finished; finished by Jehovah, sojourning in human clay. "Shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest, and every tree therein. For the Lord hath most marvellously redeemed Jacob, and no less illustriously glorified himself in the recovery of Israel." Isaiah xliv. 23. O for the tongue of a seraph! But even this would be defective; such ardour cold, and such energy languid.

I have done; I add no more; I leave it—to some future letter? to some more laboured essay? No; but to the hymns of heaven, and the adorations of eternity, to supply the deficiency of my acknowledgments. In the mean time, let me entreat my Theron to contemplate our Lord Jesus Christ under that most illustrious character described by the prophet, "a Priest upon his throne," Zech. vi. 13, dignifying the sacerdotal censer by the regal diadem; adding all the honours of his eternal divinity to the sacrifice of his bleeding humanity. Then, I promise myself, you will find it almost impossible not to adopt the emphatical and ardent protestation of the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory," that I should confide, "save only in the obedience and the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord!"

When you made the tour of France and Italy, and, crossing the Alps, gained the summit of some commanding ridge; when you looked round with astonishment and delight on the ample plains, which, crowded with cities, and adorned with palaces, stretch their beauteous tracts below; when you surveyed the famous rivers that roll in silent but shining dignity, stating the boundaries of kingdoms, and wafting plenty through the gladdened nations; when you shot your transported view to the ocean, whose unmeasurable flood meets the arch of heaven, and terminates the landscape with inconceivable grandeur; did you then choose to forego the pleasure resulting from such a prospect, in order to gaze upon the naked crag of some adjacent rock; or could you turn your eyes from those magnificent objects, and fasten them with pleased attention upon a shallow puddle that lay stagnating at your feet?

You who have beheld the scene, can accommodate the simile with peculiar advantage. For which reason, I shall wave the application, and only beg leave to transcribe a wish that is now warm on my heart, and is often breathed in supplication from my lips: May the Father of our spirits, and the Fountain of wisdom, give us an enlightened "understanding to know him that is true!" grant us the inestimable blessing, "that we may be in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: For this Saviour is the true God, and that privilege is life eternal." 1 John v. 20.

My Theron needs no argument to convince him, that such a prayer is an act of rational and real friendship—is the most genuine and substantial proof, that I am

His truly affectionate

ASPASIO.

* I believe it will be needless to observe, that the salvation mentioned in this and other passages of like import, is not limited to a temporal deliverance, but extends to a state of spiritual and eternal happiness. The temporal is only a subordinate blessing; a kind of appendage to the other; somewhat like the halo round the globe of the moon, or that faint and secondary range of colours which frequently attends the glowing rainbow.

LETTER IX.

THERON TO ASPASIO.

DEAR ASPASIO,—YOUR two letters have reached my hand, and I hope they have not missed my heart. I might inform you what pleasure they gave me, and how highly I esteem them. But you desire no such compliments; you desire to see me impressed with the sentiments, and living under their influence. This would be the most acceptable acknowledgment to my Aspasio, because it would be the most happy effect to his Theron. May every day, therefore, bring a fresh accession of such gratitude to me, and of such satisfaction to you!

To watch for my soul, and pray for my salvation, I am thoroughly convinced, is the truest instance of rational and exalted friendship. Every claim to that amiable character is defective and vain, if it does not extend to our spiritual interests and our everlasting welfare. For which reason I need not entreat you to continue and perpetuate this best expression of social kindness. Or, if I do, it is rather to testify how much I prize the favour, than to prompt your affectionate and ready mind.

Your last found me at a friend's house, which lies pretty near the western ocean. Yesterday, waked by the lark, and rising with the dawn, I strolled into the fragrant air and dewy fields; while, as Shakespeare, with his usual sprightliness expresses himself,

> ——Jocund day,
> Stood tip-toe on the misty mountain's top.

Sweet was the breath of morn, and sweet the exhalations of the freshened flowers; grateful were the soft salutes of the cooling zephyrs, attended with the charm of earliest birds; delightful the sun, painting with his orient beams the chambers of the firmament, and unveiling the face of universal nature.

My mind, but little affected with these inferior entertainments, was engaged in contemplating an object of infinitely superior dignity; in contemplating that adorable Being, who raised, from nothing raised, this stupendous system of things, and supports, with his word supports, the magnificent frame; who (to speak in the language of his own Spirit) "openeth the eyelids of the morning, and commandeth the day-spring to know its place;" Job xxxviii. 12; commandeth the light, by its punctual and pleasing ministrations, to draw aside the curtain of darkness, and discover the skies shining with glories, and disclose the earth blooming with beauties.

"Father of light and life," said my transported mind,

> ——Thou Good Supreme!
> O teach me what is good! teach me Thyself.
> Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
> From every low pursuit! and feed my soul
> With faith, with conscious peace, and virtue pure,
> Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss.
> *Thomson's Winter.*

Wrapt in wonder, and lost in thought, I rambled carelessly along, till I was insensibly brought to the shore, which, in these parts is prodigiously high and strong, perfectly well fitted to stand as an everlasting barrier* against the impetuous stroke of conflicting winds, and the ponderous sweep of dashing surges. Not that the omnipotent Engineer has any need of these impregnable ramparts. Here it is true, they intervene, and not only repress the rolling invader, but speak the amazing majesty of their Maker. In other places, all such laboured methods of fortification are laid aside. The Creator shows the astonished world that he is confined to no expedients, but orders all things "according to the pleasure of his own will." He bids a low bank of despicable sand receive and repel the most furious shocks of assaulting seas; and "though the waves thereof toss themselves" with incredible fierceness, yet can they not prevail; though "they roar," and seem to menace universal destruction, "yet can they not pass over," Jer. v. 22, this slightest of mounds.

A winding passage broke the declivity of the descent, and led me by a gradual slope to the bottom. The moon being in her last quarter, and the tide at its greatest recess, I walked for a while, where briny waves were wont to flow. The ebbing waters had left a vacant space several furlongs broad, equal in length to a very extended vista, smooth on its surface as the most level bowling-green, and almost as firm as the best compacted causeway. Insomuch that the tread of a horse scarce impresses it, and the waters of the sea never penetrate it. Exclusive of this wise contrivance, the searching waves would insinuate themselves into the heart of the earth: the earth itself would be hollow as a honey-comb, or bibulous as a sponge; and the sea, soaking by degrees through all its cavities, would in process of time forsake its bed, and mingle with the plains and mountains. But this closely cemented or glutinous kind of pavement, is like claying the bottom of the universal canal; so that the returning tides consolidate, rather than perforate its substance, and prevent the sun from cleaving it

* These, doubtless, "are the doors and the bars," which the Almighty mentions in the course of his awful interrogatories to Job: the massy doors, which can never be forced: the solid bars, which can never be broke; and, I may add, the conspicuous columns on which his Providence has inscribed that sovereign mandate, "Ne plus ultra." Or, as the prohibition runs in his own majestic words, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther." Job xxxviii. 10.

with chinks. Such, I hope, will be the case with this soul of mine, amid the temptations that beset me. Beset me they do, they will; but may they never win upon my affections, nor gain admittance into my heart! Let them make me humble, and keep me vigilant; teach me to walk closely with my God, and urge me to an incessant dependance on Christ. Then, instead of being ruinous, they may become advantageous; and instead of shattering, will only cleanse the rock on which they dash.

The mighty waters, restless even in their utmost tranquillity, with a solemn but placid murmur struck my ear. The billows sometimes advancing to kiss the sand, sometimes drawing back their curly heads into the deep, whitened at their extremities into an agreeable foam; which, with the reflexive representation of the azure canopy, formed the appearance of a most spacious floating mantle, tinged with a beautiful blue, and edged with fringes of silver. Dignity and elegance, I find, are the inseparable characteristics of the Creator's workmanship; as comfort and happiness, I sometimes perceive, are the very spirit of his gospel, and the genuine produce of its commands.

On one side, the Atlantic main rolled its surges from world to world.—Immense, immense diffusion of waters! What a spectacle of magnificence and terror! What an irrisistible incitement to reverence and awe! How it fills the mind and amazes the imagination! It is the grandest and most august object under the whole heavens. It reminds me of that apocalyptic vision which John, the enraptured seer, beheld! "As it were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood, and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed," Rev. viii. 8, 9. I have not penetration enough to discover the spiritual meaning of this passage; but I discern a most dreadful grandeur in its plain and literal sense. If we consider the wonderful compass and the terrible force of such an enormous mass of fire: if we consider its horrible and destructive effects on such a vast body of waters as the third part of the ocean; how tremendous and astonishing is the idea! Surely nothing but divine inspiration could suggest these images; as none but an almighty Being can execute this vengeance! Who would not fear an eternal King, that has such weapons, and such artillery reserved against the day of battle and war? Job xxxviii. 23.

Spacious as the sea is, God has provided a garment to cover it. Profound as the sea is, God has prepared swaddling-bands to wrap it. Ungovernable as it may seem to us, he overrules it with as much ease as the nurse manages a new born infant, Job xxxviii. 8, 9. An infant it is before almighty power, and to an infant it is compared by Jehovah himself: though, to our apprehension, it raves like a stupendous madman. But if he command, it opens a peaceful bosom, and receives his people. It smooths the way for their passage, and stands as a bulwark for their defence. They march "through the midst of the sea upon dry ground, and the waters are a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," Exod. xiv. 22. If he reverses his mandate, they drive down with an irresistible sweep, upon the hosts of Pharaoh, and overwhelm the chariots and horses of Egypt. They pour confusion upon arrogance,* and disappoint the designs of persecution and cruelty. If he says "Be still," the bellowing surges are hushed, and the gentlest lamb is not so quiet. If he says, "Destroy," even the quiescent waters kindle into rage; they rise in their Maker's cause, and ten thousand lions, stung with hunger and rushing upon their prey, are not so fierce. When he bids them execute any other commission, the horse broke to the bit, the spaniel disciplined to the signal, are not half so dutiful and obsequious. And shall our passions be more wild than the winds, more turbulent than the billows? Forbid it, almighty Lord! "Thou that rulest the raging of the sea, and the noise of his waves, restrain, subdue, and calm the madness of the people."

The eye travels hard: It wanders over a vast, vast length of fluctuating plains. It reaches the limits of the hemisphere where skies and waves seem to mingle. Yet it has scarce made an entry upon the world of waters. What I here discern, is no more than the skirts of the great and wide sea. Tracts incomparably broader are still behind; and tracts of unbounded extent are behind even those. Great then, O my soul, inconceivably great, is that adored and glorious sovereign, who sitteth upon this flood as upon a throne! Psal. xxix. 10; nay, who holds it, diffused as it is from pole to pole, in the hollow of his hand; and before whom,

* *Arrogance*—This is described with exquisite delicacy, in the Επινικιον, or triumphant song of Moses. "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, mine hand shall destroy them." What swelling words of vanity are here!—The very spirit of a Thraso breathes in every syllable of this beautiful prosopopæia. Never was the language of bluster, ferocity, and rhodomontade, so finely mimicked. How noble is the turn, and how exalted the sentiment which follows! "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters." The God of Israel need not summon all his power, or level the right-aiming thunderbolts: he only blows with his winds, and the great mountain breaks like a bubble. All this insolent and formidable parade is quashed: sinks into nothing, expires in shame and ruin. Exod. xv. 9. 10.

in all its prodigious dimensions, it is but as the drop of a bucket. How shall reptiles of the ground sink low enough in their own apprehensions? What humiliation can be sufficiently deep for sinful mortals before this high and holy One! Yet how may they rise on the wings of hope! how may they soar on the pinions of faith! when, in the language of his prophet, and in his own Son's name, they thus address the everlasting God. "Awake! Awake! put on strength, O arm of the Lord! awake for our succour and security, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep? that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? Isa. li. 9, 10.

How grand, surprisingly grand and majestic are the works as well as the attributes of an omnipotent Being! What are all the canals in all the countries of the earth compared with this immense reservatory! What are all the superb edifices erected by royal munificence, compared with yonder concave of the skies! And what are the most pompous illuminations of theatres and triumphant cities, compared with the resplendent source of day! They are a spark, an atom, a drop.—Nay, in every spark, and atom, and drop, which proceeds from the hand of the Almighty, there is the manifestation of a wisdom and a power absolutely incomprehensible.

Let us examine a single drop of water, the very least quantity that the eye can discern; only so much as will just adhere to the point of a needle. In this almost imperceptible speck, a famous philosopher computes no less than thirteen thousand globules. Amazing to conceive! impossible to explicate!—If, then, in so small a speck, abundantly more than ten thousand globules exist, what myriads of myriads must float in the unmeasured extent of the ocean!—Let the ablest arithmetician try to comprehend in his mind, not the internal constitution, but only the number of these fluid particles. As well may he grasp the winds in his fist, or mete out the universe with his span, as execute the task. If, then, we are utterly unable to number (which is the most superficial of all researches) even the most common works of the great Jehovah; how can we pretend to lay open the secrets, and penetrate the recesses of his infinite mind! How can we pretend to investigate the whole process, and solve all the difficulties of that highest and deepest of the divine schemes, redemption!

I have sometimes been offended, I must confess, when you have enlarged upon the mysterious truths of Christianity. But I perceive the beam was in my own eye, when I fancied the mote was in my friend's. Is there, in every ray of light, and in every particle of matter, a depth of contrivance unfathomable by the line of any human understanding? And shall there be nothing abstruse or profound, nothing but what is level to our scanty apprehensions, in the "great things," Hos. viii. 12, of God's law, and the "glorious things" Acts. ii. 11, of his gospel? To expect this is just as wise in itself, and just as congruous to nature, as to expect a sea, whose cavities might have been digged by our spade;—a sky, whose arches are measurable by our compass;—a sun, whose orb may be included in our lanterns.

When, therefore, I read of One uncreated and eternal Being, subsisting in Three divine Persons; when I hear of an infinitely pure and perfect God, made flesh for the redemption of sinful men; when I meditate upon the righteous and universal Judge, reconciling the world unto himself by the death of his own Son; when a thousand curious and inquisitive thoughts are ready to arise on the occasion: I will bid them first sound the depths of a single drop, and then apply their plummet to the boundless ocean. This I am very sure, is not weak credulity, nor wild enthusiasm; but the maturest dictate of reason, and the very precision of truth. Let then the Great Creator make that sublime declaration: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," Isa. lv. 9. Let every human creature add that humble acknowledgment, "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33; and not devotion only, but reason and truth will say "Amen" to both.

You see, Aspasio, how I am trying to adopt your spirit. You will observe the willing scholar, though not the great proficient. But stay! Is this right? to divert from such commanding subjects, and take notice of mere punctilios? My friend may spare his frowns: I am surprised and angry at myself. Away with the little arts of self-recommendation. Self should be forgot, should be swallowed up and lost in devout astonishment, when we are viewing the magnificence, and meditating on the wonders of creation.

Behind me, and far off to the north, Cambria's dusky coasts just, and but just emerged. Lost were all her woods and mountains. Instead of ornamented towns and cultivated plains, a confused mist, or a low-hung cloud, seemed to hover on the ocean's remotest brim. Behind me! Remembrance is roused at the expression, and conscience sharpens her sting. Ah! how often, and how long have I treated in this very man-

er, the noblest scenes, and the sublimest joys!. have turned my back—ungrateful and besotted creature!—upon the heavenly country, and wandered from the regions of infinite delight! Therefore now they appear dim. I have scarcely a glimpse of their transcendent excellencies. Or if I see them by faith, it is with frequent intermissions, and much obscurity. Turn me, O thou God of my salvation, turn me from pursuing phantoms, and attach me to thy blessed self. Let me henceforth steer an invariable course to Emmanuel's kingdom. May its treasures, as I advance, open to my view, and its glories brighten in my eye. O! may some odours, better, far better, than Sabæan spicy odours,* exhale from the delectable hills and the celestial shores!—But chiefly, thou eternal Spirit, breathe upon my soul, both by thy convincing and comforting influences! nor ever cease to swell my sails, and speed my progress, till I arrive at "the land that is very far off, and see the King," the King of grace and of glory, "in all his ineffable beauty." Isa. xxxiii. 17.

On my left hand, a range of mountainous cliffs rose in a perpendicular direction. The huge pile extended, as far as the sight could discern, its black boundaries. Here bending inwards to the land; there bellying out into the deep; everywhere projecting a shade several leagues across the ocean.

The height of these cliffs so prodigious, that every human creature who comes near the summit starts back terrified and aghast. Only a few straggling goats venture to graze on the top; and these, to a person walking below, appear but as specks of moving white; while the sea-mews, that winnow the air about the middle steep, look like winged animalcules pursuing their little sports in a different region. The aspect of these cliffs, so wild and horrid, it is impossible to behold them without a shivering dread. The spectator is apt to imagine, that nature had formerly suffered some violent convulsions, or been shattered by the flaming bolts, and that these are the dismembered remains of the dreadful stroke; the ruins, not of Persepolis or Palmyra, but of the world!

Amazing! What adventurous daring creature is yonder gathering samphire from the cavities of the rocks! He has let himself down several fathoms beneath the black and dizzy summit. He gleans a poor livelihood, from the edges of danger, shall I say? rather, from the jaws of death. I cannot discern the rope to which he clings. He seems to be suspended over the tremendous precipice by a thread, by a hair, by nothing.—I will look no longer. The very sight chills my veins. While I view his perilous elevation, I can think of nothing but a headlong downfall and fractured bones; of brains left to reek on the pointed crags, and blood streaming on the discoloured beach.

Suppose (if the mind can bear so shocking a supposition) some poor wretch, exposed on the brow of this stupendous promontory; without any support for his feet; and cleaving only to a weak slender shrub, which but just adheres to the interstices of the rock: what tumultuous throbbings seize his breast! what a dying paleness invades his cheeks! and what agonies of fear rend his heart, as he hangs projecting over the ragged precipice; and surveys the ocean, deep, wondrous deep, below! The bough gives way. His only hope fails. It yields more and more to his weight. Good heavens! he sinks! he sinks!—O! for some friendly hand, to snatch him from perishing! Millions, millions of gold, were the cheap purchase of such a mercy. There was a time, my soul, when thou wast in a situation, equally, shall I say? infinitely more dangerous; tottering, not only on the verge of life, but on the very brink of hell. Remember that compassionate arm, which was stretched out, in the very article of need, to rescue thee from imminent and everlasting perdition. Never forget that gracious voice which said, in accents sweeter than the music of the seraphic choir, "Deliver him from going down into the pit. Let his health be restored, and his day of grace be prolonged."

In some places, the hideous ruins not only tower to the skies, but lean over the strand. Prominent and frightfully pendulous, they nod horror, and threaten destruction on all below. A person congratulates himself when he has got clear of the bending precipice, and can hardly forbear thinking that the enormous load is withheld by some unseen hand, till the execrable wretch, doomed to a most astonishing vengeance, is come within reach of the blow. And truly, if he had the strength of the elephant, or the firmness of the behemoth, this must grind him to powder, or even crush him into atoms.

How awful to consider, that there is a day coming, when wicked potentates and haughty monarchs will beg of yonder seas to yawn compassionately deep, and hide them in their darkest abysses—hide them from the piercing eye and avenging sword of inflexible justice: That there is a day

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* Alluding to these lines in Milton!

——— As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mosambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabæan odour from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest'd, and many a league
Cheer'd with the grateful smell old ocean smiles.
Book IV. l. 159.

coming, when the soft voluptuary, the wanton beauty, and all the ungodly of the earth, will beseech these tremendous ridges, with all their unsupportable burden of craggy rocks, to rush down upon their guilty heads! Rev. iv. 15, 16, if by this means they may be screened from the infinitely more dreaded weight of divine indignation.

Vain are their cries; and vainer still would be their refuge, should their passionate requests be granted. Can floods conceal the impious wretches, when the caverns of the ocean shall be laid bare, and the foundations of the world be discovered? Can rocks secrete an obnoxious rebel, when rocks, with all their marble quarries and adamantine entrails, shall dissolve like melting wax? when hills, that plunge their roots to the centre, and lose their towering heads in air, shall start from their affrighted base,* and flee away like a withered leaf? Good God!† what racking anguish must they feel! what inexpressibly severer torment must they fear! who can implore, ardently implore as a most desirable favour, what imagination itself shudders to conceive.

In some places, these mountainous declivities lift their brow aloft, plant their basis deep, and, instead of portending a fall, defy the fury of the most impetuous elements. Firmly consolidated, and steadfastly established, they have withstood the united, the repeated assaults of winds and waves, through a long series of revolving ages. The sacred writers, I observe, select almost all the striking images which the whole creation affords, in order to communicate their heavenly ideas with the greatest advantage. Isaiah, describing the security of the righteous, takes his comparison from the grand spectacle before my eyes: "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks," Isaiah xxxiii. 16, inaccessible as those lofty ridges, immoveable as their everlasting foundations.

Should it be asked, what these munitions of rocks may signify? I find two places of refuge and safeguard pointed out in scripture; to either of which, I believe, the metaphor is applicable. "He had horns," says one of the divine pindarics, "coming out of his hand; there was the hiding of his power,* Hab. iii. 5. Uncontrollable and omnipotent power was lodged in the great Jehovah's hand; and this was the sure defence, this the impregnable garrison, for all his people. The church of Christ is said to be "in the clefts of the rock,† Cant. ii. 14; that "spiritual rock," of which the Israelites drank in the wilderness; whose sacred clefts were opened when the bloody spear tore up the Redeemer's side, and cut a wide and deadly passage to his heart. Surely, "the inhabitants of this Rock have reason to sing, Isa. xlii. 11. What should disquiet them? Who can destroy them? Why should not the voice of joy be in their dwellings, and that hymn of holy triumph in their mouths, "We have a strong city. Salvation hath God appointed, salvation

* This brings to our remembrance a most sublime description of the divine power, which arises in a beautiful climax, and terminates in this grand idea: "The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation, the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn." Psalm xxix. 4—6.

The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation. This is the general proposition, which, in the following sentences, we see most magnificently illustrated. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, when he speaks in thunder, and bids the lightning execute his orders. the trees, the cedar trees, those sturdiest productions of the earth, are shivered to pieces. Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon, which for stateliness and strength, surpass the oaks of the forest, surpass every tree of the field, almost as much as the oak exceeds a shrub. It is a small thing with Jehovah, to rend the trunks, to tear up the roots, and make those massy bodies skip like a calf, even Lebanon and Sirion, the mountains on which they grow, tremble before their God. They are thrown into strange commotions; they are ready to spring from their foundations; and with all their load of woods and rocks, appear like some affrighted or some sportive animal, that starts with horror, or leaps with exultation.

† *Good God!*—This exclamation is introduced on a very serious occasion, and used with an apparent air of reverence. Under which circumstances, perhaps, it may be sometimes allowable, and not dishonourable to the divine Majesty. But when it is admitted into ordinary conversation, on trifling occurrences, and with a levity of temper, it is itself a very great offence, and discovers a very irreligious spirit. It is so great an offence, that the God of heaven and earth declares himself the avenger of all such transgressors. He will not hold them guiltless, or he will assuredly punish them. And if God condemn, who shall acquit? If he will punish, who can deliver from his hand? It discovers a very irreligious spirit; is a most dangerous symptom, somewhat like a plague spot on the conversation. It shows that there is no saving health, no life of God in the soul. Was there any sensibility in the conscience, any grace in the heart, it would be impossible to treat so wantonly and so presumptuously that glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God. Deut. xxviii. 58.

* Horns were an emblem of strength. A horn of salvation is put for a mighty and effectual salvation, Luke ii. 69. Thou hast heard me from among the horns of the unicorns; thou hast rescued me from the most potent and formidable enemies, Psal. xxii. 21. Here the word seems to denote that power of Jehovah, to which nothing is impossible, and more than seems, if we consult the next clause. There was the hiding of his power; or, as it may be rendered, "his powerful hiding," a most secure refuge, a sanctuary absolutely inviolable. I have accommodated this passage to a different sense, See Meditations. But the true signification, most suitable to the context, and most subservient to the prophet's design, is, I apprehend, given by Theron. It is something like an exalted sentiment in the Night Thoughts, which, with a small alteration, may serve as a paraphrase on the text:

And nature's shield the hollow of his hand.
A Christian's shield the hollow of his hand.

† Should the reader have an inclination to see this sacred, but mysterious book explained, I would refer him to Dr Gill's Exposition of the Canticles: which has such a copious vein of sanctified invention running through it, and is interspersed with such a variety of delicate and brilliant images, as cannot but highly entertain a curious mind; which presents us also with such rich and charming displays of the glory of Christ's person, the freeness of his grace to sinners, and the tenderness of his love to the church, as cannot but administer the most exquisite delight to the believing soul. Considered in both these views, I think the work resembles the paradisaical garden described by Milton, in which

Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue.
Appear'd with gay enamell'd colours mix'd.

itself" "for walls and bulwarks," Isa. xxvi. 1. Happy should I think myself, if I was interested in this Saviour, and established on this Rock.

Yonder, on the summit of the most conspicious cliff, is erected a grand and stately pile. At the top, my glass discovers a superb lantern; at the foot, are the huts of fishermen, surrounded with various sorts of nets. It is, I suppose, a light-house; intended to apprise the sailor of devouring gulfs, and destructive shoals; or else to conduct him into a safe road, and secure harbour.

Both the situation and design of the building read me a lesson; the one of awful admonition, the other of comfortable instruction.—Comfortable instruction: How massy and ponderous is the edifice! yet there is not the least reason to be apprehensive of a failure in the foundation. Was the structure ten thousand times larger, the solid rock would support it with the utmost ease, and the utmost steadiness. Such is Christ, such are his merits, such his glorious righteousness, to those wise and blessed souls, who rest all the weight of their everlasting interests on him alone. Such, did I say? Much surer. For "the mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, Isa. liv. 10; but this divine basis can never sink, can never be shaken.—Awful admonition; For it recals to my memory that alarming yet welcome text,* which you styled the spiritual light-house; which has been as serviceable to my distressed mind and bewildered thoughts, as such an illuminated watch-tower to the wandering and benighted mariner. May I often view it; ever attend to its faithful direction; and be led, by its influences, into the haven, the desired haven of peace and salvation!

Let me once again survey those vast but noble deformities; those rude but majestic elevations of stone. Fortifications, reared by an almighty hand, to protect us at once from warring elements, and invading enemies. Ramparts, which overlook and command the ocean; which, viewed by distant mariners, seem to touch and prop the sky; which have surrounded our isle ever since the universal deluge, and will be her never-failing defence even to the general conflagration. If some opinionated engineer should take it into his head to suspect the stability of these unshaken and everlasting bulwarks; if he should make proposals for strengthening them with buttresses, or girding them round with cramping-irons, how would his project be received? with approbation and applause, or with contempt and indignation? "Fool that he is, to think of enlarging, corroborating, or improving the finished and magnificent works of nature, by the puny piddlings of art!" Such, so foolish and preposterous, was my once favourite conceit, of adding my own performances, in order to increase the justifying efficacy of Christ's obedience. What a disparagement was this to the great, the divine foundation! which, for the support and security of burdened and endangered sinners, is sufficient—is self-sufficient—is all-sufficient.

How changeable is the face of this liquid element! Not long ago, there was nothing, from this stony boundary to the horizon's utmost verge, but the wildest tumult and most horrible confusion. Now the stormy flood has smoothed its rugged brow, and the watery uproar is lulled into a profound tranquillity. Where rolling mountains rushed and raged, threatening to dash the clouds and deluge the earth; there the gentlest undulations play, and only just wrinkle the surface of the mighty bason. Where the dreadful abyss opened its wide and unfathomable jaws, to swallow up the trembling sailor and his shattered vessel; there a calm and clear expanse diffuses its ample bosom, alluring the fish to bask in the sun, and inviting the sea-fowl to watch for their prey.

In this fair-floating mirror, I see the picture of every cloud which passes through the regions of the sky. But in its uncertain and treacherous temperature, I see more plainly the unconstant and ever-variable condition of human affairs. I durst not be surety to the mariner for peaceful seas and soothing gales. I could not ascertain the continuance of this halcyon weather so much as a single day, or even to the next hour. And let me not fondly promise myself an uninterrupted tenor of serenity in my mind, or of prosperity in my circumstances. Sometimes, indeed, my heart exults under the smile of heaven and the favour of God: But soon, ah! too soon, I am clouded with fear, and oppressed with corruption. I sigh out that passionate acknowledgment, "Wretched man that I am!" and add that wishful inquiry, "Who shall deliver me?" For this disordered state of things, the afflicted patriarch's complaint is the most apposite motto, and the most wholesome memento: "Changes and war are around me." Job x. 17. But there is a world, where disastrous revolutions will be known no more; where our enjoyments will no longer fluctuate like the ocean, but be more steadfast than the rocks, and more immoveable than the shores.

Here I see an immense collection of waters in a state of deep repose. Could I extend my view to some remoter tracts, I should behold every thing smoother and calmer still. Not a furrow sinks, nor a

* See Rom. ix. 30—32. and above, Letter V.

ridge swells the surface of the ocean: It is all like a glassy plain. The waves are asleep? Echo is hushed: Not a gale stirs: The sea stagnates; the mariner is becalmed, and the vessel scarcely creeps. Whereas, could I survey the straits of Magellan, or the gut of Gibraltar, I should find a very striking difference. There the waters press in with vehemence, and rush forwards with impetuosity. All is there in strong agitation and rapid progress. The ship is whirled through the narrow passage, and rides, as it were, on the wheels of the surge, or on the wings of the wind. This, my dear Aspasio, is a true image of what I have been, and of what I am. Some months ago, when I was insensible of guilt, all my prayers were listless, and all my religion was a spiritual lethargy. I felt not in my heart what I uttered with my tongue. Hosannahs were but an empty ceremony, and confessions froze on my formal lips. But since the Spirit of God has awakened me from my dream, and convinced me of my sinfulness, I can no longer be satisfied with indolent and yawning devotions. Trials and temptations put strong cries into my mouth. My soul mourns before the Lord; my desires plead with the blessed God; and I am ready to say, as the patriarch of old, "I cannot, I must not, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." Gen. xxxii. 26.

I see no flocks of sheep, with sober assiduity, nibbling the grassy plains. No sportive lambs, with innocent gaiety, frisking along the sunny banks. Here are no stables for the generous steed, nor pastures for the lusty heifer. Nevertheless these watery regions are stocked with colonies of proper and peculiar inhabitants, who are clothed and accoutred in exact conformity to the clime; not in swelling wool or buoyant feathers, not in a flowing robe or a full-trimmed suit, but with as much compactness, and with as little superfluity as possible. They are clad, or rather sheathed in scales; which adhere closely to their bodies, and are always laid in a kind of natural oil; than which apparel, nothing can be more light, and at the same time, nothing more solid. It hinders the fluid from penetrating their flesh, it prevents the cold from coagulating their blood, and enables them to make their way through the waters with the utmost facility. They have each a curious instrument,* by which they increase or diminish their specific gravity; sink like lead, or float like a cork; rise to what height, or descend to what depth they please.

This is the abode of leviathan, hugest of living creatures. Before whom the broad-limbed elephant and the tall-necked camel, are mere shrimps; a stretched out promontory when he sleeps; a moving island when he swims; "making the sea to boil like a pot," when, unwieldily wallowing, he takes his prodigious pastime. Here the voracious shark, that tyrant of the fluid kingdoms, and assassin of the finny nations, roams and commits his ravages, imbrues his horrid fangs, and marks his rapid path with blood. Here dwelt that great, and greatly surprising fish, whose fierceness and avidity the almighty Sovereign employed, as his pursuivant, to arrest a fugitive prophet: whose ample jaws, or capacious entrails were the dungeon to confine a rebellious subject, and the cabin to lodge a penitent offender; whose bulk, and strength, and speed were a kind of vessel, transporting this convict to "the bottom of the mountains, and the bars of the earth." Jonah ii. 6. After the criminal was sufficiently chastised, and properly humbled, they served as a galley with oars to convey him safe to land.

In the same element resides (at least takes up part of his residence) that formidable monster, who is made without fear, and "has not his like upon earth." He esteemeth the pointed iron as straw, and ponderous brass as rotten wood. His heart is as hard as a piece of the nether-millstone, and his scales are a coat of impenetrable mail. Strength not to be resisted, much less to be subdued, lies entrenched in his sinewy neck. His eyes are like the eyelids of the opening day; and when he rolls those glaring orbs, there seems to be another morn risen on mid-noon. His teeth are terrible; jagged for rapine and edged with death. His throat is as a burning furnace; clouds of smoke are poured from his nostrils, and flakes of fire issue from his mouth. None, no not the most resolute, dares provoke him to the combat, or even stir him up from his slumbers. He laugheth at the shaking of the spear, "and sorrow marcheth in triumph before him,"* Job. xli. 22. Whenever he raiseth himself, the mighty are afraid; wherever he advanceth, ruin is there. If a mere creature is capable of spreading such alarm and dread, how greatly is the Crea-

* The air-bladder.

* פלגון חרוץ ראכח. "Mœror," says Bochart, "præcedit tanquam metator et comes, tumidique ante ambulo regis." Terror and anguish are a kind of advanced guard to this monarch among the reptiles; or, they go before the monster, as the man bearing a shield went before the Philistine giant.—The original word occurs in no other part of the divine book. I cannot recollect any expression, which so fully represents its meaning, as Homer's κοδίοων, or Xenophon's γαυριασθαι; both which are intended to describe the ardour and action of a high-mettled prancing steed.—The whole paragraph is a sketch of the crocodile's picture. It exhibits a few circumstances, culled from that inimitable description, extant in the book of Job, which are given either in the sacred writer's own words, or else in a paraphrastic explanation of their sense.

for himself to be feared! who can turn the most harmless inhabitant of the ocean into a ravenous alligator, or a horrid crocodile! who can arm every reptile of the ground with all the force and rage of a lion!

It is impossible to enter on the muster-roll those scaly herds, and that minuter fry, which graze the sea-weed, or stray through the coral groves. They are innumerable as the sands which lie under them; countless as the waves which cover them. Here are uncouth animals, of monstrous shapes,* and amazing qualities.† Some that have been discovered by the inquisitive eye of man; and many more, that remain among the secrets of the hoary deep. Here are shoals and shoals, of various characters, and of the most diversified sizes; from the cumbrous whale, whose flouncings tempest the ocean, to the evanescent anchovy, whose substance dissolves in the smallest fricassee. Some, lodged in their pearly shells, and fattening on their rocky beds, seem attentive to no higher employ than that of imbibing moist nutriment. These, but a small remove from vegetable life, are almost rooted to the rocks on which they lie reposed; while others, active as the winged creation, and swift as an arrow from the Indian bow, shoot along the yielding flood, and range at large the spacious regions of the deep.

Here is the tortoise, who never moves but under her own portable pent-house: The lobster, which, whether he sleeps or wakes, is still in a state of defence, and clad in jointed armour: The oyster, a sort of living jelly, engarrisoned in the bulwark of native stone; with many other kind of sea-reptiles, or, as the Psalmist speaks, "things creeping innumerable," Psal. civ. 25. I am surprised at the variety of their figure, and charmed with the splendour of their colours. Unsearchable is the wisdom, and endless the contrivance, of the all-creating God! Some are rugged in their form, and little better than hideous in their aspect. Their shells seem to be the rude production of a disorderly jumble, rather than the regular effects of skill and design. Yet we shall find, even in these seeming irregularities, the nicest dispositions. These abodes, uncouth as they may appear, are adapted to the genius of their respective tenants, and exactly suited to their particular exigences. Neither the Ionic delicacy, nor the Corinthian richness, nor any other order of architecture, would have served their purposes half so well as this coarse and homely fabric.

Some, on the other hand, are extremely neat. Their structure is all symmetry and elegance. No enamel in the world is comparable to their polish. There is not a room of state, in all the palaces of Europe, so brilliantly adorned as the dining-room and the bed-chamber of the little fish that dwells in mother of pearl. Such a lovely mixture of red, blue, and green, so delightfully staining the most clear and glittering ground, is no where else to be seen. The royal power may covet it, and human art may mimic it; but neither the one nor the other, nor both united, will ever be able to equal it.

But what I admire more than all their streaks, their spots, and their embroidery, is, the extraordinary provision made for their safety. Nothing is more relishing and palatable than their flesh; nothing more heavy and sluggish than their motions. As they have no speed to escape, neither have they any dexterity to elude the foe. Were they naked or unguarded, they must be an easy prey to every freebooter that roams the ocean. To prevent this fatal consequence, what is only clothing to other animals, is to them a clothing, a house and a castle. They have a fortification, that grows with their growth, and is a part of themselves. By this means, they live secure amidst millions and millions of ravenous jaws: by this means, they are embarked, as it were, in their own shell; and, screened from every other assault, are reserved for the use and pleasure of mankind.

This is the birth-place of cod, the standing repast of Lent. This is the nursery of

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* *Monstrous shapes.*—Such as the sword-fish, whose upper jaw is lengthened into a strong and sharp sword, with which he sometimes ventures to attack ships, and is capable of piercing their sides, though ribbed with oak. This may be called the champion of the waters; who, though never exceeding sixteen feet in length, yet, confiding in a weapon at once so trusty and so tremendous, scruples not to give battle, even to the whale himself. The sun-fish has no tail, seems to be all head; and was it not for two fins, which act the part of oars, would be one entire round mass of flesh. The polypus, remarkable for its numerous feet, and as many claws, by which it has the appearance of a mere insect, and seems fitted only to crawl. At the same time an excrescence, arising on the back, enables it to steer and pursue a steady course in the waves; so that it may pass under the twofold character of a sailor and a reptile.

† *Amazing qualities.*—Among these may be reckoned the torpedo, which benumbs on a sudden, and renders impotent, whatever fish it assaults; and, which is a more extraordinary property, strikes even the fisherman's arm, when he offers to lay hold on it, with a temporary deadness. By this means, it possesses the double advantage of arresting its prey, and securing itself.—The cuttle fish, furnished with a liquid magazine of a colour and consistence like ink, which, when pursued by an enemy, the creature emits and blackens the water. By this artifice, the foe is bewildered in the chase, and while the one vainly gropes in the dark, the other seizes the opportunity, and makes his escape.—The nautilus, whose shell forms a natural boat. The dexterous inhabitant unfurls a membrane to the wind, which serves him instead of a sail. He extends also a couple of arms, with which, as with two slender oars, he rows himself along. When he is disposed to dive, he strikes sail, and, without any apprehension of being drowned, sinks to the bottom. When the weather is calm, and he has an inclination to see the world, or take his pleasure, he mounts to the surface; and, self-taught in the art of navigation, performs his voyage without either chart or compass; is himself the vessel, the rigging, and the pilot.—For a more copious illustration of this amusing and wonderful subject, see Nature Displayed, vol. iii.

turbot, for its exquisite relish justly styled *the pheasant of the waters*. Hence comes the sturgeon, delicious even in pickle, and a regale for royal luxury; hence the flounders, dappled with reddish spots, and a supply for vulgar wants. Here dwell the mackerel, decked, when haled from their native element, richly decked with the most glossy dyes; the herring, whose back is mottled with azure, and his belly sleek with silver; the salmon, in plainer habit, but of larger substance, and higher esteem, than either or both the preceding. These, when shotten and lean, wander wildly up and down the vast abyss; when plump and delicate, they throng our creeks, and swarm in our bays —they repair to the shallows, or haunt the running streams. Who bids these creatures evacuate the shores, and disperse themselves into all quarters, when they become worthless and unfit for our service? Who rallies and recals the undisciplined vagrants, as soon as they are improved into desirable food? Who appoints the very scene of our ambushes to be the place of their rendezvous, so that they come like volunteers to our nets? Surely the furlough is signed, the summons issued, and the point of reunion settled, by a Providence ever indulgent to mankind, ever studious to treat us with dainties, and "load us with benefits," Psal. lxviii. 19.

We have wondered at* our Saviour's penetration and power:—his penetration, which, though the sea was at a distance, and walls intervened, discerned the fish that had just swallowed a piece of money;—his power, which, without any delay, brought the lawless rambler, charged with the silver spoil, to Peter's hook. But is it not equally wonderful, to observe such innumerable multitudes of finny visitants annually approaching our shores and crowding our banks? which furnish our tables with a wholesome and delicate repast, at the same time that they yield to our nation a revenue† more certain, and no less considerable, than the mines of Peru?

These approach, while those of enormous size and tremendous appearance abandon the shores. The latter might endanger the fisherman's safety, and would certainly scare away the valuable fish from our coasts. They are therefore restrained by an invisible hand, and abscond in the abysses of the ocean. Just as the wild beasts of the earth, impelled by the same overruling power, hide themselves in the recesses of the forest. A ship infected with a pestilential distemper is obliged to keep off at sea, and not permitted to enter the port till she has performed her quarantine. In like manner, these monsters of the deep, whose very business is destruction, are laid under a providential interdict; only with this very desirable difference, that as their presence would always be pernicious, they are never suffered to come near, their quarantine is perpetual.

"Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth,* and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee," Job. xii. 7, 8, that the Lord is gracious; that his tender mercies are over all his works; that to us he is superabundantly and profusely good, having ordered all things in the surges of the ocean, as well as on the surface of the ground, for our rich accommodation, and for our greatest advantage.

One circumstance relating to the natives of the deep is very peculiar, and no less astonishing. As they neither sow nor reap, have neither the produce of the hedges nor the gleanings of the field, they are obliged to plunder and devour one another for necessary subsistence. They are a kind of authorized banditti, that make violence and murder their professed trade.† By this means prodigious devastations ensue; and without proper, without very extraordinary recruits, the whole race must continually dwindle, and at length be totally extinct. Were they to bring forth, like the most prolific of our terrestrial animals, a dozen only, or a score at each birth, the increase would be unspeakably too small for the consumption; the weaker species would be destroyed by the stronger; and, in time, the stronger must perish, even by their successful endeavours to maintain themselves. Therefore, to supply millions of assassins with their prey, and millions of tables with their food, yet not to depopulate the watery realms; the issue produced by every breeder is almost incredible. They spawn, not by scores or hundreds, but by thousands and by millions.‡ A single mother is pregnant

* See Letter VIII.

† We are told by the after-mentioned author, that the banks of Newfoundland alone bring into the proprietors of that fishery a revenue of several millions every year. And they will, in all probability, be an unimpaired resource of treasure, when the richest mines now wrought in the world are choaked up or exhausted.

* The earth is represented as bearing witness to the immense benignity of the blessed God. Some minutes, or a short abstract of her testimony on this occasion, may be seen in Letter VI.

† To this, I believe, the prophet alludes, in that remarkable expression, Thou makest men as the fishes of the sea. Thou sufferest men to commit, without restraint or control, all manner of outrages. What should be a civil community, is a scene of oppression. The weakest are a prey to the strongest; and every one seeks the destruction of his neighbour, Hab. i. 4.

‡ Mr. Petit found 342,144 eggs in the hard roe of a carp, sixteen inches long. Mr. Lowenhoeck counted in a cod of an ordinary size, 9,384,000 eggs.—A fecundity perfectly amazing! but admirably adapted to the

with a nation. By which amazing, but most needful expedient, a periodical reparation is made, proportionable to the immense havoc.

As the sea is peopled with animated inhabitants, it is also variegated with vegetable productions. Some soft as wool, others hard as stone. Some rise like a leafless shrub; some are expanded in the form of a net, some grow with their heads downward, and seem rather hanging on, than springing from the juttings of the rocks. These may, with much greater propriety than the famous plantations of Semiramis, be called pensile gardens. But as my walk reached no farther than the purlieus of the ocean; as neither you nor I have ever taken a single turn among those submarine groves; as Moses, Joshua, and Jonah, the only writers that ever made the wonderful tour, intent upon more important themes, have left us no memoirs relating to this curious point; I shall not venture to advance any thing particular on the subject. Only one remark I would offer in general:—

The herbs and trees which flourish on the dry land, are maintained by the juices, that permeate the soil, and fluctuate in the air. For this purpose they are furnished with leaves to collect the one, and with roots to attract the other. Whereas, the sea-plants, finding sufficient nourishment in the circumambient waters, have no occasion to detach a party of roots into the ground, and forage the earth for sustenance. Instead, therefore, of penetrating, they are but just tacked to the bottom; and adhere to some solid substance, only with such a degree of tenacity as may secure them from being tossed to and fro by the random agitation of the waves.

We see from this, and numberless other instances, what a diversity there is in the operations of the great Creator's hand. Yet every alteration is an improvement, and each new pattern has a peculiar fitness of its own. The same economy takes place, such a difference of administration,—I mean, in his government of the rational world. In "choosing an heritage for his people," and assigning a condition to each of his servants, there is a great variety with respect to individuals, yet a perfect uniformity and complete harmony with respect to the whole. Some he calls out to a course of distinguished labours: They make an illustrious figure in life, and appear "as a city set on an hill." Matth. v. 14. Others he consigns over to obscurity; They are like the prophets whom good Obadiah hid in a cave, and are styled "his secret ones." Psalm lxxxiii. 3. Those, the cedars, which stand conspicuous on the top of Lebanon; these, the violets which lie concealed at the foot of a brier.

St. Paul was eminently qualified for busy scenes, and the most extensive services. He is introduced, therefore, into places of concourse. His ministry lies amidst the most renowned and populous cities. Even his imprisonment at Rome seems to have been a providential expedient for fixing him, as it were, on the stage of public observation, and in the very centre of universal intelligence; where his preaching was like plunging a stone into the midst of a smooth canal, which affects not only the neighbouring parts of the surface, but spreads the floating circles over all the wide expanse. Whereas, the beloved John, being less fitted to bustle among a crowd, is sent into the unfrequented solitary island, there to indulge the flights of heavenly contemplation, and receive, with uninterrupted attention, the mysterious visions of God.—Job shall have thorns in his path; have the dunghill for his seat; and be exposed, as a mark, to all the arrows of tribulation. Solomon shall dip his foot in oil; shall be elevated on the throne of royalty, and surrounded with the most lavish caresses of heaven.

In all this seeming, this more than seeming contrariety, there is a display, not only of sovereign authority, but of consummate propriety. The great head of the church acts like a judicious general, and appoints such a station to each of his soldiers as corresponds with the ability he gives. He acts like the most skilful physician, and prescribes such a remedy for all his patients, as is most nicely suited to their respective cases. He knows the precise point of time, the particular place of abode, the peculiar circumstances of condition, which are most proper for each and every of his children; and, like a tender as well as unerring father, what he knows to be best, that he constantly allots. I said, like a general, like a physician, like a father. But the comparison is low; the language is inexpressive. Christ is all that is implied in these relations, and unspeakably more. O that we may rejoice in the superintendency of such a Saviour! and not only resign ourselves to his will, but thank him for managing the helm; thank him for steering our course, through the changes of time and the uncertainties of futurity; since, whatever our forward and petulant passions may suggest, the Lord's ways are so far from being unequal, that they have all the possible fitness and propriety—they are ordered "in number, weight, and measure."

All this is so very different from the

pressing exigencies of the watery world; admirably contrived for the benefit and delight of mankind! If we advert to this peculiarity, it will give the utmost emphasis to the patriarch's metaphorical expression, and an inimitable beauty to his prophetic wish. Let these my grandsons grow into a multitude; or, which is more exactly answerable to the original, "let them multiply abundantly, even like the fishes of the ocean," Gen. xlviii. 16.

prospects which lately presented themselves, that I can hardly forbear asking, Whether I am not translated into a new world? Where are the waving hillocks, covered with the Creator's bounty? where are the fruitful valleys, made vocal with his praise? No cultured field, no opening blossom, not so much as a green leaf appears. None of my late entertainments remain, but only the cooling zephyrs; which are no longer perfumed with the breath of flowers, but impregnated with the freshness of the ocean. Yet though all those lovely landscapes are withdrawn—though the gurgling fountain is silenced, and the blooming garden lost—I am not far from the origin, both of the odours which exhale from the one, and of the crystal which flows from the other. I am now upon the margin of that grand reservoir which supplies the country with its fertility, and the parterre with its beauty. The sea is the inexhaustible cistern of the universe: The air and sun constitute the mighty engine, which works without intermission to raise the liquid treasure; while the clouds serve as so many aqueducts, to convey the genial stores along the atmosphere, and distribute them at seasonable periods, and in regular proportions, through all the regions of the globe.

I question whether the united application of mankind could, with their utmost skill, and with all possible percolations, fetch a single drop of perfectly sweet water* from this unmeasurable pit of brine. Yet the action of the solar heat draws off, every hour, every minute, millions and millions of tons, in vaporous exhalations, which being skilfully parcelled out, and securely lodged in "the bottles of heaven,"† are sent abroad, sweetened and refined, without any brackish tincture, or the least bituminous sediment, sent abroad upon the wings of the wind, to distil in dews, or pour themselves in rain, to ooze from the orifices of fountains; to trickle along the veins of rivulets; to rise in the cavities of wells; to roll in many a headlong torrent, from the sides of mountains; to flow in copious streams, amidst the bosom of burning deserts, and through the heart of populous kingdoms, in order to refresh and fertilize, to beautify and enrich, every soil, in every clime.

How amiable is the goodness, and how amazing is the power of the world's adorable Maker! How amiable his goodness, in distributing so largely what is so absolutely necessary, and so extensively beneficial! That water, without which we can scarce perform any business, or enjoy any comfort, should be every one's property; should spring up from the soil; should drop down from the clouds; should stream by our houses; should take a journey from the ends of the earth, and the extremities of the ocean, on purpose to serve us. How amazing his power! that this boundless mass of fluid salt, so intolerably nauseous to the human taste, should be the original spring which deals out every palatable draught to mankind, and quenches the thirst of every animal! Doubtless the power by which this is effected can extract comfort from our afflictions, advantage from our calamities, and "make all things work together for our good." Rom. viii. 28.

Vast and various are the advantages* which we receive from the liquid element; vast, as its unbounded extent; various, as its ever-mutable surface. The sweet waters glide along the earth in spacious currents, which not only exhilarate the adjacent country by their humid train and exhaling moisture, but, by giving a brisk impulse to the air, prevent the unwholesome stagnation of their own vapours. They pass by opulent cities, and, receiving all their filth, rid them of a thousand nuisances, which, when once committed to these fluid scavengers, are as effectually secreted as if they were buried ever so deep in the earth. Yet, though they condescend to so mean an employ, they are fitted for more honourable services. They enter the gardens of a prince, and compose some of the most delightful ornaments of the place. They glitter upon the eye, as they float in the ample canal. They amuse the imagination as they ascend in curious *jets d'eau*. They yield a nobler entertainment, as, forming themselves into sheets of sloping silver, they fall in graceful or in grand cascades. If, instead of beautifiers, we think proper to make use of them as drudges, they ply at our mills; they toil incessantly at the wheel, and, by working the hugest engines, take upon themselves an unknown share of our fatigue, and save us a proportionable degree of expense.

So forcibly they act when collected, and most surprisingly they insinuate when de-

* I have not forgotten what was lately affirmed in our public papers, that a certain ingenious gentleman, I think, in the city of Durham, had found out the art of sweetening sea-water.—What he produced might probably approve itself to the taste, and not be without its usefulness. Yet I cannot but query, whether it will be found to have all those fine, balmy, salutiferous qualities, which distinguish and recommend the rain-water, which has been exhaled by the kindly warmth of the sun; has been filtrated by passing and repassing through the regions of the air; has been clarified in the highest and purest tracts of the atmosphere—has been further refined and perfected by the searching agency of the winds. I should very much wonder, if the puny alembic could equal this grand apparatus of nature.

† So the clouds are elegantly styled in sacred writ, Job xxxviii. 37.

* The high value which mankind set upon this element, and the many benefits they receive from its ministration, both these particulars are very strongly expressed by the Hebrews, who call a pool or reservoir of water, in its primary signification, a blessing, Cant. vii. 4. Isa. vii. 3.

tached. They throw themselves into the body of a plant, they penetrate the minutest of its organized tubes, and find a passage through meanders, too small for the eye to discern, too numerous and intricate even for imagination to follow. How difficultly does a labourer that serves the mason push his way up the rounds of a ladder, bending under the burden of mortar on his head! while these servants in the employ of nature carry their load to a much greater height, and climb with the utmost ease, even without the assistance of steps or stairs. They convey the nutrimental stores of vegetation, from the lowest fibres that are plunged into the soil, to the very topmost twigs that wave amidst the clouds. They are the caterers for the vegetable world, or (if I may be allowed the expression) the suttlers which attend the whole host of plants, to furnish them with seasonable refreshment and necessary provision. By means of which "the trees of the Lord are full of sap, even the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted." Psalm civ. 16. And notwithstanding their vast elevation and prodigious diffusion—though they are abandoned by man, and deprived of all cultivation—yet not a single branch is destitute of leaves, nor a single leaf of moisture.

Besides the salutary, cleanly, and serviceable circulation of the rivers, the sea has a libration no less advantageous, and much more remarkable. Every day this immense collection of waters, for the space of five or six hours, flows towards the land, and after a short pause, retires again to its inmost caverns, taking up nearly the same time in its retreat, as it required for its access. How great is the power which sets the whole fluid world in motion! which protrudes to the shores such an inconceivable weight of waters, without any concurrence from the winds, frequently in direct opposition to all their force! How gracious also is the Providence which bids the mighty element perform its tumbling revolutions with the most exact punctuality! Was it suffered to advance with a lawless and unlimited swell, it might sweep over kingdoms, and deluge whole continents. Was it irregular and uncertain in its approaches, navigation would be at a stand, and trade become precarious. But, being constant at its stated periods, and never exceeding its appointed bounds, it creates no alarm to the country, and affords very considerable aids to traffic.

The tide, at its flow, rushing up our large rivers, clears and deepens the passage, in many places spreads a copious flood, where a dry and empty waste lay before. Is the sailor returned from his voyage, and waiting at the mouth of the channel? The flux is ready to convey his vessel to the very doors of the owner, and without any hazard of striking on the rocks or being fastened in the sands. Has the merchant freighted his ship? would he have it transferred to the ocean? The reflux tenders its service, and bears away the load, with the utmost expedition, and with equal safety. Behold, O man! how greatly thou art beloved, how highly favoured by thy Maker! In what part of his works has he forgotten or overlooked thy welfare? Show me a creature, point out a spot, in the formation or disposition of which he has not been mindful of thy interests? "He has made thee to have dominion over the works of his hands and has put all things in subjection under thy feet. All sheep and oxen, the fowls of the air, and the fishes;" yea and the surges "of the sea," Psalm viii. 6—8, are subservient to thy benefit. Even these, wild and impetuous as they are, yield their willing backs to receive thy load and, like an indefatigable beast of burden, carry it to the place which thou shalt nominate.

What preserves this vast flood in a state of perpetual purity? It is the universal sewers, into which are discharged the refuse and filth of the whole world. That which would defile the land, and pollute the air, is transmitted to the ocean, and neither mischief nor inconvenience ensue. Those swarms of locusts, which, while living, were a plague to Pharaoh, by their loathed intrusion, and, when dead, might have caused a more dreadful plague, by their noisome stench, swept into the sea, were neither pestilential nor offensive. How then is this receptacle of every nuisance kept clean? Why does it not contract a noxious taint, and diffuse a destructive contagion? such as would render it a grave to the aquatic, and bane to the terrestrial animals? It is owing partly to its incessant motion, partly to its saline quality. By the one, it is secured from any internal principle of corruption; by the other, it works itself clear from every adventitious defilement.

A directory this, and a pattern for me! Thus may divine grace, like the penetrating power of salt, cure the depravity of my heart, and rectify the disorders of my temper! season my words, and make all my conversation savoury! Thus may a continual course of activity, in my secular and my sacred vocation, prevent the pernicious effects of indolence! Let me daily exercise, or be attempting to exercise, the graces of Christianity, lest faith become feeble, lest hope contract dimness, and charity wax cold.

Now the tide begins to flow. Wave rises upon wave, and billow rolls over billow. Nothing can divert, nothing retard its progress, no, not for a moment. Though

Canutus be in the way,* though his royal authority and strict prohibition, nay, though all the forces of his kingdom oppose, it will never discontinue the advancing swell, till it has reached the destined point. So may I always abound in communion with God, or in beneficence to men, resigning one religious or charitable employ only to enter upon another, and be thus pressing forward, still pressing forward, to the prize of my high calling in Christ Jesus; differing from these regular vicissitudes of the ocean only in one particular, that my endeavours never ebb, my soul never draws back: since this would be, if temporary, to my grievous loss; if final, to my aggravated perdition.

Consider the sea in another capacity, and it connects the remotest realms of the universe, by facilitating an intercourse between the respective inhabitants. What short-sighted beings are mankind! how extremely superficial their views! how unavoidable, therefore, their frequent mistakes! The ancients looked upon this bottomless deep, as an impassable gulf. If our forefathers were so egregiously mistaken in this instance, let us not too peremptorily pronounce upon any difficult or mysterious point, lest succeeding generations, or a more enlightened state, should cover us with the double confusion of childish ignorance and foolish conceit.

We have clearly demonstrated, and happily experienced, the very reverse of that grey-headed surmise to be true. The ocean, instead of being a bar of separation, is the great bond of union. For this purpose, it is never exhausted, though it supplies the whole firmament with clouds, and the whole earth with rains; nor ever overflows, though all the rivers in the universe are perpetually augmenting its stores, and pouring in their tributary floods. By means of this element we travel farther than birds of the strongest pinion fly, and discover tracts which the "vulture's eye has never seen," Job xxviii. 7. We make a visit to nations that lie drowned in their midnight slumbers, when every industrious person on this part of the globe is bestirring himself in all the hurry of business. We cultivate an acquaintance with the sun-burnt negro and the shivering Icelander. We cross the flaming line, we penetrate the frozen pole, and wing our way even round the world.

This is the great vehicle of commerce.—Not to mention the floating castles, which contain whole armies, which bear the thunder, the fiery tempests, and all the dreadful artillery of war; what a multitude of ships, of the largest dimensions and most prodigious burden, are continually passing and repassing this universal thoroughfare! ships that are freighted, not with sacks, but with harvests of corn; that carry not pipes, but vintages of wine; that are laden, not with bars of iron, blocks of marble, or wedges of gold, but with whole quarries of massy stone, and whole mines of ponderous metal! All which, lodged in these volatile storehouses, and actuated by the breath of heaven, are wafted to the very ends of the earth; wafted, enormous and unwieldy as they are, more expeditiously than the light Berlin bowls along the road; almost as speedily as the nimble-footed roe bounds over the hills.*

Astonishing ordination of eternal wisdom! yet most graciously contrived for the benefit of mankind!—I can hardly satisfy my view in beholding this rolling chaos; I can never cease my admiration, in contemplating its amazing properties.—That an element, so unstable and fugitive, should bear up such an immense weight, as would bend the firmest floors, or burst the strongest beams! That the thin and yielding air should drive on, with so much facility and speed, bodies of such excessive bulk as the strength of a legion would be unable to move! That the air and the water, acting in conjunction, should carry to the distance of many thousand miles, what the united force of men and machines could scarcely drag a single yard!—Puny and despicable are our attempts; but great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! "If thou wilt work," says the prophet, who or what "shall let it?" Isa. xliii. 13. Neither the meanness of the instrument, nor the greatness of the event. A sling and a stone shall lay the gigantic bravo in the dust, 1 Sam. xvii. 50. An ox-goad shall do more

* Alluding to a memorable and instructive story recorded of king Canutus, who, probably without having read, had nevertheless thoroughly learned, that excellent lesson of Horace:

Regum timendorum in proprios greges,
Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.

Some of his abject and designing flatterers had the impious assurance to tell him, "his power was more than human." To convince them of their folly, and rebuke them for their falsehood, he ordered his chair of state to be placed on the extremity of the shore, just as the tide began to flow. Here he took his seat in the presence of the parasites, and many other attendants. Then, with all that dignity of air, and severity of accent, which sovereign authority knows how to assume, he said, "Thou sea, the land on which I sit is mine: nor has any one dared to invade my rights, or disobey my commands, without suffering the deserved punishment. I charge thee, therefore, on pain of my highest displeasure, not to enter these territories, nor touch the feet of England's monarch." When the rude waves made bold to enter on the forbidden ground; nay, when those uncourtly things presumed to rush upon the royal seat, and even to dash his Majesty's person, he started from his throne, and bid every beholder observe the impotence of earthly kings; bid them remember, that He alone is worthy of the name, whom winds, and waves, and universal nature obey.

* A ship, under a brisk and steady gale, will sail at the rate of 216 miles in 24 hours; persevering, if the wind continues favourable, in the same rapid career for several days together: A course, which, considering both its swiftness and duration, cannot be equalled by the ablest horse, perhaps not by the nimblest creature that treads the ground.

execution than a battery of cannon, Judg. iii. 31. Even "a worm shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff," Isa. xli. 14, 15. God All-Sufficient is his name, and out of weakness he maketh his strength perfect. O that we, my dear Aspasio, that *I* especially, may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might! Then, as the light air is made to act with a more forcible impulse than the most vigorous engines; as the fluid water is made to sustain more ponderous loads than the most substantial works of masonry; so we, who in ourselves are nothing but impotence, shall be enabled to triumph over the legions of hell, and tread down all the temptations of the world.

How are the mariners conducted through this fluid common, than which nothing is more wide, and nothing more wild? Here is no tract to be followed, no posts of direction to be consulted, nor any shepherd's hut where the wandering traveller may ask his way.—Are they guided by a pillar of fire in the night, or a moveable cloud in the day, as the sons of Jacob and Joseph were escorted through the eastern deserts?—No, but by a mean, contemptible, and otherwise worthless fossil.—The apostle James mentions it as a very observable fact, that the "ships, which are so great, and driven of fierce winds, yet are turned about with a very small helm whithersoever the governor listeth, Jam. iii. 4. Is it not equally wonderful, that they should be led through such a pathless and unmeasurable waste by so small an expedient as the intervention of the loadstone?* Till this surprising mineral was discovered, and its properties were improved, navigation lay in its cradle; was at best a mere infant that crept timorously along the coasts; was obliged to keep within sight of the shores, and, if driven out beyond the narrow sphere of her landmarks, could neither ascertain her situation nor pursue her voyage. But this guide, when every beacon on the top of the hills is vanished from the acutest ken; where nothing but skies are seen above, and seas alone appear below—this guide points out the proper passage. This communicates an intelligence which shines clear in the thickest darkness, and remains steady in the most tempestuous agitations. This has given, not indeed birth, but maturity to navigation, and turned her swaddling-bands into wings. This has emboldened her to launch into the heart of the ocean, and enabled her to range from pole to pole.

* I am aware that other expedients are used for shaping a proper course on the ocean, such as making observations from the sun by mathematical instruments. But these, I believe, are only subordinate aids to the needle. The grand regulator is the magnet. I have heard an experienced sailor declare, he would rather be without his quadrant, than without his compass.

Thus does God, both in the operations of nature and the administrations of providence, accomplish the most important ends by the most inconsiderable means. When the formidable Sisera is to be cut off, the blow shall be given, not by some puissant champion, but by the hand of a woman, Judg. iv. 9. When Jericho is to be demolished, those impregnable fortifications shall fall, not beneath the stroke of battering engines, but before the sound of rams' horns, Josh. vi. 3. When a hundred thousand Midianites are to be routed, the Lord of Hosts will gain this signal victory, not by numerous legions completely armed, but by a handful of Israelites, accoutred only with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers, Judges vii. 19. Who would have thought, that from the root of Jesse, a root out of a dry ground, should arise that great tree, which "stretches her boughs unto the sea, and her height unto the heavens, and her branches unto the ends of the earth?" That the despised Galilean and the carpenter's son should be the Saviour of the world, and the Heir of all things? Nay, that a person humbled like the meanest of slaves, and executed like the vilest of malefactors; nailed to a cross, and laid prostrate among the dead; that he should restore life and immortality to ruined sinners; should open the gates of grace and glory on lost mankind? That a few illiterate creatures, taken from the barge, the oar, and the net, should confute philosophers, and convert kings; should overthrow the strong-holds of idolatry, and plant Christianity on its ruins! This is a circumstance which, though a stumbling-block to some people, has considerably strengthened my faith. It is perfectly agreeable to the Almighty's manner. It is (if I may so speak) the distinguishing turn of his hand, and the peculiar style of his works. Whence does he raise the charmingly-beauteous flowers? whence the magnificent myriads of forest-oaks? whence the boundless and inestimable stores of harvest? From principles which bear not the least proportion to their effects.—Besides, this most emphatically speaks the God. It "shows the lighting down of his arm," Isa. xxx. 30, and absolutely precludes all the pretensions of human arrogance, or finite power. It appropriates the honour to that supreme agent, before whom the easy and the arduous are both alike. All men that see it must confess, This hath God done.

Through this channel, are imported to our island the choice productions, and the peculiar treasures, of every nation under heaven. So that we can breakfast upon a dissolution of the American kernel,* and

* Called the cocoa, which affords the principal in-

see the rich nutrimental liquor froth in our cups, without ever tempting the foaming brine. We can steep the delicately-flavoured Chinese leaf in the waters of our own well; or spend the afternoon in our own parlour, and be regaled with an infusion of the finely-scented Arabian berry. We can season the friendly bowl with the juices of the orange, or refresh our clammy palate with the pulp of the tamarind, without feeling that fervent heat which imparts such a poignant relish to the former, without suffering those scorching beams which give a fever-cooling virtue to the latter. We can pile upon our salvers a pyramid of Italian figs; fill the interstices with the sky-dried raisins of Malaga; and form a summit for the inviting structure with the pistacia nut of Aleppo. By this means, the eastern spices exhale their odours on our table, and the western canes transfuse their sweetness into our viands. We clothe our bodies with the vegetable fleeces of the south,* and line our apparel with warm furry spoils from the north. We can wear the pearl, polished in the abysses of the Persian gulf; and walk on the carpets manufactured in the dominions of the Great Mogul; yet neither expose ourselves to the rage of boisterous seas, nor the more dreaded treachery of a barbarous people. In short, by this grand and beneficial expedient of navigation, every tide conveys into our ports the wealth of the remotest climes, and brings the abundance of the universe to be unladen on our quays; London becomes a mart of nations; and almost every private house in the kingdom is embellished or accommodated from the four quarters of the globe.

Almost every private house—Is not this more like rhetorical flourish, than real truth? Are not all the advantages I have mentioned the peculiar portion of the rich? Is not the sea, like high life and the gay world, somewhat capricious and partial? bestowing lavishly her favours on the wealthy, at the same time that she neglects the needy? Quite the reverse. Like her most exalted yet most condescending Creator, she is no respecter of persons. She deals out her liberalities to all; to the wealthy, such as are suitable to their circumstances; to the indigent, such as are best adapted to their condition. If she ornaments the bodies of the first, she employs the hands of the last; furnishes these with useful labour, those with elegant accommodations. What a multitude of industrious people acquire a livelihood by preparing the commodities intended for exportation! and what a multitude of dexterous artificers maintain their families by manufacturing the wares imported from abroad!

It is reckoned a valuable species of beneficence to provide proper work for the poor. This withdraws them from many temptations, and preserves them from much wickedness. It hinders them from being a burden to themselves, and a nuisance to the public. They might otherwise be idle, and as vermin on the body politic; or even mutinous, and as vipers in the bowels of the nation: whereas, by exerting themselves in a due subordination, and with becoming diligence, they are the very sinews of the community; or like the grand wheel in the machine of state, whose incessant activity distributes plenty, and pours innumerable conveniences through the whole. What a master then, or rather what a mistress, is the sea! how extensive her correspondence, and how large her demand for workmen! Into what branch of trade does she not enter? What kind of ingenious science, or useful toil, does she not befriend? How many millions of honest but needy persons are engaged in her service? and how amply are they repaid for their pains? "They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." They also that dwell among their own people, and abide in the villages, even they enjoy the bounty, and share the advantages of the ocean. For, though it is false philosophy to suppose the waters themselves strained through subterranean passages into the inland countries; yet it is an undeniable truth, that their beneficial effects are transfused into every town, every hamlet, and every cottage.

Surely the inhabitants of our isle have reason to turn the prediction of Moses, concerning the tribe of Joseph, into a devout and grateful acknowledgment:—"Blessed of the Lord is* our land. Blessed with the precious things of heaven, with the dew, and with the deep that coucheth beneath. With the precious things brought forth by the sun, and with the precious things thrust forth by the moon. With the chief things of the ancient mountains, and with the precious things of the everlasting hills, and with the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof."† Deut. xxxiii. 13—16. May we

gredient of chocolate, and grows on a small tree in America.

* Cotton, which is a sort of wool encompassing the seed of a tree. Its fruit is of an oval form, about the size of a nut. As it ripens, it grows black on the outside; and, by the heat of the sun, opens in several places, discovering the cotton through the clefts, which is of an admirable whiteness. See Chamb. Dict.

* *Is*, (so I would translate the original,) not *be*; in the predictive, not precatory form. This implies a fulness of faith, and distinguishes prophecy from prayer; best suits the extraordinary illumination of Moses; and does most honour to the omniscient Spirit.

† Here seems to be an exact summary, and a poetical description of the riches of nature. The precious things of heaven; or rain, which descends from the upper; and dew, which is formed in the lower re-

also enjoy "the good will of him who dwelt in the bush," Deut. xxxiii. 16, and the grace of him who hung on the tree! May the eternal God be our refuge, and his everlasting arms underneath both us and our interests! happy then wilt thou be, thrice happy, O England! Thy temporal advantages, and thy spiritual privileges considered, it may be truly said, "Who," or what nation, "is like unto thee?"

This for my country; now let me wish for myself:

God of all worlds! source and supreme of things!
From whom all life, from whom duration springs!
Intense, O! let me for thy glory burn,
Nor fruitless view my days and months return.
Give me with wonder at thy works to glow,
To grasp thy vision, and thy truths to know
O'er time's tempestuous sea to reach thy shore,
And live, and sing, where time shall be no more.

You see, Aspasio, I have been studying the volume of nature; endeavouring to read its capital characters, and learn some of its instructive lessons. The sea has been the page; but how superficial is my perusal, and no less scanty my knowledge. Little, very little have I seen or conceived, relating to those works of wonder which the vast unfathomable deep contains; the plants it produces, and the creatures it nourishes; its stupendous rocks and subterranean caves; the heaps of pearl, which are its native growth; and the loads of gold, which it has gained by shipwreck. So superficial are my views of Christ; so scanty is my acquaintance with the gospel.

You, I presume, are sitting at the feet of that sublime Teacher, and attending to the dictates of his mouth, in "whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3. Let me promise myself a communication of your thoughts, as I have freely transmitted a specimen of mine. And I will make no scruple to acknowledge the superiority of the exchange that I receive.

Χρυσια χαλκειων, εκατομβοι εννεαβοιων.

Or, eloquent Isaiah speaks: "For brass you will bring gold, and for iron you will bring silver, Isa. lx. 17. rendering me, by this intercourse, you more obliged, though it is scarce possible for me to be more than I already am,

Your affectionate

THERON.

P. S. M. Paschal, who was remarkably fond of brevity, makes an odd excuse for transgressing, on a particular occasion, his favourite rule. He entreats his friend to pardon the unusual length of his epistle, by assuring him, "that he had not time to make it shorter." I cannot, it must be confessed, adopt this philosopher's apology. For I have purposely lengthened my letter, with a view of setting, in this one circumstance, a pattern for my Aspasio.

LETTER X.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,—I thank you for your letter, because it entertains and improves me: I thank you for your postscript, because it is my encouragement and apology. I am set down to write, with a copious stock of materials. It will be far more difficult to contract, than to enlarge. I must therefore acknowledge myself obliged to your candour for assigning me the easier task. That prolixity which, in others might be ungenteel and faulty, is in me an act of complaisance, and matter of duty.

Though absent from you, I went with you in your late ramble. Your descriptive pen has made me partaker of the ideal delight; may divine grace enable me to share in the spiritual improvement! When you displayed the beauties of the morn, breaking forth from the obscurity of night; when you adopted that noble aspiration from our philosophic poet, I could not forbear adding: "Thus may the gracious God, who commands the light to shine out of the midnight darkness, shine into our hearts; and give that incomparably glorious knowledge, the knowledge of his blessed Self! which, though discernible through all the tracts of creation, and derivable from every work of his almighty hand, yet nowhere beams forth with such complete and such amiable lustre as in the person of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. iv. 6. Here we behold all the sublime perfections of the Deity, not only manifested with inimitable splendour, but operating for our own advantage. We behold them, as Job speaks, "for ourselves," Job xix. 27; and cannot but receive inexpressible refreshment and joy from the view.

When you walked beneath the shade of

gions of the firmament. The deep that coucheth beneath; seas, rivers, fountains, wells, which lie in the bosom of the soil; and are sources of fertility and plenty. The precious things brought forth by the sun, must certainly denote the herbs, plants, trees, and all manner of vegetables, with their respective fruits. The precious things thrust forth by the moon, may probably refer to the mineral kingdoms; in the formation of which that ruler of the night may have a considerable influence. The moon is confessedly the parent of tides: and may put in motion those bituminous and saline fluids, which, circulating through the pores of the earth, and fixing in beds of homogeneous matter, are supposed to commence minerals. As our sacred philosopher has already specified the vegetable tribes, and (if I mistake not) the beds of fossils; the principal things of the mountains and hills, should signify the sheep, goats, and other valuable animals, which feed upon those vast declivities. Then the precious things of the earth may express those herds of larger cattle, which have their pasturage in the plains, valleys, and lower grounds. A sense, which recommends itself from this consideration, that the wealth of the ancients consisted chiefly in cattle. The fulness thereof may be a kind of recapitulation: a comprehensive term, including the whole produce of the terraqueous globe: the magnificent liberality of Jehovah to his people.

those huge, horrid, and enormous cliffs, both amused and alarmed at their stupendous magnitude and frightful irregularity; when you cast your eye upon the wide expanded surface of the ocean; when you surveyed the far more unmeasurable arches of the sky, and meditated, in that awful solitude, on the wildest and most magnificent appearances of nature—I felt the same kind of devout astonishment with yourself. While the soul was wrapt in "pensive stillness and pleasing dread, methought I heard a voice, or something like a voice, from the silent spheres, as well as from the sounding seas. It seemed to echo back, what the mighty angel whom John saw flying in the midst of heaven once proclaimed, "Worship him who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water," Rev. xiv. 7. "Worship him, who stretched out that azure pavilion with such amazing grandeur; who measured yonder world of waters in the hollow of his hand; and before whom this immense range of mountainous cliffs is but as dust upon the scale."

When you described the dismal situation of a wretch exposed on the edges of the tremendous precipice; hanging over the ragged rocks and the unfathomable gulf, and cleaving only to a slender treacherous breaking bough; how heartily did I join in your adoring acknowledgments to that kind, interposing, blessed hand, which rescued us both from an infinitely more threatening and dreadful danger! rescued us as slaves from the dominion of the devil; snatched us as brands from the inextinguishable burnings; and bid us (O marvellous superabundant goodness!) bid us possess the liberty of righteousness, bid us inherit the kingdom of heaven.

When you mention the past indolence, and the present fervour of your prayers, I could not forbear reiterating my praises to God on your behalf. This is a proof, my dear Theron, that you are going in the way everlasting; for it is written, "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." Jer. xxxi. 9.—This is the work of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in your heart; for what saith the Scripture? "I will pour upon them the spirit of grace and of supplication." Zech. xii. 10. And our Lord himself mentions this as the indication of a true conversion: "Behold he prayeth." Acts ix. 11. Had not Saul prayed before? Yes; and made long prayers too. But he never, till that instant, was sensible of his undone and damnable condition; never cried to God from the depths of his distress, or from the depths of his heart; nor ever solicited the throne of grace, in the all-prevailing name of Jesus Christ. His prayers, till then, were somewhat like the motes, which fluctuate to and fro in the air, without any vigorous impulse, or any certain aim; but, in that hour, they were like the arrow, which springs from the strained bow, and, quick as lightning, flies to the mark.

I was pleased to find you, in the process of your letter, insensibly forgetting the narrative, and so engaged by the subject, that you spoke not as the relator, but as the beholder. Thus may we always be affected, when we study the oracles of truth—study them, not as cold unconcerned critics, who are only to judge of their meaning, but as persons deeply interested in all they contain; who are particularly addressed in every exhortation, and directed by every precept; whose are the promises, and to whom belong the precious privileges. When we are enabled thus to realize and appropriate the contents of that invaluable book, then we shall taste the sweetness, and feel the power of the Scriptures. Then we shall know, by happy experience, that our divine Master's words are not barely sounds and syllables, but "they are spirit, and they are life." John vi. 63.

I was still more agreeably entertained with your picture of commerce, and of the advantages we receive from navigation. One advantage, however, I can specify, which is greater than any, greater than all you have celebrated; an advantage, which will endear and ennoble navigation, so long as the sun and moon endure. The gospel, my dear friend, the glorious gospel came to our island through this channel. The volume that comprises it, and the preacher that published it, both were imported by shipping. And may we not say with the enraptured Isaiah, "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring good tidings; that publish peace; that bring good tidings of good; that publish salvation; that say unto Zion, thy God reigneth?* Isa. lii. 7. It is pleasant to hear their voice, pleasant to contemplate their message, and pleasant even to behold the ground on which they trod, or the very waves over which they sailed. This made the holy prophet rejoice in spirit, when he foresaw

* Never did language bespeak an enraptured soul more significantly than this sacred exclamation. The prophet is all wonder and all joy. He is so enamoured with his subject, and so captivated with the glory of the gospel, that he can never say enough of its excellencies. Good tidings; the very best that earth could receive, or heaven proclaim. Good tidings of good; a most comprehensive good; a collection of every blessing; or all good things in one. Publish peace; peace with God, the everlasting King; and that sweet peace of conscience which the world cannot give. Publish salvation; or that gift of righteousness which is the meritorious cause, together with the spirit of liberty and spirit of adoption, which are the rich and grand constituents of salvation. That say unto Zion, thy God reigneth; not sin and Satan, not lust and appetite, oppressive tyrants, and worse than Egyptian task-masters: but the all-wise and infinitely gracious Jehovah: he, even he setteth up his pure, his peaceful, his spiritual kingdom, in the believer's heart, in the Gentile nations, and in all lands.

the extensive spread of his Master's glory, and the certain commencement of our happiness. This put into his mouth that affectionate and congratulatory address, which, in a very particular manner, is directed to us and our countrymen: "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the ends of the earth; ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; ye isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains! Let them give glory unto the Lord; and declare his praise in the islands!" Isa. xlii. 10—12.

We read, in Ezekiel, of the most magnificent fleet that ever ploughed the seas. The masts were of cedar, Ezek. xxvii. 5, &c. and the benches of ivory. Fine linen, beautified with embroidery floated to the winds, and formed the sails. Blue and purple rigged the vessel, and clothed the meanest mariner. Let us suppose, that the freight of this splendid navy was proportioned in value to its sumptuous tackling. Yet how poor, how despicable were either, were both, if estimated with the treasures of the gospel; those divine treasures, which spring from the imputation of our Redeemer's righteousness, and which have much the same kindly influence on religious practice, as navigation, with all her improvements, has upon traffic! Give me leave to confirm this assertion, by selecting a few instances, and applying them in a few interrogatories.

One of the benefits proceeding from the imputation of Christ's righteousness, is pardon: pardon, not partial, but complete; a pardon of each sin, be it ever so heinous; a pardon of all sins, be they ever so numerous. For thus saith God the Lord, who sent both his prophets and apostles, preaching peace by "Jesus Christ, I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned and whereby they have transgressed against me, Jer. xxxiii. 8. To learn the desirable nature of this blessing, let us step back into the annals of history, and attend a traitorous unhappy nobleman to his vindictive exit. His body is demanded by the ministers of justice. Reluctant and trembling he is conducted to the scaffold. There the alarmed criminal sees the mourning block, sees the glittering axe, sees the coffin prepared for his corpse, sees thousands of anxious spectators, waiting with eager looks and throbbing hearts, the fearful catastrophe. In a word, he sees death advancing with all the solemnities of horror and wo. Time elapses. The preparatory ceremonies are despatched. The fatal moment is arrived. No longer respite can be allowed. He must submit to immediate execution. Accordingly he prostrates himself to receive the stroke; but, seized with new terrors at the poised axe and approaching blow, he starts from the dangerous posture. Again he bends, and again snatches his neck from the impending edge. A third time he lifts his pale countenance to the pitying crowds and departing light. Once more he bows to the block and once more raises his head, in wishful expectation of the royal clemency. Had a messenger appeared, at the critical instant, with a shout of joy upon his tongue, and a sealed pardon in his hand, O! how transporting the news! inexpressibly welcome the favour!—What was denied to his passionate desires, denied to the importunate solicitations of his friends, is freely offered to us in the gospel of Christ; a pardon of infinitely higher consequence, which obliterates millions and millions of rebellious acts; which extends its blessed effects not merely through the little span of life, but beyond the gates of the grave—beyond the boundaries of time—through all the ages of eternity.

How unfathomable is that immense flood, on which my Theron lately exercised his contemplation! The toiling plummets, with all their length of cordage, are unable to find a bottom. Were the hugest millstones, or the highest towers, or the most spacious cities, cast into that prodigious gulf, they would be totally overwhelmed, and irrecoverably lost. Therefore the inspired prophet, to show the boundless extent of the divine mercies in Jesus Christ, and to denote the fulness of their pardon who are cleansed in the Redeemer's blood, hath illustrated both by this grand similitude: "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," Mic. vii. 19; not one, or a few, but all their sins; not barely behind thy back, but into the sea; and not into the shallow parts, but in the very depths of the ocean; so that they shall never rise up in judgment—never be taken notice of, no, nor ever be remembered any more.

With an act of total indemnity, let us join a thorough restoration to favour. If the wrath of an earthly king be as "the roaring of a lion," Prov. xix. 12, how much more tremendous is his indignation who is able to cast both body and soul into hell! If the favour of an earthly sovereign be "as dew upon the grass," how much more desirable and delightful his loving-kindness, whom all things in heaven and earth obey! By the righteousness of Jesus Christ, we are freed from all foreboding apprehensions of the former, and established in the comfortable possession of the latter. The gospel renews and ratifies that joyful proclamation of the angelic host, "Peace on earth, and good-will to men," Luke ii. 14. God is not only pacified toward believers, but well pleased with them in his dear Son. They are the objects of his complacential

delight, and he rejoices over them to do them good.

Nay, they are made children, "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. vi. 18. and if sons, "then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. The chief captain mentioned in the Acts purchased his freedom of the imperial city Rome with a great sum of money, Acts xxii. 28. If such a little transient immunity was so valuable in his esteem, who can express the worth, who can conceive the dignity, of this divine adoption? Yet it belongs to those who receive the gospel, and are interested in Christ. They have access to the Omnipotent Being, such free and welcome access as a beloved child to an indulgent father. To him they may fly for aid in every difficulty; and from him obtain a supply in all their wants. God, as the sacred charter runs, "is their God." All his lovely, all his adorable perfections, are their glorious inheritance, and exceeding great reward. That eternal power, to which nothing is impossible, exerts itself as their guard; and that unerring wisdom, from which nothing is concealed, acts as their guide. His very justice is no longer an incensed adversary, demanding vengeance or meditating destruction; but a faithful guarantee, to provide for the punctual execution of the Redeemer's treaty, and their complete enjoyment of its various blessings. What a privilege is this! Rather, what a cluster of privileges is here! Weigh the kingdoms of the world, cast all the glories of them into the scale; and they will be found, when compared with these divine prerogatives, emptier than the bubble that bursts, lighter than the spark that expires.

In the gospel are given exceeding great and precious promises: Of such value, that they were procured by the blood of Christ; of such certainty, that they are ratified by the oath of Jehovah, Heb. vi. 17. So durable, that though "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the grass, this word of our God abideth for ever," 1 Pet. i. 23; so efficacious, that there are no such cordials to revive our fainting, and no such bulwarks to secure our endangered souls. With these the Bible is as richly replenished as the clear midnight sky is bespangled with stars. They "are all yea and amen," consigned over as a sure unalienable portion, "to them that are in Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. i. 20.

Another benefit, given in consequence of the Redeemer's righteousness, is the sanctifying Spirit. A most comprehensive blessing this! Our Saviour intimates, that it includes every heavenly gift, is an assemblage of all good things.* How singular a comfort must it be to blind Bartimeus to have his eyes opened, and behold the all-cheering light of the sun, Mark x. 52. So, and far more comfortable, are the enlightening influences of the blessed Spirit, when they shine upon the wretched creature who sits in darkness and the shadow of death. How peculiar a mercy for the impure and abhorred leper, to be healed of his inveterate disease! to feel the soothing sensations of ease, where sores rankled and pain raged! Instead of enfeebling languors and loathsome deformity, vigour braces his limbs, and comeliness blooms in his countenance, Matth. viii. 3. Equally benign, and equally salubrious, is the agency of the divine Spirit on our depraved, polluted, sensual minds. How signal was the recovery, and how welcome the change; when that unhappy creature, so wildly agitated by a mischievous demon, was reinstated in the peaceful possession of himself and his faculties! when, instead of unnaturally cutting his own flesh, or committing barbarous outrages on innocent travellers, he sat composed and attentive at the feet of Jesus, Mark v. 15, receiving heavenly instruction from his lips, and learning the meekness of wisdom from his example. So salutary and beneficial is the transforming power of the Holy Ghost the Comforter; softening the rugged, sweetening the morose, and calming the passionate temper. It is undoubtedly the utmost improvement, and the highest happiness of our nature, to have the image of the blessed God reinstamped on our hearts. This is an earnest, and an anticipation also of endless felicity; a bud which will open in heaven, and spread into immortal glory; a dawn, which will shine more and more, till the Sun of Righteousness arises, and brightens it into everlasting day. This bud the sanctifying Spirit ingrafts, this dawn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ diffuses in the barren and benighted soul.

In a word, receive this righteousness, and you have a title to all blessings, whether they be present or future, bodily or spiritual, temporal or eternal. From the necessary conveniences of bread to eat and raiment to put on, even to the crowns of glory and the fulness of joy, all, all are owing to our Redeemer's righteousness. You see now, Theron, that our scheme has no tendency to impoverish your spiritual condition, or diminish your true riches, any more than those tracts of water which surround our island are detrimental to the wealth of its inhabitants. Detrimental! No; they are an inexhaustible source of treasure. They convey to our use the choicest accommodations, and the most elegant delights; such as would in vain be expected, if the whole ocean was converted into the finest meads and most fertile pastures. So—but

* Compare Matth. vii. 11. with Luke xi. 13.

to apply this comparison, would forestall your principal question.

"Do not these favours, though unspeakably precious in themselves, tend to the introduction or support of ungodliness?"—Quite the reverse. Have we redemption through our Saviour's blood, even the forgiveness of our sins? We are redeemed, not that we may sink in supineness, or launch into licentiousness, but that we may be a "peculiar people zealous of good works." Tit. ii. 14. Are we made the children of God? Then "let our light so shine before men, that others, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven." Matt. v. 16. This is the genuine consequence of such a doctrine, and the proper effect of such a benefit. Are we vested with sacred privileges? These admonish us, these urge us, to walk worthy of him "who hath called us to his kingdom and glory." 1 Thess. ii. 12. Shall the citizens of heaven be animated with no higher views than the slaves of appetite and drudges of the world? Are we constituted heirs of the promises? The grace which they ascertain is intended to make us partakers of a divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4, and the encouragement which they administer incites us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, incites us to perfect holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor vii. 1. Such high immunities are a most endearing persuasive, not to disgrace, but magnify—not to provoke, but please—their unspeakably beneficent author.

I might farther observe, that holiness is one of the most distinguished blessings in our system; nay, is the very central blessing, to which all the others verge, in which they all terminate. Were we chosen from eternity? It was for this purpose, that we may "be holy and unblamable in love." Eph. i. 4. Are we called in time? It is to this intent, that we may "show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Pet. ii. 9. Are we "created again in Christ Jesus?" It is, to capacitate us for acceptable service, and to furnish us unto every good work, Eph. ii. 10. "I will put my spirit within you, saith the Lord." For what end? "That ye may walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Here comes in my Theron's favourite endowment—sincere obedience. Far, very far from discarding sincere obedience, we would only introduce it under its due character, and in its proper order. Under its due character; as the fruit, not the cause, of our interest in Christ's righteousness: In its due order; as following, not preceding the gift of justification.

These privileges, my dear friend, are salutary as the pool of Bethesda. John v. 4. They are restorative as the waters of Siloam. John ix. 7, or like that sacred stream flowing from the sanctuary, which healed the rivers, healed the sea, and made even the desert flourish. Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9. If justification by the righteousness of Christ had a tendency to subvert the foundation of holiness, to confirm the hypocritical professor in his neglect of moral duties, or discourage the sincere convert from the pursuit of real virtue; it would, doubtless, be unworthy of any acceptation, or rather, worthy of universal abhorrence. But I dare appeal, not only to the nature of the doctrine, and the reason of things, but to the experience of all;—yes, of all who "have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Pet. ii. 3. "Speak, ye who are enabled to believe, that God is reconciled; has received the all-satisfying atonement, and placed his Son's righteousness to your account! that he regards you as his children, and will receive you to his glory! Have you not, under such convictions, felt your hearts exulting with conscious joy; and every power of your souls springing forward to glorify your heavenly Father—glorify him by every instance of obedience, fidelity, and zeal?"

Can such invaluable benefits have a prejudicial influence on our practice, if to the consideration of their superlative worth, we add that unequalled price by which they were purchased? He who is high above all height, humbled himself to be made of a woman, and born in a stable; that we might be admitted into the family of God, and exalted to the mansions of heaven. And will this great humiliation, which is the basis of our happiness, prompt us to look down with contempt on others, or entertain arrogant thoughts of ourselves?

The Only Begotten and the supreme delight of the Father, was numbered with transgressors and ranked with felons, that we might be joined to the innumerable company of angels, and associated with saints in glory everlasting. And will any one make this a precedent or a plea for "walking in the counsel of the ungodly; for standing in the way of sinners; or sitting in the seat of the scornful?" Psalm i. 1.

All manner of evil was spoken of the faultless Jesus; his blessed name was vilified by blaspheming tongues, and his unblamable conduct blackened with the foulest aspersions; on purpose that we may be applauded when we are judged, and each hear those transporting words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant!" Matt. xxv. 21. Will this embolden us to dishonour our Lord and stain our holy profession? Shall we from hence be induced to open the mouths of his enemies, and furnish them with occasion to speak reproachfully?

He went, galled with the lashes of the

scourge, and penetrated with the pungent thorns; he went, loaded with the execrable cross, and marking the way with his precious blood; thus he went to his ignominious and tormenting exit, that we may enter into Zion with songs of triumph on our lips, and with everlasting joy on our heads. Does this invite us to go, crowned with rosebuds, to the house of riot; or go, muffled in disguise, to the midnight revel? Will it not rather incline us to sit down at his pierced feet, and bathe them with our tears, and take delight* in mourning for our crucified Lord?

Behold! he hangs on the cursed tree. There, there he hangs; rent with wounds, and racked with pain. He pours his groans, and spills his blood. He bows his head, his patient, princely head, and dies—astonishing, ravishing consideration! he dies for you and me. And will this harden our hearts, or arm our hands, to crucify him afresh by any allowed iniquity? Does not reason suggest, and Christianity dictate, and all that is ingenious enforce the apostle's important inference? "If one died for all, then they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them," 2 Cor. v. 15, 16.

He thought upon us long before the foundations of the world were laid; he remembers us, now he is exalted to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens; and will never, never forget us, through all the revolutions of eternity. And is this a motive to forget his name, to disregard his word, or to imitate the shameful neutrality and indifference of Gallio? Impressed with a sense of this invariable and everlasting kindness, surely we shall declare ourselves as those captives in Babylon concerning their dear native city Jerusalem; "If I forget thee," O blessed Jesus, "let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6.

——— Remember thee!
Ay, my dear Lord, while memory holds a seat
In this devoted breast—Remember thee!
Yes, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
Which youth and observation copied there,
And thy remembrance all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain.
SHAKSPEARE.

Is it possible, Theron, for the contemplation of such goodness to weaken the motives, or relax the springs of obedience? As soon may lenient balms kill, and rankest poisons cure. Is such a belief calculated to discourage duty, and patronize licentiousness? Just as much as vernal showers are fitted to cleave the earth with chinks, or summer suns to glaze the waters with ice. When Antony made an oration to the soldiers on occasion of Cæsar's death; when he showed them their honoured master's robe, transfixed with so many daggers; when he reminded them of the victories they had won under their assassinated commander; when he farther informed them, that their murdered general had remembered them in his will, had bequeathed all his fine gardens and beautiful walks to their use and delight;—heavens! how they took fire! Revenge sparkled in their eyes; revenge flamed in their bosoms; revenge was all their cry. They flew to the houses of the conspirators; laid them even with the ground; and, had they met the owners, would have torn them limb from limb. Some such resentment against sin will a sense of our adored Redeemer's sufferings excite; especially when set home by his blessed Spirit, and considered in connexion with those detestable iniquities which caused them, and with those invaluable blessings which were procured by them. Nothing, nothing is so effectual to beget the most irreconcilable abhorrence of all ungodliness, to make the remembrance of it bitter as wormwood, the temptations to it horrible as hell.

Let me remind you of an incident related by your favourite historian Xenophon. Cyrus had taken captive the young prince of Armenia, together with his beautiful and blooming princess, whom he had lately married, and of whom he was passionately fond. When both were brought to the tribunal, Cyrus asked the prince, what he would give to be reinstated in his kingdom? He answered, with an air of indifference, "That as for his crown, and his own liberty, he valued them at a very low rate: But, if Cyrus would restore his beloved princess to her native dignity and hereditary possessions, he should infinitely rejoice; and would pay, (this he uttered with tenderness and ardour), would willingly pay his life for the purchase." Could such a declaration, so highly endearing, alienate the affections of the princess, or induce her to violate her fidelity? Let her own conduct answer the query. When all the prisoners were dismissed with freedom, it is impossible to express how they were charmed with their royal benefactor. Some celebrated his martial accomplishments; some applauded his social virtues; all were prodigal of their praises, and lavish in grateful acknowledgments. And you, said the prince, (addressing himself to his bride), what think you of Cyrus? I did not observe him, replied the princess. Not ob-

* The sorrow arising from such tender and grateful views of the crucified Jesus, is that evangelical godly sorrow, which "worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of," 2 Cor. vii. 10. And is there not reason,—when we consider the pains he felt, the curse he bore, and the blood he shed—is there not abundant reason to say with Homer's afflicted hero, Τετρωμισθα γοοιο?—*Iliad* V.

serve him! Upon what then was your attention fixed? Upon that dear and generous man who declared, "he would purchase my liberty at the expense of his very life."* Was her heart impressed, were all her thoughts engrossed by that benevolent offer? And shall ours be less affected with the incomparably more tender and endearing love of Christ? He was not only willing, but actually laid down his life for us; a life immensely precious, and of higher dignity than all heavens. He laid down his life, not for amiable persons or worthy creatures, but for vile earth, and miserable sinners; purchasing thereby for us and our children, privileges of inestimable worth and of everlasting duration.

Will not such beneficence, so unmerited, so unequalled, win the most reluctant, and melt the most obdurate heart? The heart which is not wrought upon by this miracle of divine compassion, must be steel, must be adamant—quite impenetrable, and absolutely incorrigible. "O thou ever-blessed, thou all-gracious Redeemer, 'thy love to us is wonderful; passing,' 1 will not say, 'the love of women,' 2 Sam. i. 26, but the power of language and the reach of thought! Who can hold out against such charming attractives? who can resist such heavenly goodness? Only let a sense of thy love be always warm, always operative on our minds. This shall be instead of a thousand arguments to engage, instead of ten thousand motives to quicken our obedience." Other motives may produce external services, or hypocritical performances; terrors may extort the drudgery of the hand, bribes may purchase the adulation of the tongue; but this conciliates the will, this proselytes the affections, this captivates the soul, and makes all its powers "like the chariots of Aminadab," Cant. vi. 12, ready, expedite, and active in duty.

Hear the holy apostle giving an account of himself and his spiritual state. He speaks in language somewhat similar, though greatly superior, to the profession of the Armenian princess: "so great is the glory, so rich is the grace, so superabundant are the merits of my Redeemer, that I am determined to know nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified." 1 Cor. ii. 2. Ask the same zealous apostle, what prompted him to such indefatigable diligence, and animated him with such invincible fortitude? Why did he decline no toil, and dread no danger; rejoice in tribulation, and glory in reproach;† welcome persecution, and defy death? This is his reply, "The love of Christ constraineth me; beareth me on, with much the same strong, steady, prevailing influence, which winds and tide exert when they waft the vessel to its destined harbour."

Shall we hear what another disciple, one of the most advanced proficients in divine love, says upon the subject? one who learned his knowledge, not in the school of philosophy, but on his Saviour's bosom? "This is the love of God, that we walk after his commandments." 2 John, ver. 6. This is the natural fruit, this the certain evidence, of love to that glorious, transcendent, and adorable Being. What? Not that we supinely neglect, much less that we profanely violate his sacred precepts, but that, with assiduity and delight, we make them the rule of our conduct. "Charity edifieth;" 1 Cor. viii. 1; this divine love, far from raising the foundations, far from demolishing the structure, "buildeth up," (Ὁικοδομεῖ) the fair fabric of universal godliness.

Let me borrow an illustration from your own letter. When a pebble is cast into the smooth canal, it moves the centre and forms a circle. The first creates a second, the second breaks into a third; they continue to multiply and expand themselves, till the whole surface is covered with circular undulations. Thus, the love of an all-gracious Redeemer, when "shed abroad in the soul by the Holy Ghost," Rom. v. 5, will diffuse itself through every intellectual faculty, and extend to every species of duty, till the whole heart is filled with the image, and the whole behaviour regulated by the law of the blessed God. So that I am persuaded there is a great deal of truth and solidity, as every one must acknowledge there is a peculiar spirit and beauty, in the apostrophe of our poet;

> Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding love!
> Thou maker of new morals to mankind,
> The grand morality is love of Thee.
> *Night Thoughts, No.* iv.

You mentioned the loadstone, as most signally and most extensively serviceable in the sea-faring business. Such is faith, so efficacious in practical Christianity. This, perhaps, you think a scanty and defective principle. The property of showing the northern part of the world may seem equally

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* Εγω μεν καν της ψυχης πριαιμην ωστε μηποτε λατρευσαι ταυτην.
XENOPH. *de Cyri Instit.* lib. iii.

† That supreme affection to the blessed Jesus, which reigned in the hearts of his primitive disciples, could never have been so emphatically displayed by any strokes of eloquence, as by their own cheerful and heroic manner of expressing themselves, with relation to their sufferings. Far from regretting, "I take pleasure (says the apostle) in afflictions." 2 Cor. xii. 10. "To you," adds the same apostle, "it is given (ἐχαρισθη) as a desirable privilege, to suffer for the adorable Jesus." Phil. i. 29. St. Luke, recording the outrages committed on two disciples, for preaching boldly in the name of Christ, uses a phrase remarkably gallant and spirited: "They departed from the council rejoicing, ὁτι κατηξωθησαν ατιμασθηναι, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame," in so venerable and glorious a cause.

mean and inconsiderable. But as the one is the very soul of navigation, the other is the very life of holiness. It is somewhat like the stone, which the Babylonian monarch saw in his dream, "cut from the rock without hands," Dan. ii. 34, which, though despicable to human appearance, was mighty in operation; destroyed the superb statue; became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Thus will faith exert and diffuse its kindly yet triumphant energy, to every corruption, that it may be subdued; to every virtue, that it may be cherished.

Faith is a real persuasion, that the blessed Jesus has shed his blood for me, and fulfilled all righteousness in my stead; that, through this great atonement and meritorious obedience he has purchased, even for my sinful soul, reconciliation with God, sanctifying grace, and every spiritual blessing.*

When the Almighty sunk the cavities of the ocean, and replenished them with the liquid element, he provided an inexhaustible source of moisture, for the refreshment of every animal, and the nutriment of every vegetable. In like manner, wherever he works this true faith, he plants the seed of universal holiness, and provides for the propagation of every virtue. This persuasion of the divine good-will overcomes our natural reluctance, and excites a fervent desire to please our most merciful Father. This experience of the abundant grace of Christ attracts and assimilates the soul; turning it into his amiable likeness, "as the wax is turned to the imprinted seal." What will be the language of such a person?

"Did my exalted Master empty himself and become poor, that his most unworthy servant might be filled with all the fulness of God? Eph. iii. 19. And shall not I cheerfully deny myself the expensive pleasures of the world, that I may have somewhat to bestow on his needy children? Has the death of Christ, as a punishment, satisfied the most rigorous justice for my sins; as a price, has it redeemed me from every evil; and as a sacrifice, made my peace with God most high? And shall I not, by these mercies of my dying Lord, be induced to present all the members of my body, and all the faculties of my soul, as a living sacrifice to his honour, Rom. xii. 1, to be employed in his service, and resigned to his will? Do I believe that my Saviour has not only rescued me from hell, but established my title to all the blessings included in the promises, and all the felicity laid up in heaven? And can I neglect to seek those invaluable blessings, or forbear to aspire after this immense felicity? Can I be so ungrateful as to affront, so insensible as to forget, the infinitely beneficent Author of both? Am I persuaded that the Prince of Peace is entered into glory, as my forerunner, Heb. vi. 20, and has prepared mansions of bliss for my final reception? And shall I not follow him thither in my hopes and my affections; be as a pilgrim below, and have my conversation above? Is not this a most sweet and effectual method of gaining my heart, and if my heart, then all my powers, to his blessed self?"

Such, my dear Theron, will be the effects of faith. Therefore, it is not in vain, much less to the discouragement of real virtue, that the scripture lays such a stress upon faith: so frequently urges the importance and necessity of faith; represents faith as the principal work of the divine Spirit, and the great instrument of receiving salvation: because it is a sure, a sovereign means of "purifying the heart," Acts xv. 9; and never fails to "work by love," Gal. v. 6. Was faith, as some people are apt to imagine, like a candle put under a bushel, or like the lamps which burn in sepulchres; it would then be an insignificant labour to inculcate it, and no better than an empty flourish of words to celebrate it. But nothing is more certain than that faith is a vital, an operative, a victorious principle.

Christ is a store-house of all good. Whatever is necessary to remove our guilt, whatever is expedient for renewing our nature, whatever is proper to fit us for the eternal fruition of God, all this is laid up in Christ; and all this is received by faith, for application, use, and enjoyment. Accordingly, when Zaccheus believed, he commenced a new man; his bowels yearned with compassion; the rapacious publican became a friend to the needy, and a father to the poor, Luke xix. 8.—When the Macedonians believed, how eminently was their spirit ennobled and their practice improved. Though pressed with afflictions, their souls overflowed with joy; and, even in the deepest poverty, they signalized themselves by the abundance of their liberality.* When the first converts believed, the change of their behaviour was so re-

* This definition of faith may possibly, at the first view, dissatisfy and alarm even some pious people, including, as they apprehend, too great a degree of assurance. But if they please to take it in connexion with the explanation and adjustment delivered in the sixteenth Dialogue, I hope all cause of disapprobation or surprise will vanish. I flatter myself that the sentiment will be found, not only comfortable for the sinner, but agreeable to Scripture; and truly unexceptionable, as well as highly desirable.

* 2 Cor. viii. 2. Here is, especially in the original, as fine an antithesis, perhaps, as ever was penned. Since my last notes were so copious, I shall forego the pleasure of particularizing the beauties of this clause. I leave it to the lover of the sacred literature to admire the apostle's expression, to be charmed with the spirit of the Macedonian believers, and to derive edification from both.

markable, the holiness of their lives so exemplary, that they won the favour and commanded the respect of all the people, Acts ii. 47. In short, it is as impossible for the sun to be in his meridian sphere, and not to dissipate darkness or diffuse light, as for faith to exist in the soul, and not to exalt the temper and meliorate the conduct. That my dear Theron may be established in faith, may increase in faith, may abound in faith, is the most affectionate wish that thought can suggest or friendship adopt. May his faith therefore be established like the mountain-oaks, increase like the progressive stream, till it spreads and abounds like the overflowing flood!

I intended to have closed my letter, and confirmed my point, by a very memorable story. But however your patience may persevere, my time fails, and my hand is weary. The next post, if nothing unexpected intervenes, shall bring you the sequel. May it, when brought to my friend, be as "a nail fastened in a sure place." and give the rivet of conviction to all these important truths! In the mean time, or rather at all times, I remain cordially and invariably yours,

ASPASIO.

LETTER XI.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,—FAITH in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, is a fundamental principle in that invaluable system of sacred and divine philosophy—the gospel; by which the heavenly Teacher is continually training up millions of rational and immortal creatures, for the true perfection of their nature, for the final fruition of their God; or, in other words, for a state of consummate happiness and everlasting exaltation. In this school, may you and I be humble students and daily proficients! While others are ambitious of glittering distinctions and sounding titles, may it be our highest aim, our greatest glory, to answer the character of believers! By this character, the supreme Lord distinguishes his chosen people, and denominates the heirs of salvation. This character stands fairest in the book of life, and brightest in the annals of eternity. This character, however neglected or disesteemed among men, will be remembered and had in honour when the pompous names of statesman and generalissimo are known no more.

As faith is of such singular and extensive efficacy in genuine Christianity, methinks I would have all our meditations terminate on its glorious object, and be calculated to invigorate so benefical a principle. When we reflect on that stupendous act, the creation of the world out of nothing; let us remember, it was his act, who "obtained eternal redemption for us." When we contemplate that immense theatre of wonders, the heavens and their shining hosts; let us not forget that they are all his works, who "brought in everlasting righteousness" for us. Do we turn our thoughts to the ocean, that spacious and magnificent canal which covers more than half the globe? It was formed by his word, and is obedient to his will, who "loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Do we take a view of the earth, that grand and inexhaustible magazine, which furnishes such a multiplicity of conveniences for so many millions of creatures? It is all his property, and wholly at his disposal, who "emptied himself" (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε) for our sake, and "had not where to lay his head." Phil. ii. 7. For thus saith the inspired philosopher, thus saith the oracle of revelation, "All things were made by him, and for him. Col. i. 16.

The great Creator has enriched this habitable globe with a profusion of good. He has adorned it with a variety, an order, and a beauty, which are perfectly charming. He has ennobled it with a dignity, a sublimity, and a grandeur, which are at once delightful and astonishing. In all this, reason cannot but discern a clear manifestation of power, a bright display of wisdom, and a rich demonstration of benignity. But will the Creator himself vouchsafe to be made flesh, on purpose that he may obey and die for his guilty creatures? This is what neither the utmost penetration of men, nor the very superior intelligence of angels, could ever have demonstrated, discovered, or conceived. This exceeds whatever the elements have produced, whatever the sun has beheld, as much as the extent and magnificence of the planetary system exceed the dimensions and the furniture of a shepherd's hut. To reveal this, is the blessed peculiarity of the gospel. To know and believe this, is the distinguishing prerogative of a Christian. To apply this, to dwell upon this, to connect this with all our observations of the universe, should be our favourite and habitual employ. This will improve wonder into devotion, and raise the entertainments of science into the joy of salvation. This will render every philosophical speculation a strengthener of our faith, and make the various scenes of nature a guide to grace, and a step to glory. When this is done, then all things attain their proper end; and as they are by Christ, so they are for Christ.

But I forget myself, my business, and my promise. I am to establish the point

by incontestible fact, not to embellish it by loose harangue. With pleasure I address myself to discharge the obligation; and exemplify, in a very memorable instance, the power of faith on religious practice. From whence shall I fetch my exemplification? From the memoirs of the indefatigable apostle of the Gentiles? Here I find one, most concisely, and at the same time most forcibly displayed.

"After these things were ended," says the sacred historian, "Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome." Acts xix. 21. Who can observe, and not admire, this plain unambitious manner of relating a series of labours, the most signally successful, and most extensively useful? Nothing in human conduct ever surpassed the greatness of the one, and perhaps nothing in historical composition ever equalled the simplicity of the other.

St. Paul had already reduced Ephesus and Asia to the obedience of Christ. He had already brought Macedonia and Achaia into subjection to the gospel. He had long ago erected the standard and spread the triumphs of Christianity in the regions of Arabia. Yet, as if he had hitherto achieved nothing, he bends his forces towards Jerusalem. Then he marks out Rome for the seat of his spiritual warfare. After this he forms the same beneficent design upon Spain; including in his comprehensive plan the metropolis and the boundaries* of the known world. The universe is but just large enough to be the scene of his action; he never discontinues the charitable campaign but with the last breath of his life; and he speaks of this unintermitted course of arduous and dangerous services, as if he was only going to make some friendly visit, or join in a party of innocent pleasure: "After I have been at Jerusalem, I must also see Rome."†

Which of your Alexanders, which of your Cæsars, which of all the heroes renowned in Grecian or Roman story, can vie with the zeal and magnanimity of this poor despised tent-maker? so poor, that he was constrained to work with his own hands for a morsel of bread; so despised, that he was frequently treated as the offscouring of all things. Notwithstanding all these discouragements, what did he not attempt, what did he not accomplish, for the honour of his Master and the good of his fellow-creatures?—He embarks in a shallop; he has neither shield nor spear: yet he purposes to command the ocean, and conquer the globe. What greatness of soul was here! he expects (Acts xx. 23,) nothing but poverty, contempt, and death; yet his heart is big with the hopes of enriching, ennobling, and saving ages and generations. What benevolence of temper was this! Should you inquire concerning this illustrious champion of the cross, who were his potent auxiliaries? None but the divine Spirit. What were his mighty weapons? Nothing but the word of truth and grace. Whence proceeded his intrepid, his enterprising, his all-conquering resolution? Only from faith, a lively faith in Jesus Christ.

This, I think, is a sufficient confirmation of my doctrine. Nevertheless, I have another instance to produce: one that was exhibited in an age when the glorious object of our faith shone with dim lustre, and with distant beams; yet it may justly be admired, and will hardly be eclipsed, by the most enlightened among the Christian saints. To keep you no longer in suspense, the case I mean is that which Moses records, and the apostle celebrates: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son." Heb. xi. 17.

As this is so singular an example of the efficacious and triumphant operation of faith, unequalled in any nation of the world or under any dispensation of religion, you will give me leave to dwell a little on some of its marvellous circumstances.

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* Spain was then supposed to be the boundary of the western, as the Ganges was reckoned the extremity of the eastern world.

Omnibus in terris quæ sunt a Gadibus usque
Auroram et Gangen.—*Juv.* Sat. x.

† I am quite charmed, I must confess, with this very simple, but incomparably gallant manner of the apostle's speaking. Far beyond all the pomp of panegyric, it displays the hero.

When a handful of Spartans undertook to defend the pass of Thermopylæ against the whole army of Persia, so prodigious, it was reported, were the multitudes of the Persians, that the very flight of their arrows would intercept the shining of the sun. Then, said Dienecces, one of the Spartan leaders, "we shall have the advantage of fighting in the shade." Just before the battle of Agincourt, news were brought to King Henry's camp that the French were exceedingly numerous, and would take the field with more than six times the number of the English troops. To which the brave Captain Gam immediately replied, Is it so? "Then there are enough to be cut in pieces, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away." A commanding officer, I think, among the royalists, being besieged by the parliament forces, was summoned to surrender the castle. The summons he rejected, and treated with contempt. Upon this the enemy threatened, that, if he persisted in his resolution, the walls should, without farther delay, be battered to the ground. "What if they are?" was his answer, "I am not obliged to rebuild them."

Such calm and undaunted sentiments, amidst circumstances of the most imminent danger, argue an uncommon fortitude and superiority of mind. But, if we consider the nature of the apostle's enterprise; that it was nothing less than an open attack on the empire of Satan, a declared war against the whole idolatrous world, all which was to be attended with persecution and imprisonment, was to end in martyrdom and death; if we consider this, I believe, nothing will appear at once so humble and so exalted, so modest yet so magnanimous, as the turn and air of his expression; "After I have been at Jerusalem, I must also see Rome."

Abraham was an eminent and distinguished servant of the most high God, favoured with peculiar manifestations of the divine will, and dignified with the honourable title of his Maker's friend, 2 Chron. xx. 7, Isa. lxi. 8. Yet even this man is harassed with a long succession of troubles; and, which was reckoned in those ages the most deplorable calamity, "goes childless."*

Long he waits, worshipping God with the most patient resignation. At length an oracle from the Lord gives him hope, gives him assurance of a son. Joyfully he receives the promise, and rests in humble expectation of its accomplishment. Several years run their rounds, but no pleasing infant prattles in his arms, or is dandled upon his knees. At last the handmaid becomes pregnant. But what a disappointment was here: This is the son of the bond-woman, not of the free.

How afflicting the case of this excellent person! His kinsfolk and acquaintance see their olive-branches flourishing round about their tables. Even his ungodly neighbours have children at their desire, and leave the residue of their substance for their babes. But Abraham, the worshipper of the Almighty, the favourite of heaven; this Abraham is destitute of an heir to support his name, to propagate his family, and inherit the blessing. O the straits to which the believer is sometimes reduced! How does a sovereign Providence try his faith, as it were in a furnace of fire! not that it may be consumed, but refined, and come forth with augmented lustre, to the praise of ever-faithful, all-sufficient grace.

God is pleased to renew the grant, and assure him more explicitly, that Sarah shall have a son. But this notice comes at a very late period in life, when Sarah is advanced in years, and too old, according to the course of nature, to conceive. However, the pious patriarch "staggers not through unbelief; but hopes even against hope," Rom. iv. 18—20. Is it improbable? is it difficult? nay, is it to all human appearance impossible? So much the fitter for the exertion, and so much the more proper for the display of almighty power.

At last the gift so earnestly desired is vouchsafed. Sarah has a child—a son—an Isaac; one who should be a source of consolation and delight to his parents, should "fill their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with joy."* Psalm cxxvi. 2. With tender care, doubtless, this pleasant plant is reared. Many prayers are put up for his long life, and great happiness. The fond parents watch over him as over the apple of their own eye. Their life is bound up in the life of the lad, Gen. xliv. 30. He grows in grace as he grows in stature. So amiable is his temper, and so engaging his behaviour, as could not fail of endearing him even to a stranger; how much more to such indulgent parents, after so long a state of barrenness, and so many expectations so frequently frustrated.

Now, methinks, we are ready to congratulate the happy sire, and flatter ourselves, that his tribulations have an end, that the storms which ruffled the noon of life are blown over, and the evening of his age is becoming calm and serene. But let "not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off," 1 Kings xx. 11. Our warfare on earth is never accomplished, till we bow our head and give up the ghost. The sharpest, the severest trial is still behind. God, the supreme and uncontrollable God, demands the child. It is the will of heaven, that he make his exit, just as he arrives at manhood. "Where now, Abraham, are all thy pleasing prospects? How often didst thou say in thy fond delighted heart, "This same shall comfort us concerning our trouble?" Gen. v. 29. Many have been my sorrows, but this child shall dry up my tears, and bring me to my grave in peace. Alas! this lovely flower is to be cut down in its fairest, fullest bloom. All thy shining hopes are overcast in a moment."

"Abraham!"† says God.—Abraham knows the voice. It is the voice of condescending goodness. He had often heard it with a rapture of delight. Instantly he replies, "Here I am, speak, Lord! for thy servant is all attention;" hoping, no doubt, to receive some fresh manifestation of the divine good-will to himself and his family; or some new discovery of the method in which the divine wisdom would accomplish the promises, "I will multiply thy seed; I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed!"

* There was so much gall in this calamity, that it imbittered every other species of happiness. Visited by this affliction, the patriarch could taste no joy in his late signal victory; all his worldly prosperity was insipid, and he seems to have been incapable of relishing any other comfort, "what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" Gen. xv. 2. I would entreat the reader to take particular notice of this circumstance. It will have the same effect upon the representation of Abraham's obedience, and the whole series of his difficulties, as a magnifying glass has upon the objects to which it is applied.

* This is the import of the Hebrew name Isaac.

† The sentence with which the inspired historian introduces this affecting narrative, is unhappily translated in our Bibles, נסה את אברהם, God did tempt Abraham. This expression seems, more than seems to clash with the doctrine of St. James, chap. i. 13, and cannot but sound harsh to those ears, which have been accustomed to understand, by *tempter* and tempting, persons utterly odious and practices extremely pernicious. Whereas the true and natural signification of the original is, "he tried or explored." God sounded the depth, and measured the height of his servant's faith, in order to erect an everlasting monument of the victorious efficacy of this sacred principle, and exhibit an illustrious pattern to all them who should hereafter believe.

"Take thy son," adds God. And might not Abraham reasonably expect, that, since his son was advanced to years of maturity, he should be directed how to settle him in the world with honour and advantage; where to find a virtuous and fruitful partner of his bed? He is commanded, not barely to take his son, but his only son, his son Isaac, whom he loved. How must these affecting images awaken all that soft complacency, and all that tender triumph, which are known only to the fondly feeling heart of a parent! Must not such an introduction, so remarkably endearing, heighten his expectation of some signal mercy; to be conferred on the beloved youth, and would it not render the blessing peculiarly acceptable, more than doubly welcome?

Was he not then startled, was he not horribly amazed, when, instead of some renewed expression of the divine favour, he received the following orders? "Take now thy son—thy only son Isaac—whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of," Gen. xxii. 2.

Was ever message so alarming? each word more piercing to parental ears, than the keenest dagger to the heart. Every clause brings an additional load of misery; till the whole command swells into the most accumulated and aggravated wo.

"Abraham, take thy son." Who but Abraham could have forebore remonstrating and pleading on such an occasion?—Ananias, being charged with a commission to Saul the persecutor, takes upon him to argue the case with his almighty Sovereign; "Lord, I have heard by many concerning this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name," Acts ix. 13, 14. Sure, it can never be safe or expedient to present myself voluntarily before him, who came hither breathing out threatenings and slaughter against me! What is this but to court danger, and run with open eyes into ruin? Thus Ananias; and with how much greater appearance of reason might Abraham have replied, "Lord, shall I lose my child? lose him, almost as soon as I have received him? Didst thou give him only to tantalize thy servant? Remember, gracious God, the name he bears. How shall he answer its cheering import, how shall he be a source of satisfaction to his parents, or the father of many nations, if thou takest him away in his unmarried state, and in the very prime of his years?

"If sin lies at the door, let me expiate the guilt. Let thousands of rams, let every bullock in my stalls bleed at thy altar. My wealth, blessed Lord, and all my goods, are nothing in comparison of my Isaac. Command me to be stript of my possessions; command me to roam as a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and I will magnify thy holy name. Only let my child, my dear child, be spared.

"Or, if nothing will appease thy indignation but human blood, let my death be the sacrifice. Upon me be the vengeance. I am old and gray-headed, the best of my days are past, and the best of my services done. If this tottering wall tumbles, there will be little or no cause for regret. But if the pillar of my house, and the foundation of my hopes,—if he be snatched from me, what good will my life do me? "O my son, my son, would God I might die for thee!" 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

"If it must be a blooming youth, in the flower of his days, be pleased, most merciful God, to select the victim from some fruitful family. There are those who abound in children. Children are multiplied unto them; and though many were removed, yet would their table be full. There are those who have flocks and herds, whereas I have only this one little lamb, 2 Sam. xii. 3, the very solace of my soul, and the stay of my declining years; and shall this be taken away, while all those are left?"

Yes, Abraham, it is thy son, and not another's, that is marked for the victim. What distress, had he not been supported by faith, what exquisite distress, must have overwhelmed this affectionate parent! How could he refrain from crying out, and with a flood of tears?—"If the decree cannot be reversed, if it must be the fruit of my own body, O! that Ishmael, the son of the handmaid—How shall I speak it? my heart bleeds at the thought; at the thought even of his expiring agonies, and untimely death. But as for Isaac, the son of my beloved spouse, the son of my old age, the crown of all my labours; how, how shall I survive such a loss? The blow that goes to his heart, must be fatal to us both.

"Yet if he must die, and there is no remedy; may he not at least expire by a natural dissolution? May not some common distemper unloose the cords of life, and lay him down gently in the tomb? May not his fond mother and myself seal his closing eyes, and soften his dying pangs by our tender offices?"

No, Abraham. Thy son must be slaughtered on the altar. He shall have no other bed of death than the pile of hewn wood; no other winding sheet, than his own clotted gore. The sacrificing-knife, and not any common disease, shall bring him to his end. And think not to satisfy thy sorrowing fondness, by paying him the last honours of a decent interment. It is the Lord's will that he be cut in pieces, consumed to ashes, and made a burnt-offering; so that

nothing shall remain to be preserved or embalmed. It shall not be in thy power to soothe thy grief, by resorting to his grave, and weeping at his sepulchre, and saying—"Here lies Isaac!"

"But if all must be executed, God grant these eyes may never behold the dismal tragedy! If my Isaac must be bound hand and foot for the slaughter, if he must receive the steel into his bosom, and welter in his own innocent blood, heaven forbid that I should behold so killing a spectacle!"

Even this mitigation cannot be granted. Thou must not only be an eye-witness of his agony, but be the executioner of thy Isaac. Thy hands must lift the deadly weapon; thy hands must point it to the beloved breast; thine own hands must urge its way through the gushing veins and shivering flesh, till it be plunged in the throbbing heart. God will not permit the work to be done by another. The father, the father must be the butcher.

Is not the wretched father stunned and thunder-struck! Does he not stand fixed in horror, and speechless with grief? What words can be mournful enough to express his sorrows? Unheard of, shocking affair! Nature recoils at the very thought! How then can the best of fathers perform the deed? How shall he answer it to the wife of his bosom, the mother of the lovely youth? How can he justify it to the world? They will never be persuaded that the God of goodness can delight in cruelty, or authorize so horrid an action. Will they not take up a taunting proverb, and say at every turn, "There goes the man, the monster rather, that has imbrued his hands in his own son's blood! This is he that pretends to piety, and yet could be so savage as to assassinate, coolly and deliberately assassinate an only child!"—Might not thousands of such reflections crowd into his thoughts, and rack his very soul?

But God is unchangeable. Positive is his word, and must be obeyed; obeyed immediately too. Take now thy son. The Lord's commandment requireth speed. No time is to be lost in bidding adieu to his relations, or in fruitless supplications for revoking the doom. Nay, cheerfully, as well as instantly, must this command be fulfilled. The great Jehovah expects alacrity in his service.—Prodigious trial indeed! Yet not too great for a faith which the divine Spirit infuses and the divine Spirit sustains.

The patriarch knew full well that obedience is no obedience, unless it be willing and cheerful. Therefore he consults not with flesh and blood. He is deaf to the arguings of carnal reason, and regards not the yearnings of paternal affection. Without a murmuring word, without a moment's delay,* he sets forward on his journey; not so much as betraying the least uneasiness, to alarm his wife; nor heaving the least sigh, to surprise his attendants. And canst thou, Abraham, canst thou persist in thy purpose? can thy heart firmly resolve, can thy hand steadily execute, this inexpressibly severe task? Most triumphant faith indeed! Deservedly art thou styled "the father of the faithful!" Rom. iv. 18. Thy faith is stronger than all the ties of affection; stronger than all the pleas of nature, or all the terrors of death,—even of a death far more dreadful than thy own.

And now must he travel during three tedious, and one would think, most melancholy days, with his Isaac constantly before his eyes; with the bloody scene continually in his apprehensions; and nothing to divert his mind from dwelling on every bitter circumstance, and all the grievous consequences. "On the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and beheld afar off the appointed place. His servants are ordered to keep their distance; while himself, with the fire and the knife in his hands; and his son, with the burden of wood on his shoulders, "went both of them together." Who does not pity the sweet youth, toiling under that load which must soon reek with his blood, and soon reduce him to ashes? Meanwhile the intended victim, wondering to see all those preparations made, and no proper animal near, asks this pertinent question, "My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Sure, this endearing speech, which discovered such a knowledge of religion, and such a concern for its duties, must rouse the father's anguish, and shake his determination. How can he be the death of so much innocence, and so much piety?

Faith overcomes all difficulties. Unmoved, and inflexible, the patriarch replies, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering, my son."† After this he discloses the strange, the startling secret: "Thou thyself, my dear child, are destined to this purpose. The God who bestowed thee on my longing desires is pleased to require thee again at my hand. The Lord

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* For it is written, He rose early in the morning, ver. 3.

† Abraham, in this answer, like many of the other prophets in their predictions, seems not to have thoroughly understood the import of his own words. What he himself meant, I apprehend, is represented in the paraphrase of his speech. Yet God so overruled his tongue, that it more fully expressed the divine decree, than the paternal idea.

"God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering, my son." Thus the words are placed in the Hebrew. My son comes last, and closes the reply; that the tender accents may be left to vibrate on the father's ear, and the dear distressing image continue playing before his mind. This, I think, is a delicacy not to be overlooked, and increases the pathos of the narrative.

gave, and the Lord taketh away, let us both adore the name of the Lord. Let us confide in his promised goodness, and unanimously profess, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It does not appear that the amiable youth resisted or gainsaid. He had strength to oppose, and speed enough to escape,* the attempts of an aged father. Either or both of which, the law of self-preservation might seem to dictate, and the light of reason to justify. But Isaac knew that his father was a prophet. In this prophetical character, he sees and acknowledges the warrant of heaven. And since his Creator calls, he is content to go. Excellent Isaac! who does not admire thy courage? who is not charmed with thy resignation? and must we, in a few minutes, must we see thee a pale, a bloody, a breathless corpse?

Methinks, I shudder as we draw near the direful catastrophe. The altar is built; the wood laid in order; all things are ready for the solemn service; and Isaac offers his willing throat to the knife. Nevertheless, that the work of destiny may be sure, and no one particular relating to a sacrifice omitted, "Abraham binds his son." I have known a stubborn malefactor quite unalarmed when sentenced to the ignominious tree; not at all impressed with the most awful representations of eternal judgment; yet, when a person came to measure him for his coffin, the hardened wretch was hard no longer. He started, turned pale, and trembled in every joint. Even such a circumstance makes no impression on Abraham; neither alters his purpose, nor changes his countenance. He measures his Isaac; measures those limbs, which he had so frequently and so tenderly caressed; and if not for the coffin, yet for immediate slaughter.

Having bound him—surprising resolution!—bound him for the sword and for the flame, he "lays him upon the altar, on the wood." There now lies Isaac; the dear, the dutiful, the religious Isaac! Abraham's joy; Sarah's delight; the heir of the promises! there he lies, all meek and resigned; expecting every moment the stroke of death to fall. O parents! parents! do not your bowels yearn? is not humanity itself distressed at the scene? Say, thou who art a father, what thinkest thou of Abraham's obedience? couldst thou, to such a son, have acted such a part?

See! the father, resolute to the very last, unsheathes the murdering blade; makes bare the innocent bosom; and marks the place where life may find the speediest exit. "His heart is fixed!" he stretches his arm, and now, even now is aiming the mortal blow; when,—rejoice, ye worshippers of a gracious God! break forth into singing, ye that are in pain for the tried parent! the Lord Almighty interposes in this article of extreme need.* The Angel of the covenant speaks from heaven, and withholds the lifted hand, in the very act to strike. God, who only intended to manifest his faith, and make it honourable, bids him desist. God applauds his obedience; substitutes another sacrifice in Isaac's stead; renews his covenant with the father; and not only reprieves the life of the son, but promises him a numerous and illustrious issue; promises to make him the progenitor of the Messiah, and thereby a public blessing to all the nations of the earth.

Tell me now, Theron, was there ever such an astonishing effort of obedience? such a perfect prodigy of resignation? "Yet this hath faith done."† If you should ask, how was it possible for Abraham to perform all this, in the manner described? The answer is obvious: Because Abraham believed: or, in other words, was fully persuaded, that the God who had given him this son from the barren womb, was able to raise him again from the smoking ashes.‡ As the same God who required this sacrifice, had expressly declared, "In Isaac shall thy seed

* According to Josephus, Isaac was, when he submitted himself to the slaughter, about twenty-five years old. Others think his age was thirty-three, which makes him more exactly resemble his suffering Lord. Then his father must be above a hundred and thirty years old. Either account will justify Aspasio's supposition.

* Upon this most seasonable interposition, the inspired historian makes a very judicious and edifying remark, which seems to be greatly obscured, if not entirely spoiled, by our translation: "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." I must confess, I have always been puzzled to find, not only a pertinent sense, but any sense at all, in these words. Whereas the original is as clear in its signification, as it is apposite to the purpose. "In the mount, the Lord will be seen:" or, "In the mount, the Lord will provide." q. d. "This memorable event gave rise to, at least is an eminent exemplification, of that proverbial expression, which is commonly used at this day. In the mount of difficulty, or in the very crisis of need, when matters seem to be irretrievable and desperate, then the Lord appears as a present help. Man's extremity is God's opportunity." See Gen. xxii. 14.

† Heb. xi. 17. "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up his son Isaac." The faith of which such glorious things are spoken, to which such admirable achievements are ascribed, through this whole chapter, was a faith in the "seed of the woman," the promised Messiah. Or, could it be demonstrated, (which, I will venture to conclude, is impossible,) that, in all these heroic instances of obedience, there was no believing regard to Christ; no apprehension of his unspeakable love; no application of his transcendent merits! our argument would not lose its force, but strike with redoubled energy. For, if a belief in very inferior manifestations of the divine goodness, faithfulness and power, wrought so efficaciously on those ancient worthies; how much more victoriously must the same principle act, under far brighter displays of all the supreme perfections, in the person of Jesus Christ! I would only add, that so long as this chapter remains in the Bible, it will furnish an unanswerable confutation of those objections, which suppose the doctrine of faith to have an unkindly influence on religious or virtuous practice. Against all such cavils, it will stand fast for evermore as the moon, and as the faithful witness in heaven.

‡ He seems to have expected not only the certain, but the immediate restoration of his slain son; that he should be revived on the very spot, before he left the place, so as to accompany his return. For he says to his servants, Not I, but we will go, and worship, and return, ver. 5.

be called," the patriarch doubted not but the promise would, in a way known to infinite wisdom, be punctually accomplished. Hence he made no dispute, and felt no reluctance. His faith banished every uneasy apprehension; and neither fear nor sorrow had place in his breast. By faith he was enabled, speedily and cheerfully, without so much as a parting tear,* to obey this unparalleled precept.

And if all this, which would otherwise have been utterly impracticable, was wrought by faith, you need not suspect of weakness and insufficiency so approved a principle. Far from enervating, it will invigorate every good disposition; and instead of damping, will give life to every religious duty. Cherish faith, and you will of course cultivate obedience. Water this root, and the branches of universal godliness will assuredly partake the beneficial effects; will spread their honours, and bring forth their fruits. Through the power of faith, the saints have wrought righteousness in all its magnanimous and heroic acts. The doctrine of faith is called by St. Paul "a doctrine according to godliness," 1 Tim. vi. 3, exquisitely contrived to answer all the ends, and secure every interest of real piety. The grace of faith St. Jude styles "our most holy faith," Jude ver. 20, intimating, that it is not only productive of holiness, but that the most refined and exalted holiness arises from this stock.

Let us then be diligent to exercise, and careful to increase, faith in Jesus Christ. Let us maintain the same zealous solicitude for this leading capital grace, as the renowned Epaminondas expressed for his shield. When that gallant general was, in an engagement with the enemy, struck to the ground; his soldiers carried him off, breathless and fainting, to his tent. The very moment he opened his eyes, and recovered the use of speech, he asked—not whether his wound was mortal, not whether his troops were routed, but whether his shield was safe?—May we be enabled, my dear friend, to keep our shield safe! May we be strong, be steady, be lively in faith! Then I doubt not we shall give glory to God, receive comfort to ourselves, and abound in the works of the Lord.

Nothing can be more pertinent to my purpose than the apostle's prayer, "That we may know what is the hope of our calling in Christ Jesus, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to themward who believe." And nothing can be more expressive of the very soul of your affectionate

ASPASIO.

LETTER XII.

ASPASIO TO THERON.

DEAR THERON,—It is very probable while I am reading yours, you are perusing mine. But how unlike is my friend to the representation he receives! How unlike the satisfied, unsuspecting, cheerful Abraham! Why this dejected air in your temper? Why those pensive strokes in your letter? Let me anticipate your reply, and make answer to myself. This gloom, I trust, is a sign of approaching day. Just before the morning dawn, the nocturnal darkness is blackest: And just before the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, the penitent's distress is frequently the deepest. I promise myself the hour is at hand which will "put off your sackcloth, and gird you with gladness."

Another favourable presage is, that you take the direct and certain way to obtain substantial comfort. The righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, after which you inquire, about which you are solicitous, is a never failing spring of consolation: because it acquits from all sin; secures from all condemnation, and renders the believer unblamable and unreprovable in the sight of God. Therefore says the holy Ghost, "His name is as ointment poured forth," Cant. i. 3; even that divinely-precious name, by which he has been celebrated in the preceding epistles; by which he is distinguished in the scriptures of truth; by which, I hope, he will be more and more revealed in my Theron's mind,—"The Lord our righteousness."

* This account is so very extraordinary, that I shall not be surprised if the reader finds some difficulty in giving his assent to it; especially, as he may have accustomed himself to form very different conceptions of this remarkable affair; and may possibly be confirmed in a different train of ideas, by seeing a representation of the story in a celebrated print, where the father appears clasping his son in a tender embrace; bedewing him with tears, and suffering as much through grief, as the devoted youth is going to suffer by the knife. But the engraver, I apprehend, had not so attentively examined the circumstances of the sacred narrative, not so carefully compared them with other passages of scripture, as a judicious and worthy friend of mine; from whom I learned to consider this wonderful transaction in the above-represented view. And I must confess, the more I revolve it in my mind, the more I am convinced of its propriety.

I flatter myself, the reader will be of the same opinion, if he pleases to consult the tenth chapter of Leviticus, where Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, are devoured by fire from before the Lord. Yet Aaron is not allowed to mourn, even at such a terrible and afflictive visitation. And when, through the frailty of human nature, he could not wholly refrain, he durst not presume to eat of the sin-offering. "Such things," says he, "have befallen me; if I had eaten of the sin-offering, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord?" Let me add, that we find not the least indication of such agonizing sorrow, nor indeed of any sorrow at all, in the history as related by Moses. Neither could Abraham have been a proper type of the eternal Father, making his only begotten Son a sacrifice for sin, if he had not willingly offered up Isaac. Indeed to offer willingly, seems to have been absolutely necessary, in every acceptable oblation, and every religious service. See 2 Cor. ix. 7; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

The discovery of him under this most amiable and glorious capacity, will indeed be like breaking open a vial of the richest unguents; which not only fill the room, and regale the sense with their delightful fragrance, but refresh the spirits, and "rejoice the very heart." Might my writing, or my discourse, be as the alabaster box, to contain, to convey, and present these reviving odours; how highly should I think myself honoured, and how signally my endeavours blessed!

You ask, "How this righteousness of the divine Redeemer becomes ours?" It is a question which I receive with the utmost pleasure; and, with equal pleasure, shall attempt an answer. Or rather, as the Spirit of our God prompted the first, may the same unerring Guide suggest the last! This he has abundantly done by his prophets and apostles; so that I need only have recourse to their writings, and collect some of the hints which lie treasured up in those storehouses of wisdom.

There we are often told of union with Christ. Believers are said to be "in Christ," Col. i. 2; and to be "one with Christ," Heb. ii. 11. What is still higher, and implies a greater degree of nearness, they are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. And, which denotes the most intimate connexion imaginable, "They that are joined to the Lord Jesus, are one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17, with him! As these expressions appear dark, and their sense lies deep, it has pleased our all-condescending Instructor to illustrate them by a variety of significant types and lively similitudes. This remark very opportunely reminds me of an engagement which, some time ago, I undertook to execute, but have hitherto omitted—to make it evident that the blessed doctrine for which we have been pleading, "is deducible from several scripture images." A short descant upon some of the principal, will, I hope, at once discharge my former obligation, and satisfy your present inquiry.

This was shadowed forth by the costly, odoriferous, flowing unguent, poured upon Aaron's head; "which ran down upon his beard, and descended to the skirts* of his clothing." Psalm cxxxiii. 2. So the merits of our great High Priest are derived down to all the faithful; even those of the meanest station in life, and the lowest attainments in religion.

Was it not typified by that instructive vision which the prophet Zechariah saw? "I have looked, and behold! a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which were upon the top thereof; and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof; which, through two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves." Zech. iv. 2, 3, 12. The bowl and the lamps were a proper emblem of believers who are, by nature, dry vessels, and destitute of all good; yet should shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. The olive-trees, arrayed in verdure, and abounding with sap; always emptying themselves, yet ever full; are a very just representation of Christ, of his unchangeable love, and his inexhaustible grace. The golden pipes, through which the olive branches transmit their oil, seem to be figurative of faith, in its various and repeated actings. By these channels of conveyance, the unspeakable benefits of a Redeemer are communicated to our souls, and replenish those empty basins.

Another type the apostle mentions: "The first Adam," he says, "was a figure of him that was to come." Rom. v. 14. So eminent a figure, and corresponding in so many instances, that he styles our "Lord Jesus the last Adam." 1 Cor. xv. 45. And why? Because, like the first, he was a covenant head to his people, and transacted in their stead. Insomuch that what he did, and what he suffered, both are placed to their account. Is Adam's sin imputed to all his natural offspring? So is Christ's righteousness to all his spiritual seed. The consequences of both render the doctrine more intelligible, and the truth more undeniable. All men are "judged, condemned, dead," Rom. v. 15, 16, doomed inevitably to the death of the body, and justly liable to the death of the soul, on the score of Adam's transgression. All believers are "acquitted, justified, saved;" Rom. v. 19, 21, saved from the first death, and made heirs of the resurrection; saved from the second death, and entitled to life eternal, by virtue of Christ's obedience.

This union with Christ was not only prefigured by types, but is displayed by a variety of similitudes taken from the most familiar occurrences of life; by which it appears to be our divine Master's will, that we should live under the habitual belief of this momentous truth, and in the constant enjoyment of this distinguished privilege.—You cannot visit a friend, or view your children; you cannot enter your garden, discourse with your spouse, or contemplate your own body, without a representation and a remembrancer of this precious blessing.

Christ says to his disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." John xv. 15. Friends are a second self. St. Paul, speaking of Onesimus, uses this re-

* What we render *skirts*, is, in the original, *the mouth*, or, as the word is translated, Job xxx. 18, *the collar* of his garments.

markable phrase. "Receive him as myself," and, which is still more emphatical, "Receive him, that is mine own bowels." Philem. 12, 17. Is not Christ's friendship of the most tender and exalted kind? Doubtless it must be equal, doubtless it must be superior to Jonathan's—Jonathan loved David as his own soul: But Christ loved sinners with a love stronger than death. They were dearer to him than his own inestimable life.—Jonathan exposed himself to imminent danger, in vindicating David's conduct. Jesus surrendered himself to certain death in making reconciliation for our offences.—Jonathan interceded once and again with his father in David's behalf. Christ ever liveth, to plead his blood, and make intercession for transgressors. "Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him to give it to David, and his garment, even to his sword, and his bow, and his girdle." 1 Sam. xviii. 4. Our Redeemer, without stripping himself, has clothed us (such is the prerogative of a divine person!) with the robe of his righteousness, and with the garment of his salvation. He has consigned over to us all the merit of his holy life and propitiatory death.

Christ stands related to his people, not as a friend only, but as a parent. He is called by a prophet, "The everlasting Father," Isa. 6. 9; and we are said by an apostle to be his "children," Heb. ii. 13. Children look upon themselves as interested in the wealth of their parents. They expect, and not without reasonable ground, to reap benefit from it while the parents live, and to become possessors of it, when they die. Accordingly, the father says in the gospel, "Son, all that I have is thine," Luke xv. 31. Since the high and holy Emmanuel vouchsafes to be our Father, can we suppose him less generous than an earthly parent? or can we imagine that his children shall have less to hope than the heirs of an earthly progenitor? May we not, ought we not, to regard all his communicable goods, all the benefits resulting from his meritorious sufferings and perfect obedience, as our portion? Especially since he is the testator also, Heb. ix. 17; has bequeathed them to us by will, and having submitted to death, they become legally ours.

"I am the Vine," says our Lord, "ye are the branches," John xv. 5. They who believe, are ingrafted into Christ. Take notice of a cyon. What are the consequences of its ingrafture? It is embodied with the substance of the tree, and partakes of its fatness. The sap, imbibed by the root, circulates into it, gives it vegetable life, fills it with buds, decks it with blossoms, and loads it with fruit. If then we are one with Christ, as much as the branch is one with the stock, it must follow, even upon the principles of common experience, that his wisdom is ours, to enlighten us; his righteousness is ours, to justify us; his Spirit is ours, to sanctify us; his redemption is ours, to make us completely and eternally happy.

Christ is united to his people by a tie closer and dearer than the parental. They are not only his children, but his spouse. He is often called their bridegroom, and is not ashamed to avow the tender engagement; "I will betroth thee unto me for ever. Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness," Hos. ii. 19, 20. The condescending God multiplies, diversifies, accumulates his words; and this with admirable propriety, as well as surpassing goodness. The honour is so high, and the favour so great, we should hardly know how to believe it, and hardly venture to apply it. Lest, therefore, by a single expression, it should not be sufficiently established, it stands ratified by repeated asseverations, and with all the energy of language; so that, be the grace ever so astonishing, we are assured the fact is equally certain, he that is our Maker, is all our Husband. Isa. liv. 5.

Let us consider what follows upon such an union. We may take for an example, the case of Boaz and Ruth. Soon as their nuptials were solemnized, she that was poor became rich; from a gleaner in the field she commenced mistress of the harvest; and from abiding by the maidens had a seat at the master's table. And if we are united to Christ by a marriage-contract, the same effects will take place. We that were poor, are rich in him; we who had nothing, possess all things in Christ; we that dwell in dust, are made to sit together with our divine Husband in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 6.

If you choose some modern exemplification, what can be more pertinent than the remarkable instance of your neighbour Arietta? She was lately left a widow, by the dissolute and extravagant Bellario; her circumstances miserably embarrassed, and the little estate deeply mortgaged; her friends looked shy, and her creditors became clamorous; scarce a day passed, but it made some new discovery of debts contracted by the deceased; so that the affairs of the survivor appeared with a more melancholy aspect, and in a less retrievable condition. But having won, first the compassion, then the affection, of the wealthy and illustrious Philander, how happily is the face of things altered! All her debts devolve upon him, and all his dignity is derived to her.* He

* The demands of the law are perfect obedience:

stands responsible for whatever she owes; and she is a sharer in whatever he possesses. Though little less than ruined by her late husband, she is more than restored by her present; and has reason to rejoice in his affluence, and to glory in his honours. Have not we also reason to rejoice in our heavenly Bridegroom—since a far more glorious exchange subsists between him and his mystical spouse? He has bore the curse, that we may inherit the blessing. Sin was charged on him, that righteousness might be imputed to us. In a word, he has sustained all our miseries, that he might impart to us all his benefits. Has the law any demand? It must go to him for satisfaction. Have we any wants? We may look to him for a supply; to him, Theron, "in whom it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell." Col. i. 19.

If any thing can express an union more intimate and inseparable than the conjugal, it is that of the members with the head. And this image is used by the Holy Ghost, to shadow forth the connexion between Christ and the faithful. He is the "head over all things," with respect to rule and supremacy, but a head of union and influence, with respect "to the Church." Eph. i. 22. The head and the members constitute one natural, Christ and his church compose one mystical body. What kindness is done, what injury is offered to the members, the head regards them as done to itself. Accordingly, Christ says to the outrageous Saul, who made havoc of the church, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts ix. 4. He declares, concerning those indigent Christians to whose necessities we administer relief; "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto them, ye have done it unto me." Matth. xxv. 40. The animal spirits formed in the head, are formed for the benefit of the whole body, and designed for the use of all the members. So the righteousness wrought by Jesus Christ, is wrought out for his whole mystical body, and intended for the advantage of all his people; to be the cause of their justification, and the purchase of their salvation.

Being then so nearly related, so closely united to the blessed Jesus, it is no wonder that believers are now loved with the same fatherly love, and will hereafter be partakers of the same heavenly glory. What might we not expect from the divine Redeemer, if he vouchsafed to acknowledge but one of those endearing names? Since he has engaged himself to us by all the ties of affinity and affection, may we not promise ourselves, and with the assurance of hope, every good thing; "even all the fulness of God," Eph. iii. 19, our Saviour? Does not each of these tender relations, subsisting between Christ and his saints, imply an entire property in one another, and a mutual participation of all that belongs to either?—"My beloved is mine, and I am his,—I dare not say, is the posy of the mystical ring; but it is the undoubted effect of this divine union.

How pleasing, yet how amazing the thought! Shall we, who say to corruption, "Thou art my Father;" and to the worm, "Thou art my mother and my sister," Job xvii. 14, shall we be permitted to say, concerning the Head of all principality and power, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones?" Eph. v. 30. What a mercy might we esteem it, not to be confounded before a Majesty so exalted and sublime! What a favour, to obtain the least propitious regard from the King immortal and invisible! What an honour, to be admitted into his family, and numbered among the meanest of his servants! But to be his adopted children; to be his espoused bride; to be the members of his sacred body; to have him for our everlasting Father, him for the bridegroom of our souls, him for our heavenly head, who is the Maker of all worlds, and the Sovereign of all creatures! What words can duly celebrate, what heart can sufficiently admire, the condescension and the love of our adorable Jesus? or who can justly question the fruits of such a fellowship, and the consequences of such an union? Question them! No, the fruits are infallibly sure, as the privilege is inexpressibly great.

Let me once again introduce a great and venerable witness of both these truths: "Laban spake high, when he said, 'These children are mine, and all these things thou seest are mine.' But how high and glorious is that which may be said of a justified person: All thou hearest of Christ is thine; his life is thine, his death is thine, his obedience, merit, spirit, all thine!"* Rich and important words! than which nothing can give us a juster or fuller explanation of the apostle's assertion, "We are partakers of Christ." Heb. iii. 14.

When some foreign ladies, of the first quality, paid a visit to Leonidas' queen, the talk turned upon their rich clothes, their costly jewels, and splendid equipage. After they had severally displayed each her own grandeur, they inquired after her majesty's finery—what she had to distinguish her from the vulgar? She replied, "My illustrious husband." What else? "My illustrious husband." And as often as they re-

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Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. To which, in case of disobedience, is superadded condign punishment, "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things."

* See Dr. Lightfoot's Works, vol. ii. p. 1077.

peated the same question, she returned the same answer. Could this queen speak in such admiring, rejoicing, self-gratulating terms of her royal consort? And shall not vile sinners look upon their Redeemer—that all-glorious, yet all-condescending bridegroom; who is full of grace and truth, full of merit and righteousness—shall not they much more look upon him as their honour and their joy; the object of their dependence, and the cause of their boasting?

I should find it difficult to refrain from the farther prosecution of so engaging a topic, did I not propose to wait upon my Theron very speedily. Then I shall have an opportunity of pouring into his bosom all the fulness of my heart, with regard to this delightful subject. In the mean time, let me exhort my dear friend to be of good comfort. "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," Psalm xxx. 5. This sorrow of which you complain, may be the seed of spiritual and eternal consolation.

While I am writing, there appears full in my view one of the finest rainbows I ever beheld. It compasseth the heavens with a glorious circle; so glorious that it is no disparagement of the almighty Creator to say, "the hands of the Most High have bended it." Ecclus. xliii. 12. On what foundation would I ask is that stately and beautiful arch raised? From what source do all its radiant and lovely colours spring! It is raised on a gloomy assemblage of vapours; and all its rich tinctures spring from a louring cloud. Thus does the blessed God, on a conviction of guilt and a sense of ruin, spread faith, plant holiness, and diffuse gladness. May all these, ere long, arise in my Theron's breast! and each be bright as that resplendent bow; lasting as the sun that creates it!

In the mean time, it is the ardent wish of my soul, and shall be my frequent prayer to God, "That both our hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding," Col. ii. 1, in this great mystery of godliness. What vigour of expression, what exuberance of ideas; and, above all, what distinguished privileges are here?—Assurance—full assurance—riches of the full assurance—all riches of the full assurance of understanding"—in reference to our union with Christ, and its unutterably-precious effects! Can the orator express more? Can the sinner desire more? Can the saint, I had almost said, can the archangel enjoy more?—May this be the portion of my dear Theron, and of

His ever faithful

ASPASIO.

DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE XV.

ASPASIO had taken leave of his friend Camillus, and was come to revisit Theron, whose thoughts seemed to be in a state of much fluctuation, and no small anxiety, hoping that some proper conversation on the grace and privileges of the everlasting gospel might compose and comfort his mind, might, while his heart was softened by humbling convictions, fix the stamp of genuine Christianity, and deliver his whole soul into the mould* of evangelical religion.

When sorrows wound the breast, as ploughs the glebe,
And hearts obdurate feel her soft'ning shower,
Her seed celestial then glad Wisdom sows;
Her golden harvests triumph in the soul.
Night Thoughts.

He arrived pretty late in the evening, and, being somewhat wearied with the journey, soon withdrew to his repose. The next morning, as Theron walked abroad to taste the cool delights of the dawn, he was agreeably surprised by meeting Aspasio.

Ther. So soon awake, my worthy friend and after so much fatigue on the preceding day! I had not the least expectation of your company till breakfast. Then, indeed, I promised myself a double regale; the refreshments exhibited on the table, and those "wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Tim. vi. 3, which, more precious than manna, drop—

Asp. How, Theron! Have you also learned those soothing arts, which polish th

* *Deliver into the Mould.*—This is the literal translation, and exact sense of St. Paul's phrase, Εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον διδαχης, Rom. vi. 17, which, as it contains a beautiful allusion, conveys also a very instructive admonition; intimating, that our minds, all pliant and ductile, should be conformed to the refined precepts of the gospel, as liquid metals take the figure of some elegant mould into which they are cast.

speech, to deprave our sentiments! Could I have suspected the enchanting wiles of flattery, from my sincere, my tried, my bosom friend?

Ther. Your friend is still sincere, and his words are very remote from flattery.—How welcome to the wind-bound mariner, weary with expectation, and sick with disappointments, is the visit of a propitious gale? How welcome to the fields, parched with drought and gasping for moisture, are copious showers of rain! How acceptable to the Israelites, travelling through the inhospitable desert, and pining away for want of the fruits of the earth, was the miraculous supply of heavenly bread! Yet neither propitious gales to the wind-bound mariner, nor copious showers to the thirsty soil, nor heavenly bread to the famished Israelites, could be more welcome than your late conversation, and later correspondence, to my anxious soul.

Asp. Why, I thought you looked upon my notions as chimerical. Is Theron also become credulous? Like one of us weak-headed believers, has he quitted the strongholds of reason? is he vanquished by the slingstone of faith? or can he submit to this strange method of salvation, by embracing the righteousness and relying on the obedience of another?

Ther. I find my reason was a feeble guide, or I myself not faithful to its genuine dictates. I was blinded with prejudice; I was intoxicated with pride; a vain conceit of my moral powers betrayed me, as I fear it has betrayed many, into a contempt of the evangelical righteousness. I held what I thought an honour to human nature. I now retract my opinion: I now perceive, that as my natural light could not discover the way, neither can my personal obedience put me in possession of life and salvation. My true glory, and real happiness, I would henceforth derive from the blessed Jesus. No more banter, Aspasio:—have done: I am serious, and very much in earnest; so much in earnest, that if all my acquaintance of the Pharisaical turn, or if all my brothers of the smile, should rally me on the subject, I would frankly acknowledge my error, and as freely sign my recantation.

Asp. My dear Theron, I applaud your resolution. You have no more cause to be ashamed of such a practice, than Philip had to be ashamed of the imperfection in his limbs; when, being observed to go lame with a wound received in battle, he had this consolation suggested by one of his courtiers: "Never blush, my Royal Sir, for a defect which puts you in mind of your valour every step you take." To sacrifice our prejudices in the search of truth, is no less honourable than to be marked with a scar in the defence of our country.

I beg pardon for my pleasantry. Since you are so very serious, a gay air was quite unseasonable. You cannot often complain that I am guilty of this fault. Nor can you easily imagine the satisfaction I shall enjoy, if either my letters or my discourse have administered any advantage to my friend. I shall note it down among the distinguished blessings of my life; and have an additional obligation to love the beneficent author of all good.

But as I cannot be a furtherer of your happiness without the greatest delight, so I cannot be a witness of your solicitude without a painful regret. You must therefore permit me to ask the cause of that unusual vehemence which I observe in your speech, and of that deep concern which I read in your countenance.

Ther. I have been considering very attentively, what is the present state, and what is likely to be the final condition of my soul.

> ——————My hopes and fears
> Start up alarm'd; and o'er life's narrow verge
> Look down—on what? A fathomless abyss.
> A vast eternity!

My sins, at the same time, like an armed host, are set in dreadful array, and surround me on every side. Justice, like an injured and incensed foe, unsheathes the sword, and makes a loud demand for vengeance. No righteousness of my own presents itself, to which I may fly for refuge. The method of salvation, in which I formerly confided, is a bridge broken down; and leaves me, without any possibility of escape, abandoned to the approaching enemy.

To a person in such deplorable circumstances, how reviving, how delightful, is the very thought of being interested in the great Redeemer's righteousness! I do not wonder now at a saying of Luther's, which I have sometimes exploded as strangely extravagant: "That, upon the discovery of this glorious righteousness, the gates of Paradise seemed to fly open before him, and the dawn of heaven was all in view."

Talking in this manner, they came to an elevated terrace; which, about an hour before, had been shaved by the scythe, and emitted all the freshness of new-mown herbage. On one side, a fine champaign country stretched its wide dimensions; on the other, a flower-garden exhibited the last ornaments of the year. Here you might still see the tufted vermillion, and the full-blown ivory, glittering through spangles of liquid crystal. There you might trace the footsteps of the early cattle, by many a recent print on the dewy lawn. On the walls and espaliers autumn had spread her stores, and was beginning to beautify their rinds with many a ruddy streak, or to breathe over their glossy skins her delicate and inimitable bloom.

Asp. See, said Aspasio, the wisdom and benignity which, in amiable and inseparable conjunction, display themselves through the whole economy of the universe: "God has made every thing beautiful in his time," Eccl. iii. 11, every thing serviceable in its place. A little while ago, the flowery meads delighted our eyes, and the melodious birds charmed our ears; now, the tasteful fruits are preparing their dainties, and presenting us with a collation to regale our palate. The whole earth, and all the seasons, are rich with our Creator's goodness. Yea, the whole earth, and all that replenishes it, all that surrounds it, are full of his presence. He it is who

> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent.*

An habitual belief of this truth gives nature her loveliest aspect, and lends her the most consummate power to please. The breath of violets, and the blush of roses; the music of the woods, and the meanders of the stream; the aspiring hill, the extended plain, and all the decorations of the landscape, then appear in their highest attractives, then touch the soul with the most refined satisfaction, when God is seen, when God is heard, and God enjoyed in all. Is Theron lost in thought, and deprived of speech? Is he alone silent while all things speak their Maker's praise? Does faith throw a shade over the works of creation? Does it not heighten their beauties and enliven their graces? The religious is the only true philosopher; and the pleasures of imagination never acquire their proper relish, till they are ripened by the exercise of devotion. With this view then, since my friend forbears, let me attempt to speak; not to increase his knowledge, but to cherish faith, and cultivate devotion in us both.

The spacious canopy† over our heads, is painted with blue; and the ample carpet under our feet, is tinged with green. These colours, by their soft and cheering qualities, yield a perpetual refreshment to the eye:‡ whereas, had the face of nature glistered with white, or glowed with scarlet, such ardent and dazzling hues would, instead of exhilarating, have fatigued the sight. Besides, as the several brighter colours are interspersed, and form the pictures in this magnificent piece; the green and the blue constitute an admirable ground, which shows them all in their highest lustre, and to the utmost advantage.*

Had the air been considerably grosser, it would have dimmed the rays of the sun, and darkened the cheerful day; our lungs had been clogged in their vital functions; men had been suffocated, without the strangling noose; or drowned, without the overwhelming flood. Was it several degrees more subtle, birds would not be able to wing their way through the firmament; nor could the clouds be sustained in so attenuated an atmosphere. It would elude the organs of respiration; we should gasp for breath, with as much difficulty, and with as little success, as fishes out of their native element.

The ground also is wrought into the most proper temperature. Was it of a firmer consistence, it would be impenetrable to the plough, and unmanageable by the spade. Was it of a laxer composition, it would be incapable of supporting its own furniture. The light mould would be swept away by the whirling winds; or the oozy glebe soaked into sloughs by the descending rains. Because every situation suits not every plant, but that which is a nurse to one often proves a stepmother to others; therefore the qualities of the earth are so abundantly diversified, as properly to accommodate every species of vegetation. We have a variety of intermediate soils, from the loose disjointed sand, to the stiff cohesive clay; from the rough projections of the craggy cliff, to the softly-swelling bed of the smooth parterre.

The sea carries equal evidences of a most wise and gracious ordination. Was it larger, we should want land for the purposes of pasturage and the operations of husbandry. We should be destitute of sufficient room for mines and forests; our subterranean warehouses, and our aerial timber-yards.—Was it smaller, it would not be capable of recruiting the sky with a proper quantity of vaporous exhalations, nor of supplying the earth with the necessary quota of fructifying showers.

Do we not discern very apparent strokes of skill, and the most pregnant proofs of goodness, in each individual object? in the

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* Pope's Ethic. Epist.

† What Aspasio calls the canopy, Isaiah describes יְרִיעָה, which we translate "as a curtain;" but the exact signification is, "Sicut tenue, vel tenuissimum quid;" "Like some finely attenuated expanse." Not like the curtains of the covering of the tabernacle, which were goats' hair and badgers' skins, shaggy and coarse; but like some very fine membrane, smooth and elegant, nicely polished, and inimitably delicate. Than which comparison nothing can more perfectly correspond with the aspect of the sky.

‡ ——————— Gay green,
Thou smiling nature's universal robe!
United light and shade! where the sight dwells,
With growing strength, and ever new delight.
Thomson's Spring.

* If the reader has patience to go through the following essay, he will find it, in the issue, not altogether foreign to the main subject. If he pleases to consider it, as a kind of practical comment, in that lovely celebration of providential goodness. His tender mercies are over all his works; this may possibly alleviate the toil of perusing, and reconcile him to the length of the descant.

various tenants of the globe, and the several appurtenances of this great dwelling? It is needless to expatiate upon the more eminent and conspicuous beauties—all that shines in the heavens, and all that smiles on the earth. These speak to every ear, these show to every eye, the adorable munificence of their Maker. It is needless to launch into the praises of the valleys, delicately clothed with herbage; or of the fields, richly replenished with corn. Even the ragged rocks, which frown over the flood; the caverned quarries, which yawn amidst the land; together with the mountains, those shapeless and enormous protuberances, which seem to load the ground and encumber the skies; even these contribute their share to increase the general pleasure, and augment the general usefulness. They variegate the prospect; raise an agreeable horror in the beholder; and inspire his breast with a religious awe. They add new charms to the wide level of our plains; and shelter, like a screen, the warm lap of our vales.

We are delighted with the solemn gloom and magnificent aspect of the forest. One who saw the cedars of Lebanon, was transported with admiration at their ample trunks and towering heads, their diffusive spread and verdant grandeur. Compared with which the stately elm is but a reed, and the branching oak a mere shrub. Was our sight qualified for the search, we should discover a symmetry and a dignity altogether as perfect, and far more wonderful, in those groves of moss* which adhere to the rude stone: we should contemplate with greater surprise, if not with greater rapture, those diminutive plantations, which strike their hasty roots in the mouldy confection, or wave their curious umbrage over the perished pickle.†

Who is not charmed with the vine, and its generous warming juices? with the melon, and its delicious cooling pulp? Yet, were all our trees to produce fruits of such exalted qualities, or of such an agreeable relish, what would become of the birds? How small a scantling of such choice delicacies would voracious man resign to their enjoyment? That provision may be made for the meanest vagrant of the air, as well as for the most renowned sovereign of a nation, there is, in all places, a large growth of shrubs, covered annually with a harvest of coarse and hardy berries; so coarse in their taste, that they are unworthy of the acceptance of man; so hardy in their make, that they endure the extremest severities of the weather, and furnish the feathered tribe with a standing repast, amidst all the desolations of winter.

The fir, with her silver bark, and shapely cone; the beech,* with her quivering leaves and embowering shade, are stately decorations of our rural seats. But, if there were no entangling thickets, no prickly thorns, where would the farmer procure fences so closely wattled, or so strongly armed? How could he guard the scene of his labours, or secure his vegetable wealth from the flocks and the herds—those roving plunderers, which accede to no treaty, but that of forcible restraint, submit to no laws, but those of the coercive kind?

Most people are fond of the purslane's fleshy leaves, and the ramified fatness of the brocoli; the patato's mealy orbs, and the lentile's succulent pods. We spare no toil, we grudge no expense, to have them flourish in our gardens, and served up at our tables. But there are innumerable herbs, which pass under the contemptible character of weeds, and yet are altogether as desirable to many classes of creatures, as these culinary gifts to mankind. Who shall be at the pains to plant, to water, to cultivate, such despicable productions? Man would rather extirpate than propagate these incumbrances of his acres. Therefore Providence vouchsafes to be their gardener. Providence has wrought off their seeds into such a lightness of substance, that they are carried abroad with the undulations of the air; or, if too heavy to be wafted by the breeze, they are fastened to wings of down, which facilitate their flight; or else are enclosed in a springy case, which, forcibly bursting, shoots and spreads them on every side. By some such means, the reproducing principle is disseminated, the universal granary is filled, and the universal board furnished. The buzzing insect, and the creeping worm, have each his bill of fare. Each enjoys a never-failing treat,

* See, for a proof of this remark, the explanation of the tenth plate, in that very curious, very entertaining, and no less instructive piece entitled, "Micographia Restaurata;" where our author compares the size of this little vegetable with the dimensions of those vast trees which grow in the vigorous climates of Guinea and Brazil; the trunks of which are, according to the report of travellers, twenty feet in diameter, whereas the body of this minute plant measures no more than the sixtieth part of an inch. So that, upon a calculation, the thickness of the former exceeds that of the latter, 2,985,984 times. So prodigiously various are the works of the Creator.

† That whitish kind of down, which shags the putrefying pickle, which incrusts the surface of some corrupted liquors, and constitutes what we call mouldiness, is really a cluster of little plants. Each has a root and a stalk; each spreads its branches, and produces seed in abundance.

Radicesque suas habet, exilemque coronam,
Frondesque, fructumque gerit, velut ardua quercus.

* The fir, the beech, and such like trees, are called in Hebrew, כחלים Isa. vii. 19. Which word is rendered, but I think very improperly, *bushes*. It rather signifies the grand and most admired plants. It is intended as a contrast to the coarse and despicable thorns, mentioned in the preceding clause. And both taken together express all sorts of trees, from the towering cedar to the grovelling shrub.

equivalent to our finest venison, or to the "fat of kidneys of wheat."*

As the seeds of some plants are most artfully scattered abroad when ripe, the seeds of others are most carefully guarded till they come to maturity; and by both contrivances, every species is not barely preserved, but in a manner eternized. Some are lodged in the centre of a large pulp, which is at once their defence and their nourishment. This we find exemplified in the tasteful apple and the juicy pear. Some, besides the surrounding pulp, are enclosed in a thick shell, hard and impenetrable as stone. We cannot pluck and eat one of those downy peaches, or encrimsoned nectarines, which so beautifully emboss the wall, without finding a proof of this precaution. Cast your eye upon the walnuts, which stud the branches of that spreading tree. Before these are gathered, the increase of the cold, and the emptiness of the gardens, will sharpen the appetite of the birds. To secure the fine kernel from the depredations of their busy assailing bills, it is fortified with a strong enclosure of wood, and with the addition of a disgustful bitter rind.

If grass was as scarce as the Guernsey lily, or as difficultly raised as the delicate tuberose, how certainly and how speedily must many millions of quadrupeds perish with famine! Since all the cattle owe their chief subsistence to this vegetable, by a singular beneficence in the divine economy, "it waiteth not," like the corn-field and the garden-bed, for the annual labours of man, Micah v. 7. When once sown, though ever so frequently cropped, it revives with the returning season, and flourishes in a kind of perennial verdure. It covers our meadows, diffuses itself over the plains, springs up in every glade of the forest, and spreads a sideboard in the most sequestered nook.

Since the nutriment of vegetables themselves lies hid under the soil, or floats up and down in the air; beneath, they plunge their roots† into the ground, and disperse every way their fibrous suckers, to explore the latent, and attract the proper nourishment; above, they expand a multitude of leaves,† which, like so many open mouths, catch the rains as they fall, imbibe the dews as they distil, and transmit them, through their nice orifices, to the heart of the plant, or the lobes of the fruit.

I have touched upon the insensible creation, and pointed out the care of a condescending Providence, exercised over these lowest formations of nature. The animal world, Theron, falls to your share. It is yours to descant upon those higher orders of existence; and show us the goodness of God extending its indulgent regards to them and their interests, as tenderly, as officiously, as a hen spreadeth her wings over her infant brood.

Ther. The subject is in good hands. Let part the second be of the same strain with part the first, and there will be no occasion to wish for a new speaker. As to myself, I have very little inclination to talk. But I have an ear open and attentive to your discourse.

Asp. You put me in mind of the philosopher who presumed to read a lecture on the art of war in the presence of Hannibal. But his impertinence was voluntary, mine is constrained. Since you enjoin me this office, let us pass from the vegetable to the animal world. Here we shall find no tribe, no individual neglected. The superior classes want no demonstration of their excellent accomplishments. At the first glimpse, they challenge our approbation; they command our applause. Even the more ignoble forms of animated existence are most wisely circumstanced, and most liberally accommodated.

They all generate in that particular season which is sure to supply them with a stock of provision, sufficient both for themselves and their increasing families. The sheep yean, when there is a profusion of nutrimental herbage on the soil, to fill their udders and create milk for their lambs. The birds lay their eggs, and hatch their young, when myriads of new-born tender insects swarm on every side; so that the caterer, whether it be the male or female parent, needs only to alight on the ground, or make a little excursion into the air, and they find a feast ready dressed, and all at free cost, for the clamant mouths at home.

Their love to their offspring, while they continue in a helpless state, is invincibly strong: whereas, the very moment they are able to shift for themselves; when the parental affection would be attended with much solicitude, and productive of no advantage; it vanishes, as though it had never been. The hen which marches at the head of her little brood, would fly in the eyes of a mastiff, or even encounter a lion in their defence. Yet, within a few weeks, she abandons her chickens to the wide world, and not so much as knows them any more.

* The fat of kidneys of wheat, Deut. xxxii. 14. A sentence rich with elegance! such as would have shone in Pindar, or been admired in Longinus. Yet, I believe its principal beauty consists in an allusion to a remarkable Jewish rite. In every sacrifice, the fat of the kidneys was, as the most delicious part of the victim, set apart for God, and consumed on his altar. Here even the common people were treated like the Deity. They lay under no restraint, either from the divine prohibition, or the scarcity of the grain; but were copiously supplied, and freely regaled themselves with the choicest and finest part of this first and best of vegetables.

† Job most beautifully alludes to these two sources of vegetable fertility; "My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay till night upon my branch." Job xxix. 19.

If the God of Israel inspired Bezaleel and Aholiab with "wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge in all manner of workmanship," Exod. xxxi. 3, the God of nature has instructed the wild and warbling inhabitants of the bough. The skill with which they erect their houses, and adjust their apartments, is inimitable. The caution with which they secrete their abodes from the searching eye, or intruding foot, is admirable. No general, though fruitful in expedients, could plan a more artful concealment. No architect, with his rule and line, could build so commodious a lodgment.

Give the most celebrated artificer the same materials which these weak and inexperienced creatures use; let a Jones, or a De Moivre, have only some rude straws or ugly sticks; a few bits of dirt, or scraps of hair; a sorry lock of wool, or a coarse sprig of moss; and what works, fair with delicacy, or fit for service, could they produce?

We extol the commander who knows how to take advantage of the ground; who can make the sun and wind fight for him, as well as his troops; and, by every circumstance, embarrasses the forces of the enemy, but expedites the action and advances the success of his own. Does not this praise belong to our feathery leaders, who pitch their tent, or (if you please) fix their pensile camp, on the dangerous branches that wave aloft in the air, or dance over the eddies of the stream? By which judicious disposition, the vernal gales rock their cradle, and the murmuring waters lull their young; while both concur to terrify the shepherd, and keep the schoolboy at a trembling distance. Some hide their little household from view, amidst the shelter of entangled furze: others remove it from reach, in the centre of a thorny thicket: And, by one stratagem or another, they are generally as secure and unmolested in their feeble habitations, as the foxes, which intrench themselves deep in the earth, or as the conies, which retire to the rock for their citadel. Prov. xxx. 26.

If the swan has large sweeping wings, and a copious stock of feathers, to spread over her callow brood; the wren makes up, by contrivance, what is deficient in her bulk. Small as she is, she intends* to bring forth, and will be obliged to nurse up, a very numerous issue. Therefore, with the correctest judgment she designs, and with indefatigable assiduity finishes, a nest proper for her purpose. It is a neat rotund, lengthened into an oval, bottomed and vaulted with a regular concave. To preserve it from rain, it has several coatings of moss; to defend it from cold, it has but one window, and only a single door; to render it both elegant and comfortable, it has carpets and hangings of the softest finest down. By the help of this curious mansion, our little lady becomes the mother of multitudes. The vivyfying heat of her body is, during the time of incubation, exceedingly augmented. Her house is like an oven, and greatly assists in hatching her young. Which no sooner burst the shell, than they find themselves screened from the annoyance of the weather, and most agreeably reposed, amidst the ornaments of a palace, and the warmth of a bagnio.

Perhaps we have been accustomed to look upon the insects as so many rude scraps of creation, and to rank them amongst the refuse of things; whereas, if we examine them without prejudice, and with a little attention, they will appear some of the most polished pieces of divine workmanship. Many of them are decked with a profusion of finery. Their eyes are an assemblage* of microscopes, whose mechanism is inconceivably nice, and finished in the highest perfection. Their dress has all the variety and lustre of colours; it is set with an arrangement of the most brilliant gems, and bordered with fringes richer far than the most costly silks. Their wings are the finest expansions imaginable; cambric is mere canvass, and lawn is coarse as sackcloth, compared with those inimitable webs. The cases which enclose their wings, glitter with the most glossy varnish; are scooped with ornamental flutings; are studded with radiant spots; or pinked with elegant holes. Not any among them but are equipped with weapons, or endued with dexterity, which qualify them to seize their prey, or escape their foe; to dispatch the business of their respective station, and enjoy the pleasures of their particular condition.

* Aspasio has ventured to say, she intends; and one is almost tempted to think, from the preparation which the little creature makes, that she has really sat down, and counted the cost, and concerted her scheme. As though she had delineated with herself: "I shall lay, not a couple of eggs, but near a score. From these I am to produce a house full of young. but how shall I have warmth (unless art supply what nature has denied) sufficient to hatch the embryos, or cherish the infants?" The truth, I believe is, that in all her seeming foresight and circumspect behaviour, she acts she knows not what; only she acts what eternal wisdom knows to be necessary, and what all-condescending goodness prompts her to perform.

* The common fly, for instance, who is surrounded with a multitude of dangers, and has neither strength to resist her enemies, nor a place of retreat to secure herself; for which reason she had need to be very vigilant and always upon her guard. Yet her head is so fixed, that it is incapable of turning, in order to observe what passes, either behind or around her. Providence therefore, surprisingly wise in its contrivances, and equally bountiful in its gifts, has furnished her, not barely with a retinue, but with more than a legion of eyes. Insomuch, that a single fly is supposed to be mistress of no less than eight thousand; every one of which is lined with a distinct optic nerve. By means of this costly and amazing apparatus, the little creature sees on every side, with the utmost ease, and with instantaneous speed; even without any motion of the eye, or any flexion of the neck.

Now I am in a talking humour, give me leave to celebrate the endowments, and assert the honours of my puny clients; yet not so much to support their credit, as to magnify their all-gracious Creator. What if the elephant is distinguished by a huge proboscis? His meanest relations of the reptile line are furnished with curious antennæ; remarkable, if not for their enormous magnitude, yet for their ready flexibility, and acute sensation; by which they explore their way even in the darkest road; they discover and avoid whatever might defile their neat apparel, or endanger their tender lives.

Every one admires that majestic creature the horse; his graceful head, and ample chest; his arching neck, and flowing mane; his cleanly-turned limbs, and finely adjusted motions. With extraordinary agility he flings himself over the ditch; and with a rapid career pours himself through the plain. With unwearied application, he carries his rider from one end of the country to another; and, with undaunted bravery, rushes into the fiercest rage, and amidst the thickest havoc of the battle. Yet the grasshopper springs with a bound altogether as brisk, if not more impetuous. The ant, in proportion to its size, is equally nimble, equally strong; and will climb precipices which the most courageous courser dares not attempt to scale. If the snail is slower in her motions, she is under no necessity of treading back the ground which he has passed—because her house is a part of her travelling equipage; and whenever she departs, she is still under her own roof; wherever she removes, is always at home.

The eagle, it is true, is privileged with pinions that outstrip the wind; elevated on which, she looks down on all that soars, and sees flying clouds, and straining wings far below; her optic nerve so strong, that it meets and sustains the dazzling beams of noon; her wide-surveying glance so keen, that, from those towering heights, it discerns the smallest fish which skulks at the bottom of the river. Yet neither is that poor outcast, the grovelling and gloomy mole, disregarded by divine Providence. Because she is to dig a cell in the earth, and dwell, as it were, in a perpetual dungeon, her paws serve her for a pickaxe and spade. Her eye, or rather her visual speck, is sunk deep into a socket, that it may suffer no injury from her rugged situation: it requires but a very scanty communication of light, that she may have no reason to complain of her darkling abode. I called her subterranean habitation a dungeon; and some people, perhaps, may think it a grave, but I revoke the expression. It yields her all the safety of a fortified castle, and all the delight of a decorated grotto.

Even the spider, though abhorred by mankind, is evidently the care of all-sustaining heaven. She is to live upon plunder; to support herself by trepanning the idle, insignificant, sauntering fly. Suitable to such an occupation, she possesses a bag of glutinous moisture. From this she spins a clammy thread, and weaves it into a tenacious net. Expert as any practised sportsman, she always spreads it in the most opportune places. Sensible that her appearance would create horror, and deter the prey from approaching the snare, when watching for sport she retires from sight; but constantly keeps within distance, so as to receive the very first intelligence of what passes in the toils, and be ready to launch, without a moment's delay, upon the struggling captive. And what is very observable, when winter chills the world, and no more insects ramble amidst the air, foreseeing that her labour would be vain, she discontinues her work, and abandons her stand.

I must by no means forget the little monarchy which inhabits the hive. The bees are to subsist, not as a lawless banditti, but as a regular community. It is theirs to earn a decent livelihood by honest industry; not to glut themselves with carnage, or enrich themselves by rapine. For which reason they are actuated by an invariable inclination to society. They possess the truest notions of domestic economy, and have enacted the wisest laws for political government. Their indulgent Creator has made them a present of all necessary implements, both for constructing their combs, and for composing their honey. They have each a portable vessel, with which they bring home their collected sweets; and they have all the most commodious storehouses, in which they deposit their delicious wares. Though made for peace, they know how to use the sword. They can take up arms with the utmost resolution and intrepidity, when arms are requisite to guard their wealth or repel their foes. Without going through a course of botany, they can readily distinguish every plant which is most likely to yield the materials proper for their business. Without serving an apprenticeship in the laboratory, they are complete practitioners in the art of separation and refinement. They are aware, without borrowing their information from an almanack, that the vernal gleams, and summer suns, continue but for a season. Mindful of this admonition, they improve to the utmost every shining hour; and lay up a stock of balmy treasures, sufficient to supply the whole state, till the blossoms open afresh, and their flowery harvest returns.

Let the peacock boast, if he pleases, his

elegant top-knot and lofty mien; his neck adorned with varying dyes; and his train bespangled with a round of stars. Yet let him know, that the despised butterfly, and even the loathed caterpillar, display an attire no less sumptuous; and wear ornaments altogether as genteel, if not quite so magnificent. Does beauty sit in state on that lordly bird? She shines in miniature on the vulgar insect. Is the master of this lower creation ennobled with the powers of reason? The meanest classes of sensitive existence are endued with the faculty of instinct; which gives them a sagacity that is neither derived from observation, nor waits for the finishings of experience; which, without a tutor, teaches them all necessary skill, and enables them, without a pattern, to perform every needful operation; and, what is far more surprising, never misleads them, either into erroneous principles, or pernicious practices, never fails them, in the nicest and most arduous of their undertakings.

Can you have patience to follow me if I step into a different element, and just visit the watery world? Not one among the innumerable myriads which swim the boundless ocean, but is watched over by that exalted eye, whose smiles irradiate the heaven of heavens. Not one but is supported by that almighty hand, which crowns angels and archangels with glory. The condescending God has not only created but beautified them. He has given the most exact proportion to their shape, the gayest colours to their skin, and a polished smoothness to their scales. The eyes of some are surrounded with a scarlet circle; the back of others is diversified with crimson stains. View them, when they glance along the stream, or while they are fresh from their native brine; and the burnished silver is not more bright, the radiant rainbow is scarce more glowing, than their vivid, glistering, glossy hues.

Yet notwithstanding the finery of their apparel, we are under painful apprehensions for their welfare. How can the poor creatures live amidst the suffocating waters? As they have neither hands nor feet, how can they help themselves, or how escape their enemies? We are soon freed from our fears by observing, that they all possess the beneficial, as well as ornamental furniture of fins. These when expanded, like masts above, and ballast below, poise their floating bodies, and keep them steadily upright. We cannot forbear congratulating them on the flexible play and vigorous activity of their tails, with which they shoot themselves through the paths of the sea, more swiftly than sails and oars can waft the royal yacht. But we are lost in wonder at the exquisite contrivance and delicate formation of their gills; by which they are accommodated, even in that dense medium, with the power of breathing, and the benefits of respiration. A piece of mechanism this, indulged to the meanest of the fry; yet surpassing, infinitely surpassing, in the fineness of its structure, and the felicity of its operation, whatever is curious in the works of art, or commodious in the palaces of princes.

Ther. Some persons, Aspasio, have the art of giving dignity to trivial, and spirit to jejune topics. I cannot but listen with a pleased attention to your discourse, though it descends to the lowest scenes, and meanest productions of nature.—To make such philosophical remarks was usually my province; to add to the religious improvement yours. But my thoughts at present are wholy taken up with the consideration of my Saviour's righteousness. I can hardly turn my views, or divert my speech to any other subject. All those amiable appearances of the external creation, which I was wont to contemplate with rapture, afford but a languid entertainment to my mind. Till my interest in this divine Redeemer is ascertained, the spring may bloom, the summer shine, and autumn swell with fruits, but it will be winter, cheerless, gloomy, desolate winter in my soul.

Asp. You say, Theron, you attended to my cursory hints. Then your own superior discernment could not but perceive, how every part of the exterior world is adjusted in the most excellent and gracious manner. Not the coarsest piece of inactive matter, but bears the impress of its maker's fashioning skill. Not a single creature, however insignificant, but exhibits evident demonstrations of his providential care. His hand is liberal, profusely liberal, to all that breathes and all that has a being.

Let me only ask—and to introduce this question with the greater propriety, to give it a more forcible energy on our minds was the principal design of the preceding remarks—let me ask, "Does God take care for oxen?" 1 Cor. ix. 9. Is he a generous benefactor to the meanest animals, to the lowest reptiles? Are his munificent regards extended farther still, and vouchsafed even to the most worthless vegetables? And shall they be withheld from you, my dear friend, and from me? Not one among all the numberless productions, which tread the ground, or stand rooted to the soil, wants any convenience that is proper for its respective state. And will his heavenly Father deny Theron what is so necessary to his present comfort, and his final happiness? Impossible!*

* I know not how to forbear transcribing a paragraph from one of our periodical papers; which contains a proposal for adapting natural philosophy to the capacity of children; wishing, at the same time, that the ingenious author would enlarge his sketch

Ther. I wish for, but I can hardly hope to partake of that spiritual blessing; which always included my whole happiness, and now engrosses my whole concern.

Asp. "Not hope to partake of!"—What foundation, what shadow of pretence, has this desponding temper, either in reason or in Scripture? Is it not evident from the whole book of revelation; is it not apparent through the whole compass of nature, that the almighty Lord, "who governeth the world with the palm of his hand, Eccl'us. xviii. 3, is remote, infinitely remote, from a niggardly disposition? He not only provideth for the wants, but even "satisfieth the desire of every living thing, Psal. cxlv. 16.

Consider those stately poppies, which are now the principal ornament of the garden. They have no tongue to request the least favour. Yet the ever-gracious Maker clothes them from his own wardrobe, and decks them with exquisite beauty.—Observe the young ravens, which sit carelessly croaking on yonder boughs. Do they cry for food? Psal. cxlvii. 9. It is in hoarse inarticulate accents: Yet the all-supporting God overlooks their ignorance; hears meaning in their noise; and supplies their every need from his own spontaneous bounty. If he accommodates the former, though incapable of asking; if he attends to the latter, though insensible of their benefactor; can he disregard our pressing wants? will he reject our earnest petitions? especially, when we seek such pure and exalted gifts, as it is both his delight and his honour to bestow.

O! my friend, look abroad into universal nature, and look away every disquieting thought.

Ther. Did you inquire what pretence I have for this desponding temper? Alas! I have more than a pretence, I have a reason; a reason too obvious—my great unworthiness!

Asp. Pray, where was the worthiness of the stiff-necked Israelites? Yet the Lord "bare them, and carried them all the days of old," Isa. lxii. 9. Where was the worthiness of Saul the blasphemer? Yet the blessed Jesus made him a chosen vessel, and set him as a signet on his right hand. You deserve nothing at the hand of God our Saviour: Neither did Joseph's brethren deserve any kindness from the viceroy of Egypt. Yet he delivered them from famine, who sold him to slavery; he settled them in the choicest territories, who cast him into the horrible pit. He showed himself a friend and a father to those unnatural relations who were his actual betrayers, and his intentional murderers. And can you persuade yourself, will you harbour a suspicion, that Christ is less compassionate than Joseph? shall a frail mortal outvie Emmanuel in beneficence?

Ther. Is not some righteousness of our own indispensably required, in order to our participation of the righteousness of Christ?

Asp. Yes, such a righteousness as the Samaritan woman, John iv. 18, and Zaccheus the publican possessed; or such as the Philippian jailor, and the profligate Corinthians might boast, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Zaccheus was a man of infamous character, and chief among the extortioners. The jailor was a barbarous persecutor, and in purpose a self-murderer. Yet our Lord says of the former, "This day," without enjoining any course of previous preparation, "is salvation come to thine house," Luke xix. 9. St. Paul directs the latter, without insisting upon any antecedent righteousness, "to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ;" and assures the poor alarmed sinner that in so doing he should be saved." Acts. xvi. 31.

So that nothing is required in order to our participation of Christ and his benefits, but a conviction of our need, a sense of their worth, and a willingness to receive them in the appointed way; receive them as the freest of gifts, or as a matter of mere grace. "Come, and take freely," Rev. xxii. 17, is our Master's language; without staying to acquire any graceful qualities, is his meaning.

Ther. Surely, to come without holiness, without any decent preparative, must be a gross indignity to the divine Jesus. Whoever presents a petition to an earthly sovereign, will think it absolutely necessary not to appear in a slovenly dishabile, much less in filthy raiment. Does not our Lord himself, in the parable of the wedding garment, inculcate this very point, and caution us against a presumptuous approach?

Asp. In the parable you mention, Christ is both the bridegroom, the feast, and the wedding garment, Matth. xxii. 11. And who are invited to an union with this Bridegroom? to be guests at this feast? to be arrayed with this wedding-garment? The messengers are sent, not to the mansion-houses of the rich, or the palaces of the mighty, but to the highways and hedges; where misery mourns, and poverty pines, and baseness hides her head. To whom is

into a treatise; and execute the plan which he has so judiciously projected, and of which he has given us so delicate a specimen.

After some remarks on the sagacity of birds, their industry and other surprising properties, he adds, "Is it for birds, O Lord, that thou hast joined together so many miracles which they have no knowledge of? Is it for men who give no attention to them? Is it for the curious, who are satisfied with admiring without raising their thoughts to thee? Or is it not rather visible, that thy design has been to call us to thyself, by such a spectacle? to make us sensible of thy providence and infinite wisdom; and to fill us with confidence in thy bounty, who watchest with so much care and tenderness over birds, though two of them are sold but for a farthing?"

their message addressed? To the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind, Luke xiv. 21. persons who have no amiable or recommending endowments, but every loathsome and disgustful property. Yet these (mark the passage, my dear friend; mark well the encouraging circumstance) these are not only not forbidden, but entreated, importuned, and by all the arts of persuasion, by every weighty or winning motive, compelled to come in. And after all this, surely, it cannot be an act of presumption to accept, but must be a breach of duty to refuse the invitation.

Ther. You take no notice of the man who was found without a wedding-garment; which is by far the most alarming incident, and that which gives me no small uneasiness.

Asp. And does my Theron take proper notice of the divine declaration? "I have prepared my dinner," says the King eternal, "All things are ready," Matth. xxii. 4. "Whatever is necessary for the justification, the holiness, the complete salvation of sinners, is provided in the merit and the grace of my Son. Let them come therefore, as to a nuptial banquet; and freely enjoy my munificence; and feast their souls with the royal provision.

The man without a wedding-garment, denotes the specious superficial professor; who is "called by Christ's name," but has never "put on Christ Jesus by faith." Shall I tell you more plainly whom this character represents? You yourself, my dear Theron, was some months ago, in the state of this unhappy creature, when you trusted in yourself, and thought highly of your own, thought meanly of your Saviour's righteousness.

I congratulate my friend on this happy deliverance from so dangerous a condition. You and I are now like the returning prodigal. Let us remember that he came with no recommendation, either of dress, of person, or of character. None but his nakedness, his misery, and an acknowledgment of vileness, which had every aggravating, not one extenuating circumstance. Yet he was received, received with inexpressible indulgence; and clothed with that first, that best, that divinest robe, Luke xv. 22, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Let us accustom ourselves to consider this incomparable robe, under its evangelical character. It is not a matter of bargain, nor the subject of sale, but a deed of gift. "The gift of righteousness," says the apostle. And gifts, we all know, are not to be purchased, but received.

Ther. Is nothing then, nothing to be done on our part? no heavenly-mindedness to be exercised? no victory over our lusts gained? no fruits of sanctification produced?

Asp. These legal apprehensions! how closely they cleave to my Theron's mind! But I hope the word of God, which pierceth to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, will give the severing blow. And what says that sacred word? It describes the gospel as a will or testament, Heb. ix. 16, 17,* and all its glorious blessings, as legacies, bequeathed by the dying Jesus. When your old acquaintance Charicles left you a handsome legacy, what did you do to establish your title, and make it your own?

Ther. My title was pre-established by my friend's donation. I had nothing to do, but to claim, to accept, and to possess.

Asp. Do the very same in the present case. They who believe are heirs, undoubted "heirs of the righteousness which is by faith," Heb. xi. 7. Surely you cannot suppose that Christ's kindness is less sincere, or that Christ's donations are less valid, than those of an earthly testator.

Ther. This illustration hardly reaches the point. I speak not of doing any thing by way of merit, but by way of qualification.

Asp. If there be any qualification, I think it is our extreme indigence. This indeed it will be proper to have; and this, I presume, you are not without. Other qualification, neither reason prescribes nor scripture requires.

"Reason prescribes no other."—The gifts of the great eternal Sovereign are intended, not to recognise our imaginary worth, but to aggrandize our views of his mercy and grace. To answer such a design, the unworthy and the sinners are duly qualified; nay, are the only qualified persons.

"Scripture requires no other."—The ever-merciful Saviour says not, They are unqualified for my merits; they have no valuable or noble acquirements. But this is his tender complaint: "They will not come to me," just as they are—with all their sins about them, with all their guilt upon them—"that they may have life." John v. 40. Pray—take notice of this text, and you will see things placed in a new light, ranged in a new order. Sanctification, heavenly mindedness, and a victory over our lusts, are not so much the qualities which he requires, as the blessings which he will confer.

* This notion not only runs through the scriptures, but stands conspicuous even in their title-page. What are they called? The Old and the New Testament. What is a Testament? An authentic deed, in which estates are transmitted, and legacies bequeathed In other testaments some earthly possession: in this the heavenly patrimony, even all the riches of grace, and the everlasting inheritance of glory. Did we consider the scriptures in this light, it would be a most engaging invitation to search them with assiduity and pleasure. What child is willing to continue ignorant of a deceased parent's last will and testament? Who does not covet to know, what honours, hereditaments, and wealth, devolve to his enjoyment by such an interesting and venerable conveyance?

Ther. "The unworthy and sinners, the only qualified!" of this expression I cannot but take particular notice. Then Judas should stand in the first rank of qualified persons; and the devout centurion, "whose prayers and alms had come up as a memorial before God," was thereby unqualified for the favour of heaven.

Asp. If you observed my expression, I spoke in the hypothetical manner; made a supposition rather than advanced an assertion. If there be any qualification, this is the only one. But, strictly speaking, there is no such thing. The impulsive or inclining cause of all God's favour shown, of all God's goodness exercised, is—from the creature? No; but from himself, himself alone! "He has mercy," not because this or that person is amiable, is meet, or qualified, but "because he will have mercy." And as for our need of mercy and reconciliation, arising from our sinfulness, this can no more constitute a real qualification for the blessings, than an act of rebellion can qualify for the first honours of the state.

But this we must allow, that such need, such misery, such sinfulness, illustrate the freeness, and manifest the riches of grace. And this we should never forget, that God's first and leading purpose, in all his favourable dispensations to fallen man, is to demonstrate the sovereignty, and advance the glory of his grace. The Lord, promising a very extraordinary deliverance to Israel, says, "not for your sakes, be it known unto you, do I this," Ezek. xxxvi. 32, single act of kindness. What then is the inducement? We find it in the following declaration: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions for my own sake,* and according to the good pleasure of my will." Isa. xliii. 25. What is the end of all? "It is for the praise of the glory of his grace." Eph. i. 6. A proper motto this for all the displays of divine goodness to sinful men. It has been inscribed by the hand of truth and inspiration. Time and eternity, instead of erazing the lines, will only stamp them deeper, and open them wider.

Ther. This is such a gift! to be interested in all the merits of Christ! to have his immaculate righteousness imputed to my soul! so that from henceforth there shall be no fear of condemnation, but a comfortable enjoyment of freest love, and a delightful expectation of completest glory!

Asp. If this rich donation surpass your very thoughts, and fill with you grateful astonishment, it is so much the better adapted to display, what the scripture very emphatically styles, the "abundant," the "superabundant," the "exceeding abundant"* grace of our God. God hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants. He is a boundless ocean of love; ever flowing, yet absolutely inexhaustible. See! what an innumerable variety of benefits are transmitted from yonder sun, to gladden all the regions of nature! yet the sun is but a spark; its highest splendour no more than a shade; its uninterrupted and most profuse communications of light, a poor diminutive scantling; compared with the riches of divine benignity.

The servant in the parable, who owed ten thousand talents, craved only some merciful forbearance; whereas his generous lord remitted the whole sum, and gave him an acquittance in full: "I forgive thee all that debt," Matth. xviii. 32. You wonder, and very deservedly, at such vast generosity. But what had been your admiration to see the noble master admitting this obnoxious slave to a share in his dignity? what if he had made so worthless a wretch the chief of his family, and the heir of his estate? This perhaps you would say, exceeds the bounds of credibility. Yet God Almighty's stupendous beneficence exceeds all this. He not only spares guilty creatures, but makes them his children; makes them inheritors of his kingdom; and as an introduction to all, or rather as the crown of all, makes them partakers of his Son. Heb. iii. 14.

Ther. The gift is inestimable; of more value than all worlds. It will render me blessed and happy, now and for ever. And may so unworthy a creature look for a blessing thus superlatively excellent?

Asp. Unworthy? my dear friend, dwell no longer upon that obsolete topic. The greatest unworthiness is no objection in Christ's account, when the soul is convinced of sin, and the heart desirous of a Saviour. And as for worthiness, this is as much disavowed by the gospel as equivocal generation† is exploded by the discoveries of our improved philosophy.

Nay, farther, this notion is diametrically contrary to the gospel, and totally subversive of the covenant of grace.

Ther. In what respect?

Asp. Because it would make our own duty and obedience the terms; whereas the terms were Christ's suffering, and Christ's obedience. These are the hinge on which that great transaction turns, and on which the hope of the world hangs.

* Which teaches us that God, and nothing in the creature, is the original, entire, sole cause of all grace, and every gracious vouchsafement. It is not only by him, and through him, but to him; for the honour of his benign perfections, that we are pardoned, accepted, saved.

* Υπερβαλλουσα χαρις. 2 Cor. ix. 14. Υπερεπερισσευσεν η χαρις. Rom. v. 20. Υπερεπλεονασεν η χαρις. 1 Tim. i. 14.

† The ancients imagined, that many vegetables and insects were produced by, I know not what, plastic power in the sun and other elements. This is called *equivocal* generation. Whereas the modern philosophers maintain, that every individual of this kind derives its being from some parent-vegetable or parent animal. This is styled *univocal* generation.

Ther. Be more particular, Aspasio.

Asp. The first covenant was made with Adam, for himself and us. Breaking it, he lost his original righteousness, and became subject to death; was at once a bankrupt and a rebel. Now you cannot suppose that the Almighty Majesty would enter into a fresh covenant with an insolvent and attainted creature. It pleased, therefore, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity to undertake our cause, to become our Surety, and put himself in our stead. With him the second covenant was made. He was charged with the performance of the conditions; thereby to obtain pardon and righteousness, grace and glory, for all his people. "I have made a covenant with my Chosen One,"* is the language of the Most High. And the terms were, (you will permit me to repeat the momentous truth,) not your worthiness or mine, but the incarnation, the obedience, the death of God's ever-blessed Son.

Ther. Has man then no office assigned, no part to act in the covenant of grace?

Asp. He has; but it is a part which my friend seems very loath to discharge. His part is to accept the blessings fully purchased by the Saviour, and freely presented to the sinner. His part is not to dishonour the Redeemer's gracious interposition, and infinitely-sufficient performance, by hankering after any merit of his own. His part (why will you constrain me to reiterate in this manner!) is not to bring money in his hand, with the ten brethren; but with an empty hand, and like an impoverished Lazarus, "to take hold of God's covenant." Isa. lvi. 4.

Ther. If this be the nature of the new covenant, I must confess I have hitherto been ignorant of the gospel.

Asp. And from hence arises your present distress; from hence your averseness to receive comfort. You are a philosopher, Theron, and have been accustomed to examine nicely the proportion of objects, rather than to weigh them in the balance of the sanctuary. Here you find all proportion swallowed up and lost. This quite overthrows all your conclusions, drawn from the fitness of things. Here man is nothing, less than nothing, while grace is all in all. And should we not, however unworthy in ourselves, magnify the grace of our God?

* Psal. lxxxix. 3. It is generally allowed, that this Psalm, in its sublimest sense, is referable to Christ; and in its full extent, is referable only unto Christ. If so, I think it would be more significant and emphatical to render the word my Chosen One. This will furnish out a very clear and cogent argument to prove, that the covenant of grace was made with our Lord Jesus. Just such an argument as the apostle uses to convince the Galatians that the promises of the covenant were made to the same divine Person, Gal. iii. 16. From both which promises this important conclusion follows, that justification and every spiritual blessing are the purchase of Christ's obedience; are lodged in him as the great propitiatory, are communicated to sinners only through the exercise of faith, or in the way of believing. See Zech. ix. 11.

Ther. Most certainly.

Asp. How can this be done, but by expecting great and superlatively precious blessings from his hand? Alexander, you know, had a famous but indigent philosopher in his court. Our adept in science was once particularly straitened in his circumstances. To whom should he apply, but to his patron, the conqueror of the world? His request was no sooner made than granted. Alexander gives him a commision to receive of his treasurer whatever he wanted. He immediately demands, in his sovereign's name, a hundred talents.* The treasurer, surprised at so large a demand, refuses to comply, but waits upon the king, and represents the affair; adding withal how unreasonable he thought the petition, and how exorbitant the sum. Alexander hears him with patience: but, as soon as he had ended his remonstrance, replies: "Let the money be instantly paid, I am delighted with this philosopher's way of thinking. He has done me a singular honour, and shewed, by the largeness of his request, what a high idea he has conceived, both of my superior wealth, and my royal munificence."

Thus, my dear Theron, let us honour what the inspired penman styles "the marvellous loving-kindness of Jehovah. From the King, "whose name is the Lord of hosts," let us expect—not barely what corresponds with our low models of generosity, much less what we suppose proportioned to our fancied deserts, but what is suitable to the unknown magnificence of his name, and the unbounded benevolence of his heart. Then we shall cheerfully and assuredly trust, that Christ Jesus will be "made of God to us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption;" that he, who hath given himself for us, Eph. v. 2, will give us of his Spirit, John iv. 13, and will give unto us eternal life. John x. 28.

Ther. Yes, upon condition that we fight the good fight, and finish our course of duty. Henceforth, says the apostle, after this is done, "there is laid up for me, and for other victorious soldiers, for other faithful labourers, "a crown of righteousness."

Asp. To such persons the crown will assuredly be vouchsafed. But is it vouchsafed on account of their successful warfare, or persevering obedience? If so, "Israel may vaunt themselves and say, Mine own hand, not the Redeemer's interposition, hath saved me. Judges vii. 8.

Not to repeat what has already been alleged in opposition to this opinion; not to produce what might further be urged, from a variety of scriptural testimonies; I shall only desire you to observe what the apostle himself adds in this very place: "There is

* About ten thousand pounds.

laid up for me a crown of righteousness;" but is this the pay proportionate and due to his own services? Is it what he claims and demands, on the foot of duty performed? The very title of the reward implies the contrary. It is a crown of righteousness, because purchased by the meritorious and consummate righteousness of Christ. The action of the judge declares the contrary; "which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day." It is, you see, an act of favour; the issue of unmerited bounty; what neither saint nor martyr, nor apostle enjoys, but only by way of gracious donation.* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

I would fain have my Theron form more honourable apprehensions concerning the mercy and the bounty of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will bestow what you suppose he exacts. He is really a benefactor where you would represent him as a task-master. "The Lord will give grace as well as glory." He knows you have neither strength nor merit; therefore he will supply your want of both from his own unfathomable fulness.

Ther. Ah! my Aspasio! you do not know my state. I have not only no merit, but great guilt; was by nature a child of wrath; have been by practice a slave of sin; and what is worse, am still corrupt; have still a carnal heart.—And has not such a wretch forfeited all title to the divine favour? Nay, does he not deserve the vengeance of eternal fire?

Asp. That we all deserve this misery, is beyond dispute. I am truly glad that we are sensible of our demerit. Here our recovery begins. Now we are to believe, that the Lord Jesus has satisfied divine justice; has paid a glorious price, on purpose to obtain for such ill-deserving, such hell-deserving creatures, all pardon, all holiness, and everlasting happiness. According to the import of that charming Scripture, "When we were enemies (and what is there in an enemy to bespeak favour or deserve benefits?) we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. v. 10.

You have great guilt. But is this a reason why you should be excluded from the blessings of the covenant? Contemplate the state of that forlorn and wretched outcast, described in Ezekiel, chap. xvi. An infant "in its blood:" this represents a sinner, who has nothing to excite love, but all that may provoke abhorrence. Yet what says the Holy One of Israel? "When I saw thee"—not washed and purified, and made meet for my acceptance, but—"polluted in thy blood;"* loathsome with defilement, and laden with iniquity; then, even then, "I said unto thee, Live: I spread my skirt over thee, and thou becamest mine." This is the manner of his proceeding, not barely to one nation, but to all his people; not in one period of time only, but through all generations.

You are still corrupt, one that is sensible of his corruption, and acknowledges his sinfulness! Then you are the very person for whom the Saviour's righteousness is intended; to whom it is promised.—You are a governor of the county hospital, Theron. You have been industrious in promoting, and are active in supporting that excellent institution; where medicine with her healing stores, and religion with her heavenly hopes, act as joint handmaids to charity. What are the circumstances which render any persons the proper objects for an admission into your infirmary?

Ther. Their poverty, and their distemper. Without poverty, they would not need; and, free from distemper, they would not prize, the benefit of our modern Bethesda.

Asp. Apply this to the case under consideration. The whole world is in a state of spiritual disorder. Christ is styled by the inspired writer, "the Lord our healer." Exod. xv. 26. The gift of his righteousness, the balm of his blood, and the influences of his Spirit, are the sovereign restorative. And sure it cannot be a fanciful persuasion of our health, but a feeling conviction of our disease, which renders us proper objects of his recovering grace. "He came, not to call the righteous," the righteous in their own eyes, "but sinners," Matt. ix. 13, Acts v. 31, self-condemned and ruined sinners, to give them "repentance," and pardon, and newness of life.

Ther. But if any foolish and refractory patients have abused our beneficence, it is a standing unalterable rule of the house, never to admit them a second time, however pressing their exigencies, or however powerful their recommender. I have not once only, but through the whole course of

* I Believe no one experienced in the spiritual life will suspect that Theron speaks out of character. Conscience, when once alarmed, is a stubborn and unceremonious thing. It pays no deference to wealth; it never stands in awe of grandeur: neither can it be soothed by the refinements of education or the attainments of learning. And we generally find that a most unaccountable propensity to self-worthiness strongly possesses the newly awakened convert. He is perpetually raising objections founded on the want of personal merit; notwithstanding all our remonstrances to quiet his fears, and remove his jealousies. It is truly a hard task for a mind naturally leavened with legal pride, to come naked and miserable to Christ; to come divested of every recommendation but that of extreme wretchedness; and receive from the hand of unmerited benignity the free riches of evangelical grace.

* The words are peculiarly emphatical; not only doubled, but redoubled; to denote, at once, the strangeness of the fact, yet the certainty of the favour. "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live." Ezek. xvi. 6.

my life, abused the marvellous loving kindness of the Lord.

Asp. And is not the Lord superior to all his creatures, in acts of pardon as well as of power? Yes, as those heavens are higher than this prostrate earth, so much more enlarged and extensive is the divine clemency —than the widest sphere of human kindness, shall I say? rather, than the boldest flights of human imagination. Your statutes are inexorable, in case of one notorious irregularity committed: "But the free gift of a Redeemer's righteousness is vouchsafed, notwithstanding "many offences, unto justification." Rom. v. 16. It is the glory of our almighty Ruler, and redounds to the honour of his crucified Son, to pass over, Prov. xix. 11, not a single transgression only, but a multitude of provocations; to be altogether as unequalled in mercy, as he is absolutely supreme in majesty.

As it is the grossest pride to entertain high notions of our own accomplishments, or to expect eternal life on the score of our own obedience; so it will be the greatest affront to the grandeur of Christ's merits, and the freeness of his grace, if we suppose our crimes too heinous to be forgiven, or our persons too vile to be accepted.

Theron paused.—These considerations seemed to operate; this anodyne to take effect. Desirous to improve the favourable juncture, and impart the needed consolation, Aspasio added:—

How often did the inhabitants of Jerusalem disregard the warnings, and reject the counsels of our blessed Lord! How justly might he have sworn in his wrath, "They shall never hear the joyful sound of my gospel more. The blessings which they have so wantonly despised, and so wickedly abused, shall be irrevocably withdrawn." Instead of passing such a sentence, this is the charge which, after his resurrection, he gives to his apostles: "Let repentance and remission of sins be preached in my name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke xxiv. 47. "At Jerusalem, Lord! Have not the men of that ungrateful and barbarous city been deaf to thy tenderest importunities? Did they not persecute thee unto condemnation and death? Are not their weapons still reeking, as it were, with thy blood; and their tongues still shooting out arrows, even bitter words, by which they would murder thy character, as they have already crucified thy person?" Yet these wretches (and could any be more inhuman? could any be more unworthy?) are not only not abhorred, but unto them is the message of grace and the word of salvation sent. Nay, to show the unparalleled freeness of our Redeemer's grace, these are first upon the heavenly list. The glad tidings of pardon and life, which are to be published through the world, must begin (amazing mercy!) must begin at Jerusalem.

Ther. Thus much I may venture to profess in my own behalf;—That I long for this blessing; I pray for this blessing; but I cannot see my title to this comprehensive and inestimable blessing clear.

Asp. I behold it perfectly clear. Some days ago, a worthy clergyman, who lately came to settle in the neighbourhood, did himself the honour of making one at your table. After dinner you showed him your library; we took a walk in your garden, and made the agreeable tour of the fish-ponds. Then, with that amiable frankness of mien and accent, which is so peculiar to my friend, and exceedingly endears all his favours, you told him, "that he was as welcome to any book in your study, as if the whole collection was his own; that if, on a visit from some acquaintance of superior rank, he should wish to be accommodated with a more delicate entertainment than usual, the productions of your waters, and of your hot-beds, were entirely at his service; and that his acceptance of your offers, without the least shyness or reserve, would be the most pleasing compliment he could pay you on the occasion."

What says the great Proprietor of all good? "If any man," however unworthy his person, or obnoxious his character, "thirst;"—thirst for the blessings of my evangelical kingdom;—"let him come unto me," the fountain of these living waters, "and drink his fill." John vii. 37. You yourself acknowledge that you long for the sacred privileges of the gospel. Your heart is awakened into habitual and lively desires after the salvation of Christ. What is this but, in the spiritual sense, to thirst? To you, therefore, the promise is made, to you the riches of this benign dispensation belong.

That clergyman has not the least suspicion of being disappointed, in case he should send for a brace of carp from your canal, or a fine melon from your garden.—Why is he so confident? Because he has done you any signal service? No; but because you have passed your word, and made the generous offer. And why should you harbour the least doubt concerning the divine veracity? Why should you call in question your right to these heavenly treasures? since it is founded on a grant altogether as free, altogether as clear, as your own indulgent concession, and infinitely more firm than any human engagement? founded on the fidelity of that supreme Being, "who remembers his covenant and promise to a thousand generations."

Ther. It is impossible to confute, yet difficult to believe what you urge.

Asp. What I urge is not the voice of a

few dubious passages, nicely culled from the book of God, or forcibly wrested by the interpretation of man. The whole tenor of inspiration runs, with the greatest perspicuity, and the greatest uniformity, in this delightful strain. Let me, out of a multitude, produce another express from the court of heaven. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, even he that hath no money. Come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Isaiah lv. 1. Wine and milk undoubtedly signify the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons; the communications of sanctifying grace, and the hope of eternal glory. These are nourishing and refreshing to the soul, as milk, the richest of foods, and as wine, the best of cordials, are to the body. These you see are to be obtained, "without money, and without price," without any merit of our own—without any plea deduced from ourselves, by poor, undone, perishing bankrupts. They are to be enjoyed by every one—who unfeignedly esteems them, and humbly seeks them. No exception is made; no exclusive clause added. It is not said, any one that is worthy, but "every one that thirsteth." To leave no room for any misgiving apprehensions, the kind invitation is repeated: "Buy and eat; buy wine and milk." The invaluable yet free tender is confirmed again and again; "He that hath no money—without money—without price." And both are pressed upon us with a very remarkable, with the most affectionate vehemence: "Come ye; come ye; yea come."

Had our heavenly benefactor permitted us to draw up this instrument of conveyance, and word it according to our own wish, what language could we have contrived, to render either the grant more free, or our claim more secure?

Ther. These are cheering truths. They amount to little less than a demonstration. And I am ready to declare, in the language of Agrippa, Almost thou persuadest me to commence a believer.

Asp. And why, my dear friend, why not altogether? Can you distrust the sincerity of the divine overtures? If the overtures are real, your title is unquestionable. Nay, there is more than an overture: You have an actual gift from the Almighty Majesty. "To us," says the prophet, including all that wait for the redemption of Christ, and the consolation of Israel, "a child is born." Isaiah ix. 6. "To us," he repeats the precious truth, to declare his exuberant joy, and denote the absolute certainty of the thing, see Gen. xli. 32, "a son is given;" even God's own Son, the ever-blessed Jesus, to be our propitiation, our surety, our complete Redeemer.

Just cast a look upon yonder neat lodge. Though placed in the centre of a spacious field, it seems to be contiguous with the extremity of the vista. The eye, travelling over such a length of ground, has almost lost the windows, and the decent ornaments of the front. But I shall not soon lose the idea of that amiable munificence, which, as I was rambling one pleasant morning, and accidentally called at the house, I learned from its present owner. He was, I find, one of your servants; had spent several years in your family: When he settled in the world, you bestowed upon him that commodious box, and a pretty adjacent farm; to possess, without molestation or control, during his life. Does he not reckon the little estate, by virtue of your donation, to be his own? as much his own, for the time prescribed, as if he had paid an equivalent in money? Since the Lord Jehovah has given us his Son, and all his unutterable merits; why should we not, with an assurance of faith, receive the incomparable gift? Why should we not confide in it, as firmer than the firmest deed; and far more inviolable than any royal patent? Especially since it has been sealed to us in every sacramental ordinance, and witnessed by every good motion of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Ther. My servant never affronted my authority. If he had vilified my character, or insulted my person, should I then have been inclined to make the same advantageous settlement?

Asp. Herein appears the infinite superiority of the divine bounty. God is rich in mercy, not only to the obedient and grateful, but to the unthankful and unworthy. "To the Lord our God," says the prophet, "belong mercies and forgivenesses," in measure superabundant, and in continuance unwearied: and this, "notwithstanding we have" offended him by our manifold failures in duty; nay, have "rebelled against him,"* Dan. ix. 9, by flagrant violations of his law.

* The original word in the Hebrew language, bears a more obnoxious signification. It denotes the most audacious and the most flagitious impiety. It denotes that rebellion which is as the sin of witchcraft; and that stubbornness, which is as the iniquity of idolatry: Yet, all-virulent and execrable as it is, it does not suppress the yearnings of divine pity, nor supersede the exercise of divine forgiveness. With a word derived from the same root, Saul, when exasperated almost to madness, upbraids Jonathan. And we know, persons so extremely incensed never speak in the softest terms; never touch the subject with a feather, but make their tongue like a sharp sword.

May I venture to add, that our translators seem to mistake the proper application of the aforementioned passage? They represent Saul's invective, flying as wide of the mark, as it is overcharged with malice. Son of the perverse rebellious woman! This might be asserted, without the least impeachment of Jonathan's personal loyalty. Besides, is it not excessively indecent, as well as absolutely unreasonable, to reflect upon the mother, for the misdemeanours of the son? Surely, the clause should be rendered in perfect consistence with the genius of the original: Thou son of perverse rebellion; or, more agreeably to the English idiom, Thou perverse rebellious wretch! 1 Sam. xx. 20.

In sweet concert with this prophetical lesson, sings the transported psalmist: "Thou, Lord," in thy sacred humanity, "hast ascended up on high;" ascended, from the low caverns of the tomb, to the highest throne in the highest heavens. "Thou hast led captivity captive;" hast abolished death, that universal tyrant; and subdued those powers of darkness which had enslaved the whole world. Like a glorious and triumphant conqueror, thou hast also "received gifts;" not merely for thy own fruition, but to confer on others, by way of honorary and enriching largess. What are those gifts, Theron?

Ther. The gifts of the gospel, I suppose; pardon of sin, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and those other privileges of Christianity, which constitute the present happiness of mankind, and prepare them for future bliss.

Asp. You rightly judge. And for whom were those royal, those heavenly donatives received? If you have an inclination to bestow a sword set with diamonds, a finely wrought piece of plate, or an exquisitely finished picture—what names present themselves to your thoughts? What persons are the objects of your choice? The approved friend, or distinguished favourite, I make no question. But for whom (let me ask again, since it is a point of the last importance) were those heavenly donatives received?

Ther. Let me recollect: "Thou receivedst gifts," not for fallen angels, but "for men;" and not for thy friends, but for thy "enemies;" yea, "for the rebellious also," Psalm lxviii. 18. Merciful heaven! What a word is this! And does it come from the God of truth? Gifts, divine gifts! gifts of unspeakable value and eternal duration, and these to be conferred on enemies, on the rebellious! wretches who are destitute of all gracious qualifications; who deserve not the least favour, but have reason to expect the frowns of indignation, and the sword of vengeance!

Asp. Thus it is written in those sacred constitutions, which are far more stedfast and unalterable than the laws of the Medes and Persians. Thus it is spoken, by the mouth of that Almighty Being, with whom there is no variableness, nor the least shadow of turning.—Let us not, my dear friend, by unreasonable unbelief, frustrate all these promises, and reject our own mercies. Let us not, by an evil heart of unbelief, make God a liar; and make ourselves, of all creatures, most miserable.

But see! The clouds which hung their agreeable sables to damp the ardour, and abate the glare of day, are departing. The sun has been colouring their fleecy skirts, and spreading over the floating screen a variety of interchangeable hues. Now he begins to edge them with gold, and shine them into silver; a sure indication, that (like the glittering but transitory toys which they represent,) they will soon be swept from the horizon, and seen no more. The bright orb, while we are speaking, bursts the veil, and, from a voluminous pomp of parting clouds, pours a flood of splendour over all the face of nature. We shall quickly perceive this open situation too hot to consist with pleasure, and must be obliged to seek for shelter in the shady apartments of the house.

Will you admit me, Theron, into those shady apartments?

Ther. Admit you, Aspasio! I am surprised at your question. I thought you had known me better; and I am sorry it should be needful to assure you, that my house is as much your own as it is mine. The more freely you command it, the more highly you will oblige me.

Asp. May I believe you, Theron? Do you speak from your heart? or must I conclude, that you plausibly profess what you have no intention to perform? Would you be pleased, if I should obstinately persist in these dishonourable suspicions, notwithstanding all your friendly protestations?

Ther. My dear Aspasio, I see your design. I see and am ashamed, ashamed to think that I should fancy myself more punctual in my professions, than God is true to his word. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!"

DIALOGUE XVI.

Our friends had agreed upon a visit to Philenor. They rode through a fine open fruitful country, which was covered with crops of ripened corn, and occupied by several parties of rustics gathering in the copious harvest.

The rye, white and hoary as it were with age, waved its bearded billows, and gave a dry husky rustle before the breeze. The wheat, laden with plenty, and beautifully brown, hung the heavy head, and invited by its bending posture, the reaper's hand. Plats of barley, and acres of oats, stood whitening in the sun. Upright and perfectly even, as though the gardener's shears had clipped them at the top, they gratified the spectator's eye, and gladdened the farmer's heart.—Beans, partly clad in native green, partly transformed and tawny with the parching ray, were preparing the last employ for the crooked weapon. Some of the grain lay flat, in regular rows, on the new-made stubble. Some were erected in graceful shocks, along the bristly ridges. Some,

conveyed homewards on the loaded waggon, nodded over the groaning axle.

The villages seemed to be empty, and all their inhabitants poured into the plains. Here were persons of each sex and of every age.—The lusty youths, stooping to their work, plied the sickle; or swept, with their scythes, the falling ranks. The sprightly females followed, binding the handfuls into sheaves, or piling the swaths into hasty cocks. Dispersed up and down were the children of the needy, gleaning the scattered ears, and picking their scanty harvest. Nor were the old people absent; but crawling into the sun, or sitting on a shady eminence, they beheld the toils, the pleasing toils they once sustained.

This is the most joyful period of the countryman's life; the long expected crown of all his labours. For this he broke the stubborn glebe, and manured the impoverished soil. For this he bore the sultry beams of summer, and shrunk not from the pinching blasts of winter. For this he toiled away the year, in a round of ceaseless but willing activity; knowing that* "the husbandman must labour, before he partakes of the fruits," 2 Tim. ii. 6. And will not the blessed hope of everlasting life; will not the bright expectation of consummate bliss, animate us with an equally cheerful resolution, both to resist the temptations, and discharge the duties of our present state?

Short seemed the way, and quick passed the time, as they travelled through such scenes of rural abundance and rural delight. Before they were aware, the horses stopt at Philenor's seat, where they found, to their no small disappointment, that the master was gone abroad. They alighted however, and took a walk in the gardens.

The gardens, at proper intervals, and in well chosen situations, were interspersed with pieces of statuary. At the turn of a corner, you are—not shocked with a naked gladiator, or a beastly Priapus, but agreeably surprised with the image of Tully. He is just risen from his seat, and upon the point of addressing himself to some important oration. A reverential awe appears in his countenance; such as silently acknowledges that he is going to plead before the rulers of the world. Sedate, at the same time, and collected in himself, he seems conscious of superior eloquence, and emboldened by the justice of his cause. His thoughtful aspect, and gracefully-expanded arm, speak to the eye, before the tongue has uttered a syllable.

You enter an alley, lined on either side with a verdant fan, and having no variety of objects to diversify the intermediate space, your view is conducted to a magnificent building at the end. As you walk along, contemplating the masterly performance in architecture, an unexpected opening diverts your attention, and presents you with some striking imitation of the virtuous or heroic life. Not the Macedonian madman, nor Sweden's royal knight-errant; nor Caesar, infamously renowned for his slaughtered millions—but the truly-gallant Czar: a drawn sword in his hand, and a commanding majestic sternness on his brow. The weapon is held in the most menacing posture; and many a spectator has been observed to start back with apprehensions of fear. It is that gloriously severe attitude in which the grateful citizens of Narva beheld him, and in which all posterity will admire him, when he turned upon his victorious, but ungovernable troops, and threatened to drench the dagger in their hearts, if they did not immediately desist from rapine* and slaughter, immediately allow quarter to their vanquished foes.

Under a circular dome, supported by pillars of the Doric order, and in a spot where several walks centre, stands—not the Venus de Medicis; corrupting, while it captivates the world—but a Spartan mother. Her habit decent and graceful; somewhat like the Juno Matrona of the Romans, as she is finely depictured in Mr. Spence's Polymetis. Her air stately and resolved; expressive of dignity, yet mingled with softness. She holds a shield, is in the act of delivering it to her son; a youth setting out for the army, and going to hazard his life in defence of his country. She is supposed to add that spirited and magnanimous exhortation, which is engraven on the protuberance of the buckler,—η ταν, η επι ταις—"Bring it back, my son, as thy trophy; or be brought back upon it as thy bier."

I am particularly pleased, said Theron, with the contrivance of this last ornament. It is regulated by one of the most refined rules of art, Not to lavish away all the beauty at a single view, but to make a skilful reserve for some future occasion. The dome and the columns afford pleasure, when beheld at a considerable distance; the fine animated figure in the midst displays its graces on a nearer approach: by which means the attention is kept awake, and the entertainment continues new.

But what I principally admire, is the spirit or style of the decorations in general. They put me in mind of a very just remark, which Mr. Pope has somewhere made. It

* Beza thinks that in settling the construction of this verse, the adverb πρωτον should be connected with the participle κοπιωντα.

* As soon as the soldiers were masters of the town, (Narva), they fell to plunder, and gave themselves up to the most enormous barbarities. The Czar ran from place to place, to put a stop to the disorder and massacre. He was even obliged to kill with his own hand several Muscovites who did not hearken to his orders.—VOLTAIRE'S *Hist. Charles XII.*

is, if I remember right, to this effect: "A man not only shows his taste, but his virtue, in the choice of his ornaments. A proper piece of history, represented in painting on a rich man's walls, (or exhibited in imagery amidst his gardens,) is very often a better lesson than any he could teach by his conversation. In this sense, the stones may be said to speak, when men cannot, or will not." All but the comparative or satirical part of the observation, I would apply to the prospect before us, and its worthy owner.

Asp. Philenor's gardens, are, I think, more chaste and delicate in their ornaments, than a certain collegiate church. In the latter place, we might reasonably expect the strictest adherence to purity, if we should not meet with the symbols of piety and incitements to religion. What then would be the reflections of a judicious observer, if, in such a solemn and venerable edifice, he should see a huge brawny fellow stuck up against the wall, with his posteriors half bare, his whole body more than half naked, and in an attitude none of the most decent?* Excuse me, Theron. I confess myself ashamed even to rehearse the description. How then can the spectacle itself become the house of divine worship?

Ther. But perhaps this same brawny fellow may represent a Heathen demigod; one of the idols worshipped by antiquity; the tutelary deity of valour.

Asp. And will this justify the practice? Does not this add profaneness to immodesty? Are we Christians to thank Hercules for the valour of our warriors, and make our acknowledgment to Pallas for the conduct of our generals? Shall we, Christians, behold with admiration, or recognise as our benefactors, what the apostle has stigmatized under the character of "devils?" 1 Cor. x. 20.

If he who overthrew the tables of the money-changers, had taken a walk in these famous cloisters, I am apt to suspect he would have paid no very agreeable compliment to this fine piece of statuary. "Take these things hence," would probably have been his command; and, "make not the precincts of your temple a chamber of Pagan imagery," his rebuke. John ii. 16. Neither is it at all unlikely, that the image itself, notwithstanding its inimitable workmanship, might have shared the fate of its kinsman Dagon,

——When the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopp'd off
In his own temple, on the groundsell edge
When he fell flat, and shamed his worshippers.
MILTON, i. 458.

Ther. But how should the artist represent the great achievements and the shining qualities of his hero, if you will not allow him to make use of these significant emblems?

Asp. I question whether they are so very significant. The mirror seems to characterise a fop, rather than a soldier. It leads us to think of a soft Narcissus, admiring himself; rather than a sagacious general, planning the operations of the campaign. Besides, is sacred literature so destitute of proper emblems, that we must borrow the decorations of our churches and the trophies of our conquerors from the dreams of superstition, or the delusions of idolatry? How just and expressive are those emblematical representations, exhibited in Ezekiel's vision? where activity and speed are signified by hands in conjunction with wings; and the deep, the complicated, yet ever harmonious schemes of Providence, by "a wheel in the middle of a wheel." With what propriety and force are the noblest endowments pictured in the revelations of St. John and their grand machinery! Superior wisdom, and benevolence of heart, are described by the face of a man; strength of mind, and intrepidity of spirit, by the visage of a lion; calmness of temper and indefatigable application, by the features of an ox; a penetrating discernment, and an expeditious habit of acting, by the form of "a flying eagle." Rev. iv. 7.

These hieroglyphics are graceful, are pertinent, and such as every spectator will understand. Whereas the devices of our new monumental encomium are, I presume, to the unlearned, hardly intelligible; to the serious little better than profane; and to every beholder, indelicate, if not immodest. Philenor, I imagine, would blush to admit them into his walks or avenues. And I am sorry to find them received into the most ancient,* most renowned, and most frequented church in the kingdom.

Talking in this manner, they come to a curious grove, formed on that uncommon plan, proposed by Mr. Addison, in one of his Spectators. It consisted wholly of evergreens. Firs clad in verdant silver, pointed their resinous leaves, and shot aloft their towering cones. Laurels arrayed in glossy green, spread their ample foliage, and threw abroad their rambling boughs. Bay-trees

* Referring to the monument lately erected for Major General Fleming, in Westminster Abbey; where, under the General's bust, are placed Hercules and Pallas. Hercules with his club and lion's skin, in the manner related above; Pallas, with a mirror and serpent at her side. The reader may see a picture and an explanation of this monument in the Gentleman's Magazine for August 1754.

* Some antiquarians trace back the origin of this church even to the reign of Lucius; which is more than the space of 1500 years. Others suppose that Sebert, King of the East-Saxons, about the year of our Lord, 605, built the first religious structure on this spot. All agree that it was re-edified and enlarged by Edward the Confessor, and that the present stately and magnificent fabric was founded by Henry III.

were expanded into a fan, that no weather could tarnish; or rounded into a column, that knew not how to moulder. While the lauristinus ran out into a beautiful irregularity of shape; and compacted her reddening gems, in order to unfold her whitening bloom. In one place lay a dale, gently sinking, and coated with the chamomile's natural frieze, which never changes its colour, never loses its gloss. Near it, and scooped, you would imagine, from the same hollow, arose a mount, softly swelling, and shagged with furze, gay with perennial verdure, and generally decked with golden blossoms. Here you are led through a serpentine walk and hedges of box; and find perhaps a solitary pyramid or a capacious urn; each composed of unfading yew.—There you look through a strait alley; fenced on either side, and arched overhead with mantling philyra; and see at the extremity, an obelisk sheathed in ivy, and ornamented with its sable clusters as with wreaths of living sculpture. Scattered up and down were several sorts of holly; some stripped with white, some spotted with yellow, some preparing to brighten and beautify the scene with berries of glowing scarlet.

The heads of the trees, arising one above another, in a gradual slope, from the diminutive mazerean to the lofty cypress; the several shadings of their green attire, greatly diversified, and judiciously intermixed, afford, especially in the winter season, a most enlivened and lovely prospect. As the sunshine is, by the frequenters of this grove, usually more coveted than the shade; it is so disposed as to admit, in one part or another, every gleam of fine weather which exhilarates the winter.

Asp. There must be something unspeakably pleasing in a plantation, which appears lively and fruitful when all its neighbours of the woodland race are barren, bleak, or dead; but how much more cheering and delightful must it be, when decrepit age or bodily infirmities have impaired the vigour and laid waste the gratifications of our youthful prime, to find a solid undecaying pleasure in the favour of God and the hope of glory! Now, indeed, the feathered tribes resort to the more flowing umbrage of the poplar and the ash; but amidst December's cold, you shall observe them forsaking the leafless woods, and flocking to this friendly receptacle; hopping across the sunny walks, or sheltering themselves, in the wet and stormy day, under these trusty boughs. So the many thoughtless creatures, who turn their back upon religion amidst the soft and soothing caresses of prosperity, will want, extremely want, its sovereign supports under the sharp and distressing assaults of adversity, sickness, and death. This collection, it is true, may not equal the groves of annual verdure in floridity of dress; but it far exceeds them in the duration of its ornaments. Ere long, yonder showy branches will be stript of their holiday clothes; whereas, these will retain their honours, when those are all rags, or nakedness. Thus will it be with every refuge for our poor, imperfect, sinful souls; excepting only the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every thing else will "fade as a leaf," Isa. lxiv. 6. This, my Theron, and this alone is an evergreen; always free for our acceptance, and always effectual to save.

Ther. An evergreen it is. But, like the ruddy and inviting fruits which hang on the uppermost boughs of those lofty trees in the orchard, it seems to be quite out of my reach.

Asp. Are you sensible that you need the immaculate and perfect righteousness of our Saviour?

Ther. Was Jonah sensible how much he needed the cooling shelter of his gourd, when the sun smote fiercely upon his temples, and all the fervours of the fiery east were glowing around him? So is your Theron sensible, that without a far better righteousness than his own, he must inevitably be condemned by the sentence of the law, and cannot possibly stand before the high and holy God.

Asp. Remember then what our Lord says to such persons; "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matth. xi. 28. How gracious is the invitation? Come unto me, the Father of compassions, and the Giver of every good gift. How extensive as well as gracious! All that are "weary," (Κοπιωντες,) toiling in a fruitless pursuit of happiness, and spending your labour for that which satisfieth not. All that are "heavy laden," (Πεφορτισμενοι,) oppressed with the servitude of sin, or bowed down under a load of misery. These, all these are called, and you my friend, in the number. They have not a ticket, a bond, or some inferior pledge to ascertain their success: but they have a promise from faithfulness and truth itself. "I will give you rest," says the strength of Israel, whose will is fate, and his word the basis of the universe. And if Christ will give you rest, he will wash you in that blood which atones, and invest you with that righteousness which justifies; since nothing short of these mercies can afford any satisfaction to the guilty conscience, or true satisfaction to the restless soul.—Permit me to ask farther, Do you earnestly desire this righteousness?

Ther. Will yonder hirelings, when fatigued with the heat and burden of a long, laborious, sultry day, desire the shades of the evening, and the repose of the night? I can truly on this occasion, adopt the words of the prophet: "The desire of my soul is to

thy name," blessed Jesus, "and to the remembrance" of thy righteousness. The very mention of this spotless righteousness is music to my ears. Every fresh, though distant discovery of it, gleams pleasure upon my mind. And that would be a welcome day, a day greatly to be distinguished, which should bring it near to my view, and home to my soul.

Asp. Say not then, my dear friend, that Christ, and the blessings of his purchase, are beyond your reach. They are now, even now at your door. You need not argue anxiously and despondingly, "Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring down Christ from above? or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from beneath?" Rom. x. 6, 7. There is no such impossibility, no such difficulty in the thing. Christ and his righteousness, Christ and his salvation, are brought nigh in the word of promise. And "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus" as dying on the cross for thy redemption; "if thou shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead" for thy justification, "thou shalt be saved," Rom. x. 9. In so doing, thou shalt receive remission of sin, and power to withstand its temptations.

Have you never, in your travels, been overtaken by the dark and tempestuous night? When, chilled with the cold, and almost drowned in the rain, you arrived at the house of some valued friend, was you not willing to gain admittance?

Ther. Willing! I was desirous, I was almost impatient? I thought every moment an hour till the hospitable door opened—till I exchanged the dismal gloom and the driving storm, for the cheerful light and the amiable company within.

Asp. The adored Emmanuel professes himself equally willing to come unto you. "Behold!" says the Saviour of the world, "I stand at the door, and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. iii. 20. Like one exposed to all the inclemencies of the air, whose "head is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night," Cant. v. 2, he is not only willing, but desirous to enter. "He stands at the door," with great long-suffering and perseverance, till all obstacles are removed, or rather till that one grand obstacle is taken out of the way, unbelief. "He knocks," by the preaching of his word, and the promise of his gospel, like one who solicits admission, and will take no denial. Hear then his soliciting voice, and "he will sup with you;" will make his abode with you, will manifest his glories in you, and communicate his grace to you. Believe his promising word, and "you shall sup with him;" this will be refreshing to your distressed soul, as the most sumptuous banquet to the famished stomach and craving appetite.

Ther. I cannot open my heart.

Asp. Christ has the key of David. "He openeth, and none can shut; he shutteth, and none can open." Rev. iii. 7. He is able to make all grace, not only to exist in you, but abound towards you, 2 Cor. ix. 8, and what is still more encouraging, he is professedly "the author and finisher of our faith." Heb. xii. 2. Since he has claimed this character to himself, since he has undertaken to execute this office, why should we harbour the least distrust? Will he not fulfil his own office, and act agreeably to his own character? Be not, my dear Theron, be not faithless, but believing.

Ther. This I believe—that I am a lost sinner; under the curse of the law, and liable to the wrath of God; that there is no relief for my distress but in Christ and his transcendent merits. He, and he alone, is able to save me from my guilt, and all its dismal train of miseries. He is a Saviour fully proportioned to my wants; exactly suited to my several necessities. I believe, and am persuaded, that if I was interested in the divine Jesus, my soul should live.

Asp. Be persuaded likewise, that there is no clogging qualification, no worth to be possessed, no duty to be performed, in order to your full participation of Christ and his riches. Only believe, and they are all your own. "Christ dwelleth in our hearts"—how? by legal works, and laborious prerequisites? No; but "by faith." Eph. iii. 17. "He that believeth on the Son, hath"—a chimerical? far from it—a real and a substantial happiness, even "everlasting life." John iii. 36.

Ther. Ah! my Aspasio! I cannot believe. I feel my impotency. My mind is, as you formerly hinted, like the withered arm.

Asp. It is no small advantage, Theron, to be convinced of our inability in this respect. This is, if not the beginning of faith, the sign of its approach; and shows it to be, if not in the soul, yet at the very door. Fear not, my friend. He who bids you stretch out, will strengthen the withered arm. He first makes us sensible of our weakness, and then "fulfils all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power." 2 Thess. i. 11.

Can you doubt of his willingness? Then go to Mount Calvary. There listen to the "sounding of his bowels, and of his mercies towards you." Isaiah lxiii. 15. Has not every drop of blood a tongue? Cannot you read a language in each streaming wound, and hear a voice in every dying pang? Do they not all speak his infinite love even to wretched sinners? Do they not all address you with that tender remon-

strance, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" Matt. xiv. 31. Nay, do they not all declare, with an energy superior to the force of words, that he will deny you no manner of thing that is good?

Who gave his blood, what gift will he withhold?

Ther. I am ashamed to recollect, what mistaken notions I once entertained concerning the easiness of believing; as though it were to be performed, like the act of rising from our seat, or stepping into a coach, by our own strength, and at our own time. What a stranger was I then to the blindness of my understanding, and the hardness of my heart; to my bondage under unbelief, and averseness to the way of salvation "by grace through faith!"

Asp. Since you are sensible of your impotence, beware of the contrary extreme. Because you cannot by your own strength exercise faith, let not this occasion a tame resignation of yourself to infidelity. You must endeavour, diligently endeavour, to believe; and wait, and pray, for the divine Spirit. Though it is his office to testify of Christ, "and bring near the Redeemer's righteousness," Isa. xlvi. 1; yet his influences are not to supersede, but to encourage our own efforts. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" here is our duty. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, Phil. ii. 12, 13; here is our encouragement: and O what a glorious encouragement, to have the arm of Omnipotence stretched out for our support and our succour!

Ther. How, or in what manner, does the divine Spirit work faith in the heart of a sinner? You wonder, perhaps, that I ask such a question. But my apprehensions are strangely dull, and my views very dim, with regard to spiritual things. If in this respect I have any sight, it is like his who "saw men as trees walking;" saw these several objects, but so obscurely, so confusedly, that he could not distinguish one from the other, only by the circumstance of motion.

Asp. The most enlightened minds see only in part; and all have reason to make the blind beggar's supplication their own request: "Lord, that I may receive my sight!" The operation of the Holy Spirit in producing faith, is thus described by a master in Israel: "The divine Spirit brings Christ and his righteousness nigh unto us in the promise of the gospel; clearing at the same time our right and warrant to intermeddle with all, without fear of vitious intromission; encouraging and enabling to a measure of confident application, and taking home all to ourselves, freely, without money, and without price."

You was once, Theron, a zealous advocate for good works. Now you seem to have abandoned your clients. Remember, my dear friend, what our Lord Jesus Christ says, John iv. 29, "This is the work of God," of all works most acceptable and most honourable to the divine Majesty, "that you believe on him whom he hath sent."

Ther. The true belief, according to your notion, Aspasio, is so refined and exalted a virtue, that I very much question whether I shall be ever able to attain it.

Asp. If you are unable to attain it, is the Lord unable to give it? Our sufficiency for this and every good work, is not in ourselves, but in God. And to him difficulties are easy: Before him mountains are a plain. You will please to remember, that sinners are said to believe, not through their own ability, but through the power of grace: and you will permit me to ask, how you became acquainted with my notion of faith?

Ther. I am not so inattentive a reader of your letters, as to forget your definition of this momentous article. Faith, you say, "is a real persuasion, that the blessed Jesus has shed his blood for me, and fulfilled all righteousness in my stead; that through this great atonement and glorious obedience he has purchased, even for my sinful soul, reconciliation with God, sanctifying grace, and all spiritual blessings."*

Asp. I am obliged to you, Theron, for the honour you do my letter; and I hope you will pay an equal regard to the determination of our church. You once apprehended that my attachment to the church of England was unsettled and wavering. Judge now who has most thoroughly imbibed her doctrines, and is most invariably tenacious of her true interests. In the first part of the Homily concerning the Sacrament, we have this definition of faith: "It is a belief, not only that the death of Christ is available for the remission of sins, and reconciliation with God, but also that he made a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect cleansing for thy sins."†

My notion of faith, you see, is evidently the voice of the establishment; and I think

* See Letter X. Here is, it must be acknowledged, a total omission of all preparatory or rather impulsive dispositions; such as convictions of sin, and hungering after salvation. Here is likewise a total silence concerning all causes, instrumental or efficient, such as the power of the divine Word, and the agency of the divine Spirit. No mention is made of the fruits or concomitants; such as love to Christ, love of the brethren, or purity of heart. Nothing is exhibited to view but the form and essence of faith, or that particular act which characterises and constitutes real faith, which distinguishes it from the hypocritical pretension and the historical notion. This simple view is given, that the mind may fix upon the grand point, and not be embarrassed with a multiplicity of ideas.

† Answerable to this was the doctrine of the primitive church; Η πιστις ιδιοποιειται τον Θεον. Chrysost.

it gives us a clear intelligible sense, suited to the most common acceptation of the word; such as would naturally arise in the mind of a stranger, who, without any bias on his judgment, should inquire into the purport of our religion, or consider the language of our Bible.

Ther. How suited to the most common acceptation of the word?

Asp. When you sent a message to your tenant, who, in his last sickness, expressed so much uneasiness on account of his numerous family and embarrassed circumstances, assuring him that you had cancelled the bond and forgiven his debt: when you told the poor woman, whose husband fell from the loaded waggon, and broke both his legs, that you would order a surgeon to attend him, and would continue his weekly pay; how did they regard, how receive your promised kindness?—So let us credit the gracious declarations of our God, so accept his faithful promise, and then we shall answer the import of the word—then we shall truly believe.

Ther. Where is there in Scripture any thing parallel or similar to these instances?

Asp. Have you never read the words of Micah, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by transgression?" Micah vii. 18. Here is the gracious declaration.—"He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities," Micah vii. 19. Here is the faithful promise.—And why, my friend, why should we pay less credit to the ever-living Jehovah, than to a man, "whose breath is in his nostrils?" Is there treachery with the Holy One of Israel? Does the Lord make, and then violate his promise? "Ask now of the days that are past, ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether such a thing hath ever been?"

Ther. God has never violated his promise, when it was expressly made, and particularly applied. But in this circumstance there is a wide difference between the case of your friend, and the case of his poor people. I named the object of my compassion in one of the instances, and made a personal application in the other: Neither of which is done in the Scriptures.

Asp. Though we are not particularly named, yet we are very exactly described, by our family, our inclination, our practice. What says eternal Wisdom, when she makes a tender of her inestimable blessings? "To you, O men," not to fallen angels, "I call; and my voice is" not to this man or that man exclusively, but "to the sons of men" indefinitely, Prov. viii. 4. What says the holy apostle, when he publishes the counsels of heaven? "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save,"—the upright? the unblamable? Was this the case, our hopes would be covered with a cloud, or rather totally and finally eclipsed. But see! they are clear as the light, and conspicuous as the noon-day. For he came (cheering, charming word!) he came to save sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Consonant to all which is the declaration of another sacred envoy: "He," the prince of Peace, the monarch of the universe, "suffered"—for whom? They in whose behalf this matchless ransom was paid, must have an undeniable right to look upon redemption as their own: And blessed, for ever blessed be God, it is most peremptorily said, he suffered—for the unjust," 1 Pet. iii. 18.

That no part of our character might be omitted, and no part of our misery pass unrelieved, it is farther declared, "When we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly," Rom. v. 6. When we were ungodly, and considered only as ungodly creatures; neither possessed of any thing amiable, nor having the least ability to acquire it; nay, when we were chargeable with the most horrid guilt, and incapable of expiating a single offence; then, even then, Christ died—and for such abominable wretches he died. Are we not of the human family? Are we not unjust,* Rom. v. 6, towards our fellow-creatures, and ungodly towards our great Creator? Are we not in all relations, and in every respect, sinners? If we are (and upon these questions incredulity itself will scarcely demur,) let us not frowardly reject, rather let us thankfully receive those spiritual treasures, which, by virtue of the afore-cited conveyance, belong to such people; which, by several other clauses in the will and testament of our crucified Lord, evidently devolve to such persons.

Ther. Is it possible, Aspasio? Can we be warranted and encouraged to receive these treasures, in a capacity and under a denomination, which I should think more likely to exclude us, disinherit us, and overthrow all our pretensions?

Asp. This may seem strange, but it is true. All the blessings of the gospel proceed upon a supposition of sinfulness. Christ is made wisdom unto his people; but what occasion for the accession of wisdom, unless it be in the case of ignorance and folly? Christ is made righteousness; but who can stand in need of a justifying righteousness, if they are not in themselves unprofitable and guilty? Christ is made sanctification; and does not this imply a state of corruption to be remedied, a body of sin to

* He is unjust towards his neighbour, who neglects to love his neighbour as himself. And if this is the standard, who has not fallen short?

be destroyed? Christ is made redemption; and from what are persons redeemed but from chains and bondage, from misery and ruin, from all manner of evil?

It is also a most precious and invaluable truth; such as I would hold fast, and never, never let go. When I search for my own endowments, I find nothing that I dare venture to plead, being in my best moments, and amidst my choicest duties, a sinner. As this is, at all times, my undoubted character, I have at all times an undoubted warrant to say, The uncreated Wisdom calleth me; the blessed Jesus came to save me; the great Messiah suffered death for me.

Let me illustrate the point. Romulus, you know, the founder of the Roman empire, was a poor prince, had but a handful of subjects, and very scanty territories. What expedient could he devise to enlarge the boundaries of the one, and augment the number of the other? He issued a proclamation, addressed to outlaws and criminals, all that were involved in debt or obnoxious to punishment, promising that as many as would settle under his dominion, should be secured from prosecution, and vested with considerable privileges.—We will suppose a person in those distressed circumstances. Upon hearing the welcome invitation, he hangs down his head, and, with a dejected air, cries, "I am a debtor, I am a criminal, and therefore unworthy of the royal protection." What answer should be made to such a dispirited complainer? Make the same to yourself, whenever you are inclined to renew the present objections: Remembering, that the infinite and eternal Sovereign, to display the magnificence of his majesty, and manifest the riches of his goodness, has commissioned his ambassadors to publish in every nation under heaven, "That all unhappy sinners, who are oppressed by the devil, and liable to damnation, may come to Christ, and rely on Christ; may in this manner obtain pardon, righteousness, and all the privileges of children."

Ther. At this rate, the vilest miscreants have as clear, nay, have the very same warrant to believe in Christ, and receive his salvation, as the highest saints.

Asp. The very same. In this respect there is no difference. All have sinned, and must sue for spiritual blessings, not as deserving, but as guilty creatures; must receive them, not as the recompense of their own worth, but as the issues of infinite mercy. The vilest miscreants are blinded by the devil, and enslaved to their lusts: therefore they see no beauty in a Saviour, that they should desire him. Whereas when the divine Spirit opens their eyes, and inclines their hearts, they discover and make use of just the same right to Christ and his merit as the highest saints;—a right founded not on their awakened desires, not on any thing in themselves, but purely, solely, entirely, on the free grant of a Saviour.

Should you ask the highest saints, on what their hopes are grounded? This, or something to this effect, would be their reply:—"On the free exhibition of Christ and his salvation, recorded in the word of truth. There we find it written, 'To you,' though Gentiles and idolaters, 'is preached the remission of sins.' Acts xiii. 38. 'The promise is to you,' even to you, 'whose wicked hands have crucified and slain the Lord of life;' and not to you only, but 'to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God,' by the message of his everlasting gospel, 'shall call.'* We remember, Theron, though you seem to have forgotten, the wretched outcast, polluted in its blood, yet accepted by the Holy One of Israel. We remember the heavenly gifts, received by the triumphant Redeemer, for enemies, and for the rebellious. Nor can we easily forget the promise of forgiveness which was made, and the blessings of forgiveness which was vouchsafed, even to the murderers of the Lord of glory."†

Ther. This is a pleasing supposition. But it would be more satisfactory, if you should produce any of the saints speaking in this manner.

Asp. Isaiah, you will allow, was a saint of no inferior rank: Yet he breathes the spirit I am describing, and acts the part I am vindicating. Turn to that epitome of the gospel, his fifty-third chapter. There you may observe him claiming a share in the greatest of all privileges, salvation through the blood of Christ. How does he advance and maintain his claim? Not in the capacity of a sanctified, but under the character of a sinful person. These are his words; "The Lord hath laid on him," on his Son Jesus Christ "the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 6. Of me, and of my brethren in piety, does he mean? No; but of me and of my fellow-transgressors. This is evidently implied in the clause I have quoted. In the preceding part of the verse, the prophet explains himself, and leaves no room for hesitation. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own ways;" yet our transgressions, our iniquities, the God of all mercy has transferred from us, and

* Acts ii. 39. Call—in the same manner as he called those to whom Peter spake; which evidently means, not the inward efficacious call, wrought by the Spirit, but the outward call, delivered in the word. Otherwise, we must suppose every individual person in this promiscuous assembly to be savingly changed; which will hardly be credited by those who remember, that the congregation consisted of mockers, murderers, and sinners.

† Referring to Dialogue XV.

charged upon our Redeemer. As the vilest miscreants are indispensably obliged to confess the former, they have a free and full right to profess, to assert, and to believe the latter.

At this you may probably wonder; at this we ought all to wonder! this is that amazingly rich grace, which will be the wonder of saints and angels through a boundless eternity. Yet, though we wonder, let us not murmur. Let not the elder brother repine, because the young prodigal enters at the same door, and is admitted to the same table with himself.

To this testimony of the saints, shall I add the decision of their King? "God so loved the world," even the fallen, the wicked, the apostate world, that, in the fulness of time, "he gave his only begotten Son," John iii. 16, to bring in a perfect righteousness, and obtain eternal redemption. And he still gives him, with all his saving benefits, in the promise of the gospel.

Ther. Does this general gift warrant a sinner to make a particular application of all to himself.

Asp. It warrants, it demands, and in other instances obtains a particular application. When Jonah, in pursuance of the divine command, "cried and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown;" there was no particular mention of man, woman, or child. Neither the king, nor the nobles, nor the commons were specified. Much less was each and every inhabitant threatened by name. Nevertheless, this general denunciation alarmed them all; was influential on them all. Insomuch that "the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackloth, from the greatest of them even to the least." Jonah iii. 5. They believed; hence we learn the true nature of believing: "God speaks to me, and what he speaks he will perform;" is its genuine profession. Hence we likewise discover who they are which ought in this manner to apply the general word, "All, from the least even unto the greatest, believed."

Ther. The case is not parallel, Aspasio. This was a denunciation of vengeance, not a promise of grace.

Asp. And can you suppose that God is more liberal of vengeance than he is communicative of grace? Vengeance is his strange work, but in mercy and loving kindness he delighteth. Are we bound to believe and apply his dreadful threatenings? not allowed to believe and apply his precious promises? Surely the Lord's ways are not so unequal. When the law says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things," Gal. iii. 10, should not every hearer take this to himself, and submit to the sentence of just condemnation? When the gospel says, "He came to save that which was lost," Matth. xviii. 11, should not every hearer take this also to himself, and embrace the tender of free salvation.

However, if you dislike my instance, I will give you another; which is not of the vindictive, but of the beneficent kind When the manna made its first appearance in the wilderness; when the Israelites knew neither what it was, nor for whom intended; both these particulars were explained by Moses: "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." Exod. xvi. 15. No mention is made of any individual person. Yet the whole congregation looked upon this as an undoubted permission, both for themselves and their children, to gather, to fetch home, and to use the miraculous food. And here, Theron, here lies the principal difference between the vile miscreant, and the exalted saint: not that the one was originally better than the other; not that the one has a clearer grant of Christ than the other; but the latter has gathered the heavenly manna, and uses it to his unspeakable advantage: whereas it lies round about the tents of the former; and whoever will, may take, may eat, and his soul shall live.

Ther. God gave the manna to all the Israelites, both good and bad. But does he give Christ with this unlimited freeness?

Asp. Our Lord himself, alluding to this very miracle, vouchsafes you an answer: "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," John vi. 32. My Father giveth you his incarnate Son, and his divinely excellent righteousness. These are bread indeed; bread which came down from the regions of heaven; and bread which nourisheth the soul for the joys of heaven. This my Father giveth you; though not in actual possession, yet in right to possess. This he giveth you, in the free indefinite grant of his word; without which grant, any attempt to possess, even in the most upright of men, would be illegal and presumptuous; by virtue of which grant, even the poor sinner has an unquestionable warrant to receive and possess the riches of Christ.

Ther. Unquestionable! is not this expression too peremptory? That such a grant should be made to believers, I can easily conceive: But is it made to sinners—to any sinners—to the most abandoned sinners?

Asp. Yes, Theron, to sinners. And when sinners receive the grant, then they commence believers. Was it made to believers only, no man living would inherit the blessing; because all men are, by the depravity and impotence of their nature, originally concluded under sin and unbelief.

What said our Lord? My Father giveth you; that is, the people who stood around and heard his gracious voice; many of whom

were in a carnal state habitually, and even then were in a murmuring wicked frame. John vi. 26, 41. What says his prophet? "To us a Son is given," not to us who were antecedently children of the light, but who "walk in darkness, and dwell in the shadow of death," Isa. ix. 2, 6. What saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out? "I will give thee," meaning his beloved Son, "for a covenant;" it is not said, of believers, but "of the people;" it is not said, of new creatures, but "of the Gentiles;" who were the vilest of all creatures, or, as you have properly spoke, the most abandoned sinners. That we may understand more clearly the signification of these terms, and see the true extent of this gift, it is added, I will give thee "to open the blind eyes, and to bring out the prisoners from the prison," Isa. xlii. 6, 7. Miserable and guilty wretches, blinded by the devil, and enslaved to their lusts; these are the patentees in the heavenly grant. To these the great Surety is given, together with all the benefits of his covenant.

Here then the grant and the gift are mentioned; the persons for whom they are designed are specified, and expressly named. They are sinners; blinded and enslaved sinners; or, if there be any other more obnoxious sort, they are all comprehended in this one word, Gentiles. Only allow these texts to be true; only allow the divine speaker to be sincere and faithful; then we may boldly affirm, that any, that every poor sinner is authorized to say, "God gives me his Son, to be my covenant-surety. I take him at his word. The Surety and all his merits are mine." Divinely rich bounty! O let us not refuse what, on this consideration, the unerring Spirit, calls "our own mercy." Jonah ii. 8. Let us adore the beneficence of our God; let us believe his promising word; and in this sweet, this easy manner, obtain both present and final salvation.

Ther. Let me recollect:—Christ is given for the world, the apostate world, to believe on: Christ has died, not for the righteous, but for the ungodly: Christ came in the flesh to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. Well, Aspasio, if these things are true, (and how can they be otherwise, since they are the express doctrine of scripture?) it is pity but they were more generally known. For my part, I must confess, they are not only new, but strange to me. Though I have read them in the Bible, yet when I come to consider them, and compare them with what passes in my breast, I find they are quite contrary to my usual ways of thinking.

Asp. You remind me of a valuable person, whom I once numbered among my acquaintance, and whose way of thinking was somewhat similar to your own. Will you give me leave to relate his case?

Ther. Most gladly. It will be some kind of consolation to hear that others have laboured under the same difficulties with myself, and been subject to the same distresses. If I am informed of their deliverance from those distresses, it will be like showing me an opened door for effecting my own escape. If I am likewise acquainted with the manner of their deliverance, this will furnish me with a clue to guide my steps.

Asp. This person was roused from a habit of indolence and supineness, into a serious concern for his eternal welfare. Convinced of his depraved nature and aggravated guilt, he had recourse to the scriptures, and to frequent prayer. He attended the ordinances of Christianity, and sought earnestly for an assured interest in Christ; but found no steadfast faith, and tasted very little comfort.—At length he applied to an eminent divine, and laid open the state of his heart. Short, but weighty, was the answer he received: "I perceive, Sir, the cause of all your distress. You do not, you will not, come to Christ as a sinner. This mistake stands between your soul and the joy of religion. This detains you in the gall of bitterness; and take heed, O! take heed, lest it consign you over to the bond of iniquity!" This admonition never departed from the gentleman's mind; and it became a happy means of removing the obstructions to his peace.

Remember this little history, Theron; and may it prove as efficacious for your good, as it is pertinent to your circumstances! Remember, that the free grant of Christ, made in the word of truth, and addressed to sinners of mankind, is the only basis and ground-work of faith. An apostle, after all the labours of his exemplary life, can have no better. And a Magdalene or a Manasseh, as a motive and encouragement for their turning to the Lord, have the very same.

But we digress from the principal subject. Since you disapprove my account of faith, I must desire you to favour me with a description more correct and unexceptionable; For, as you justly observed, this is a very momentous article. Is not Christ the source of all spiritual good, and faith the main channel of conveyance? Surely then it should be made and kept as clear as possible. Is not Christ the foundation of all true godliness, and faith the master-arch in this sacred structure? Surely then it should be raised and turned with the utmost care.

Ther. Palæmon's account is this—Faith, he says, is a firm persuasion, that Jesus

Christ has shed his blood, and fulfilled all righteousness; has sustained the punishment due to sin, and obtained full reconciliation with God: that all this grace, and each of these benefits, are free, perfectly free—for you, for me, for others. In consequence of this persuasion, the sinner flies to Christ, comes to Christ, and trusts in Christ for his own salvation.

Asp. I have the highest regard for Palæmon's judgment; and I cannot but think my opinion is confirmed even by his. The act of flying to Christ, is an appropriating act. It implies an intention to get out of danger; it implies a discovery of Christ as the appointed safety; and consists in making use of him as such. How can this be done, but by a persuasion that he is mine? That his sufferings were in my stead, and that his death is my safeguard? What is meant by coming to Christ, we may learn from Jeremiah: "Behold! we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." Jer. iii. 22. Coming, you see, includes a real persuasion that the Lord is our God. While we are wholly destitute of this persuasion, we stand at a distance, and our souls are afar off. We are never brought nigh; we never come, in the prophet's sense, till we are taught to say, each one for himself, "Thou art the Lord my God." The act of trusting in Christ is much of the same nature: It pre-supposes that Christ is the trustee of the covenant of grace; it proceeds upon a conviction of his faithfulness in executing the office; and it is a solemn surrender or giving up the whole affair of our salvation into his hand; giving it up, not in uncertainty of success, (this would be mistrusting rather than trusting,) but with a certainty in some measure suitable to the fidelity and ability of Him with whom we have to do.

If you still are doubtful, whether any such persuasion is implied in trusting, let us choose a referee. Let us carry our controversy to the king of Israel. Inquire of David, why he trusts in the Lord, and what he means by trusting? To both these inquiries he answers distinctly and fully: "The Lord is my high tower, my shield, and he in whom I trust," Psal. cxliv. 2. "He is—he is my shield; of this I am persuaded, and therefore I trust in him: or, this I believe, and, in so doing, I trust on him."

Ther. There is an air of assurance in your representation of faith, which sounds harsh in my ear, and appears presumptuous in my eye. It is as if people pretended to know their seat in heaven before the judgment-day.

Asp. The Papists, I own, take great offence at this expression, and utterly explode this doctrine. But they are no infallible guides for us to follow; neither are they very inviting patterns for us to imitate. You and I, Theron, cannot be offended at the expression or the doctrine, if we recollect what we have been taught in the first stage of life, and what is professed in the last scene of mortality. We are taught, even from our infancy, that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is not only a sign of spiritual grace, but a pledge to assure us thereof. At the interment of the dead, we profess our sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life. That this is always applied, with due propriety, in our burial-service, I will not venture to assert; that it sufficiently countenances my sentiments, none will undertake to deny. And if this countenances, the apostle authorizes them, when he addresses us with this very remarkable exhortation: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith;" with a firm persuasion of acceptance; with a certain expectation of success.

However, if you dislike the word *assurance*, we will change it for the more softened, and more modestly-sounding term *appropriation*.

Ther. You change it for a more softened, not for a more intelligible term. I must desire to know what you mean by the word appropriation.

Asp. To appropriate, in the theological sense, is to take home the grace of God, which lies in the common indefinite grant of the gospel. Is Christ the treasure hid in the field? To appropriate this treasure, is to receive and use it as our own portion. Is Christ the balm of Gilead, full of saving health? To appropriate this balm, is to take and apply it for the recovery of our own souls. And without such an appropriation, how can we either be enriched by the former, or healed by the latter?

Let me farther explain my meaning, and exemplify the position, by considering Christ in his several offices. Christ, as a Priest, is made to guilty creatures righteousness. When we appropriate the grace of our great High Priest, this is the language of our hearts, "In the Lord have I righteousness." Isaiah xlv. 24. Christ, as a Prophet, is made to ignorant creatures wisdom. When we appropriate the benefits of our unerring Prophet, this is the persuasion of our souls, "Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me." Micah vii. 8. Christ, as a King, is made unto depraved creatures sanctification. When we appropriate the munificence of our Almighty King, this is our comfortable trust, "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work." 2 Tim. iv. 18.

This is what I mean by appropriation. That something of this kind is included in the essence of faith, is the sentiment I

would maintain. Which sentiment might be confirmed, if such confirmation were demanded, by a multitude of the most illustrious witnesses: witnesses so illustrious, that they were a blessing to the world, and an honour to human nature; so numerous, that, without giving an abstract of their testimonies, it might seem tedious only to recite their names.*

Ther. I will dispense with your recital of their names, only let me have a specimen of their testimonies.

Asp. First, then, let me present you with Dr. Owen; than whom England has produced few writers either more judicious or more devout. "Faith," he tells us in his catechism, "is a gracious resting upon the free promises of God in Jesus Christ for mercy, with a firm persuasion of heart that God is a reconciled Father to us in the Son of his love." Next let me introduce the learned and justly celebrated Altingius, professor of divinity at Heidelberg. "Faith," he says, "is a knowledge of the grace of God in Christ, together with a fiduciary reliance on it, or an application of it to a man's own self." To these let me add the unanimous suffrage of the churches of the Palatinate. It is asked, in the twenty-first question of their public catechism, "What is true faith?" To which this answer is returned. "It is not only an assent to all the truths which God hath revealed in his word; but it is an assured trust, wrought by the Holy Spirit in my heart, that remission of sins, complete righteousness, and eternal life are given, freely given, not to others only, but to myself; and all this from the mere mercy of God, through the alone merits of Christ.

These testimonies are but as the tythe to the whole crop. Yet these are more than enough to exempt me from the charge of singularity. You will not wonder therefore, if I still abide by the good old Protestant doctrine, which is espoused by so many of the ablest judges, which was the darling tenet of almost all our reformers; which has been so signally instrumental in demolishing the superstitions of Popery; and is so evidently conducive to the holiness and the happiness of Christians. Especially as I apprehend, the determinations of scripture, and the experience of scriptural saints, are all on my side.

Ther. You have now brought the cause to the proper bar. When a question so important is debated, and an interest so momentous is concerned, I cannot acquiesce in any authority less than divine. I cannot, and indeed I think we ought not. Nothing should satisfy us on such an occasion but the word, which is unerring and decisive; the word, by which we are to stand or fall eternally. Whence does it appear that the determinations of this divine word are on your side?

Asp. From the noblest description of faith which language itself can form. The writer to the Hebrews, having mentioned the life of faith, the perseverance of faith, and the end or reward of faith, proceeds to a definition of this leading grace, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. "The evidence," exhibiting not a faint surmise, but a clear demonstration, both of invisible blessings, and of our right to enjoy them. "The substance," realizing what is promised; and giving us, as it were, a possession of good things that are remote, a present possession of good things that are future.

Ther. What are those blessings, and these good things?

Asp. I will inform my Theron; and in such a manner, from such passages, as shall farther ascertain my representation of faith. What says the apostle of the Gentiles? "I preached unto you the gospel," 1 Cor. xv. 1. And what is the substance of this evangelical dispensation? "Christ died for our sins." 1 Cor. xv. 3. That so exalted a person as the Son of God, and Lord of glory, should die, is wonderful! That he should die for sins, the most abominable objects, and for sinners, the most detestable creatures, is abundantly more wonderful! That he should die, not for sins in general, but for our sins in particular, this is inexpressibly wonderful! and at the same time inexpressibly comfortable. Here we have the gospel and its capital blessing expressed in this proposition, "Christ died for our sins." Here we have faith and its principle acting expressed in this proposition, "Christ died

If the reader should inquire after their names, he will find some of them enumerated in the following catalogue:—Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Beza, Bullinger, Bucer, Knox, Craig, Melvil, Bruce, Davidson, Forbes, &c. Ursinus, Zanchius, Junius, Piscator, Rollock, Danæus, Wendelinus, Chamierus, Sharpius, Bodius, Pareus, Altingius, Triglandii (Gisbertus and Jacobus,) Arnoldus, Maresius; the four professors at Leyden, Wallæus, Rivetus, Polyander, Thysius; Wollebius, Heidegerus, Essenius, Turrettinus, &c. Many eminent British divines; Bishops Babington, Davenant, Hall; Messrs. Perkins, Pemble, Willet, Gouge, Rogers, Burgess, Owen, Marshall, &c.

If we were apparently and demonstrably in an error, yet, to err with such company, and in the footsteps of such guides, must very much tend to mitigate the severity of censure. But, I believe, few serious persons will venture to charge error and delusion upon such a venerable body of Protestant divines; so eminent for their learning, and so exemplary for their holiness; whose labours were so remarkably owned by God, and whose sentiments, on this particular subject, have been adopted by so many reformed churches. The declarations of the English and Palatine churches are produced in the dialogue. I have in my hand an extract from the confessions and standard doctrines of the church—of Scotland—of Ireland—of France—of Helvetia; with all which Aspasio has the happiness to agree. Only some of them are much stronger in displaying and maintaining the special *fiducia*, or the appropriating persuasion of faith. To quote them, would dignify and strengthen the cause. But, to avoid prolixity, I forego this advantage.

for our sins." Till the former is preached, the doctrine is not gospel; till the latter is believed, it should seem, from St. Paul's account, the conviction is not faith.

Let me produce another instance, extracted, like the preceding, from the rolls of heaven: "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life," 1 John v. 11, not proposed it, on I know not what condition, but hath given—freely and fully, without any reserve, and with a liberality suited to his inconceivable goodness, hath given the richest of all prizes; and not to some only, or to others, but to us, even to us.

Ther. Us, that is, the apostles and exalted saints.

Asp. Was eternal life given them because they were apostles? No, verily; but because Christ died for them. Did Christ die for them, because they were exalted saints? In no wise; but because they were miserable sinners. Eternal life was purchased for them when they were sinners. It was consigned over to them when they were sinners. And neither the purchase nor the gift were founded on their being saints, but aimed at making them so.

That "Christ died for our sins;" that "God hath given to us eternal life;" these are the blessings of which faith is the evidence; these the good things of which faith is the substance. This is the honey in the evangelical hive; and I am at a loss to conceive how we can taste the honey, without some appropriation of the good things to ourselves. This, if I mistake not, is comprehended in all those figurative descriptions of faith which occur in holy writ.

Ther. Favour me with some of those descriptions. I begin to see a peculiar beauty, and an unequalled richness, in the figures of scripture. Nothing yields me a more refined pleasure, than to investigate and discover the exact sense of those instructive images. It is somewhat like kindling the consecrated incense; which, when rising in a flame, diffused light; when spreading in clouds of fragrance, distributed refreshment.

Asp. Faith is styled, "a looking unto Jesus." But if we do not look unto Jesus as the propitiation for our sins, what comfort or what benefit can we derive from the sight? "A receiving of Christ." But can I have any pretence to receive him, or take possession of his merits, unless I am convinced, that they are intended for me? This is what neither the dictates of conscience will allow, nor the laws of reason authorize. "A resting upon Christ."* But how can we rest on a surety, if he has not interposed on our behalf? or how confide in a payment, which we believe to be made for others, not for ourselves?—Surely, Theron, when I rest upon an object, I use it as my support: When I receive a gift, I take it as my own property. And when the Israelites looked unto the brazen serpent, they certainly regarded it as a remedy, each particular person for himself.

Ther. To cast ourselves upon Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour; and rely upon him for our whole salvation—is not this real faith? This is what I heard some time ago from a celebrated pulpit.

Asp. If you rely on the all-sufficiency of his will, as well as of his power; if you take the comfort and appropriate the benefit resulting from both; you practise the very thing I recommend. This is what was taught from the pulpit of infallibility; and by those first of preachers, who spake as the Holy Ghost gave them utterance. Let the convinced sinner, and the afflicted soul, "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Let him not only reverence Christ as the incarnate God, and therefore mighty to save; but look upon Christ as his God, and therefore willing to save. Thus let him "lean upon the Rock of ages," Isa. l. 10, without indulging a doubt concerning his right to make use of it, or the possibility of its failing him.

To "cast ourselves upon Christ; to cast our burden," or "to cast all our care Επιῤῥιψαντες upon the Lord; 1 Pet. v. 7; are metaphors, which may receive some elucidation from an incident recorded in the Acts. When the mariners and passengers which sailed with St. Paul, saw their vessel shattered; saw the waves prevailing; saw no hope of safety from continuing in the ship; they cast themselves Απορῥιψαντες upon the floating planks. Acts xxvii. 43. They cast themselves upon the planks without any scruple, not questioning their right to make use of them; and they clave to those supporters with a cheerful confidence, not doubting but, according to the apostle's promise, they should escape safe to land. Be this what people mean when they speak of venturing or casting themselves upon Christ, and I approve the expression, I subscribe the doctrine. It speaks what I wish for my friend, for myself, and for my fellow-sinners.

Let us shift our situation, and view the point in another light. Consider the blessed and glorious object of our faith. Christ is represented by the similitude of bread, heavenly bread for the hungry soul. Faith is characterised by eating the food. And can this be done without a personal application? Christ is held forth under the image of living waters, ever running, and always

* I find two words in the original, which express the privilege and the duty of resting on Christ; one implies such a state of acquiescence as silences the clamours of conscience, and composes the perturbation of the spirit; the other signifies the refreshment and repose of a weary pilgrim, when he arrives at the end of his journey, and is settled for life in a secure, commodious, plentiful habitation. Psalm xxxvii. 7. Isa. xxviii. 12.

free for the thirsty appetite. But let them run ever so copiously, let them be presented ever so freely, all this will neither quench the thirst, nor refresh the spirits, unless they are drank. To do this is the business of faith. Christ is described as a garment, to accommodate destitute, and beautify deformed creatures. Faith is expressed by putting on this commodious garment, and wearing this beautiful robe. And can any idea, or any expression, more strongly denote an actual appropriation?

Ther. It is evident, that many holy people, in former ages, were not possessed of assurance. What is the language of David? It is all despondency: "I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes." To the same melancholy tune is the harp of Asaph strung: "Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? The same jealous and distrustful air breathes in the complaint of the church. "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Why then should my Aspasio set up a rule stricter and higher than those eminent saints attained.

Asp. You should rather ask, Why have the best judges, and the most exemplary Christians, in their several writings, set up this rule? Why have the apostles of our Lord, and the Spirit of our God, speaking in the Bible, set up this rule? To which I might reply, Because it is, of all precepts, the most beneficial. Therefore they have not so much set it up under the notion of a strict rule, as they have set it forth under the character of a choice blessing.

Your complaint, when put into its proper language, seems to run thus: "Why must we be obliged to trust in Christ alone? Why must we be obliged to assure ourselves of salvation by him?" Whereas, instead of a complaint, it should be matter of exultation, and we should rather express ourselves in this manner: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, that a sinner, such a vile sinner, should be allowed to take Christ and all his salvation as my own; and thus to assure myself of pardon, holiness and glory."

This blessing was certainly enjoyed by the holy men of old; but, like every other species of felicity in this world, it was enjoyed after an imperfect manner. They had an assured persuasion of God's present favour, and of their own final happiness. Nevertheless, this assured persuasion was liable to the assaults, both of outward temptations and of inward corruptions, which might for a while impair its vigour, though not destroy its being; as under a transient swoon the spirits fail, the colour departs, but the vital principle still subsists.

You may farther observe, concerning those pious persons, that, when they cease to exercise this confidence of faith, they lament the failure: "I said, this is my infirmity." Psal. lxxvii. 10. They chide themselves for it: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" They encourage themselves against it: "Hope in God," Psal. xlii. 5; it is thy unquestionable privilege. How could they do this—on what grounds, or from what motive—if they had not a secret persuasion that their ransom was paid, and their God reconciled; consequently, that all their doubts were an injury to his fidelity and to his goodness?

Nay, the church, even under her darkest apprehensions, still speaks the sentiment, still retains the grace for which I am pleading: "My Lord," uttered with her lips, argues an applicatory faith in her heart. So copious and pregnant are the evidences of this precious doctrine! It is confirmed by that very passage which was produced for its confutation.

Ther. If this be the sentiment of the church in general, is it also the temper of her particular members? Was each of them animated by this firm and lively faith?

Asp. Let these particular persons appear and answer for themselves. Hear the declaration of the Psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name." Psal. ciii. 1, 2. What is the cause of this holy transport and devout praise? Is it, because God possibly may; because he probably will? No; but because he actually does forgive: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." Take notice of Job's belief, and Job's support, amidst his unexampled sufferings: "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" not only that there is a Redeemer, but that he is, together with all his saving benefits, mine; which, being a truth so sweet and delightful, is expressed a second time: "Whom I shall see for myself," Job xix. 25—27, to my own advantage and for my own comfort: see him exerting his almighty power and infinite mercy, to rescue my body from the grave, and to deliver my soul from hell. What was Habakkuk's security, amidst the threatening, the tremendous, the triumphant malice, of his own and his country's enemies? "The Lord God is my strength." He says not, I wish, I pray, for the divine favour and the divine succour; but I am persuaded they both are mine; my inestimable portion, and my inviolable safeguard. "He will make my feet like hind's feet," that I shall perfectly escape from all danger; "and he will make me walk upon mine high places," beyond the reach of every evil. Hab. iii. 19.

Ther. Is this the language of believers under the New Testament dispensation?

Asp. Under every dispensation, Theron. They who lived before the law "were persuaded" (Πεισθεντες) of the promises; had not the least distrust with regard to the

certainty of their performance; nay, they "embraced them" (Ασπασαμενοι) as their own; they hugged them, as it were, to their very souls. Heb. xi. 13. They who lived under the law could say, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." Psalm ciii. 12. And can you imagine in the days of the gospel, when our advantages are greater and our light is clearer, that our faith should be weaker, or our hope fainter? St. Peter makes a profession, which excludes all doubting: "I am a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." 1 Pet. v. 1. St. Paul answers in the same heroic strain: "I know in whom I have believed; and am persuaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." Rom. viii. 39. With both which, the confession of faith recorded by St. Luke is exactly correspondent: "We believe, that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they." Acts xv. 11.

Ther. Was not this a privilege peculiar to the apostles?

Asp. By no means. All believers are brethren, and have "like precious faith." Hear how St. Peter exhorts all his people: "Gird up the loins of your mind, and hope to the end;" or, as the word should rather be translated, "hope perfectly, hope assuredly, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* 1 Peter i. 13. Maintain not a dim, but a bright hope; not a wavering, but a steady expectation of eternal life; that free but grand gift, of which the Lord Jesus, at his second coming, shall put you in full possession. The apostle, writing to his Hebrew converts, encourages them all to "hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope, firm unto the end." Heb. iii. 6. From whence it is deducible, that a trust, amounting to confidence, and the joy which naturally results from such a trust, were the common portion of Christians; possessed not barely by some few exalted saints, but by the followers of Jesus in general. I might bring many more instances. But why should I multiply proofs, since the beloved disciple declares, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that ye have eternal life."

Ther. True, Aspasio. This coincides with my apprehensions. The scriptures are written, first, that we may believe, and be entitled to eternal life; next, that we may have the knowledge of our belief, and a consciousness of our title. The apostle supposes his correspondents to possess the former, yet not to have attained the latter.

Asp. Is it certain that he makes such a supposition? He writes, I imagine, not with a view of leading them to either, but of confirming them in both. He intimates that the privilege and the comfort should go together. If we believe that Christ is our Surety, we should be persuaded that he has paid our debt, and satisfied justice to the very uttermost farthing; if we believe that Christ is our bridegroom, we should rest assured, that his righteousness, his inheritance, and his kingdom are ours. And why should we take pains to separate, what God's word and the very nature of things have united? Will this turn to our advantage? must it not issue in our loss? Besides, according to your own interpretation, whoever falls short of this cheering knowledge, falls short of one great end for which the Scriptures were written. He receives not his full reward: He only gleans where he might reap; is tossed on the ocean of uncertainty: Whereas they that have believed, have gained the port, have dropped their anchor, and enter into rest. Heb. iv. 3.

Ther. Believed! What? that our sins are laid upon Christ? that he was obedient in our stead? that all spiritual blessings are thereby procured for our—even for our enjoyment?

Asp. The blessings you mention are evidently the purport of the gospel. And I know of no other justifying faith but that which relates to the gospel, and believes its report. Isa. liii. 1. Nor can I think that any other belief will administer the tranquillity, or produce the rest specified by the apostle. But here, I find, lies the core and root of our controversy. This is the precise point to be settled, What it is to believe? What is included in this very important word? This question might renew our dispute, and cause the past arguments to recur: whereas, I would gladly get rid of disputation. We have already been too long detained in these disagreeable paths. However, since you have given the occasion, I may just touch upon another text or two: For I would willingly drive this nail to the head; and not leave my friend unconvinced on a subject of the utmost consequence.

The Lord declares by his prophet, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions." To believe, is to subscribe this declaration; to subscribe with our hand, and profess from our heart, "Lord it is done as thou hast said." Faith is, if I may so speak, the echo of the divine voice. It eagerly catches, and punctually reverberates the joy-

* Εις τελος or μεχρι τελους, signify "to the end." But τελειως, as far as I can recollect, is never used in this sense, either by sacred or profane writers. It may be rendered *perfecte, integre*, in this connexion, *cum firma fiducia*, with a firm affiance.

ful sound. Does God say, "Thou art my people?" Faith replies, "Thou art my God," Hos. ii. 23; not barely desiring, but confidently averring an interest in his favour. This explanation of faith is given us by a wisdom which cannot be deceived, by a fidelity which cannot deceive.—Once more our Lord bears this testimony concerning Thomas, "Thomas, thou hast believed." Now then, I think we have got an infallible touchstone. Let us examine what that is which Jesus Christ calls believing. Whatever it be, it is the determination of truth itself, and should pass for a verdict, from which there lies no appeal. And this, this is the confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." John xx. 28, 29. This, this expresses what our divine Master calls believing. When, therefore, we confess with our lips, and are persuaded in our hearts, that "Jesus is our Lord, who bought us with his blood; that "Jesus is our God," who will exert all his adorable perfections for our good; then we truly believe: We believe in our Saviour's sense of the word, we have that faith which he allows to be genuine.

Ther. Is this the constant language of faith? According to this account, there is no difference between the infant and the adult; between the new-born babe and the full grown man in Christ. Your spiritual children, Aspasio, must be men from their birth; nay, born in all the vigour of manhood. Whereas, the apostle makes an evident difference between the babes, the young men, and the fathers; between faith—the assurance of faith—and the full assurance of faith. If we are told of a patriarch, who was "strong in faith;" we read of some Roman converts, who were "weak in the faith;" and we hear our Lord speaking to disciples who were "fearful and of little faith."

Asp. Between faith, and the full assurance of faith, the apostle makes a difference. The one is the most exalted pitch, where the other is but an inferior elevation. Yet both are rounds of the same ladder. I do not remember, that the sacred writer anywhere distinguishes between faith and assurance. Πιστις and Πεποιθησις, *faith* and *confidence*, are joined in the epistle to the Ephesians. It is the opinion of the best critics, that the sense of the latter is included in the former. The critics' opinion is confirmed by the apostle's declaration, "We have access with confidence through faith." Eph. iii. 12. Could yonder sun diffuse warmth through the air, if it had no warmth in itself? No more could faith produce confidence in the believer, if in its own nature it did not contain the same.

The case of little faith, I think, may be explained from our Lord's own expostulation: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Here was a faith, not only in Christ's power, but also in his will. Nay, here was an appropriating faith, by which the apostle applied both to himself: "I verily believe, that my divine Master is able to preserve me, even though I venture to tread upon this tempestuous sea. I am persuaded likewise, that he will uphold me, and not suffer his servant to perish in the hazardous enterprise." Nothing less than this could have produced that hazardous enterprise, or have emboldened him to walk upon the rolling billows.

Do you not discern, in this instance, some degree of personal application, some real assurance of faith? It is true, this faith was violently assaulted by doubts, and greatly enfeebled by fears.* Yet still it was of the applicatory kind. "He can, he will," were expressive of its nature; though the boisterous winds, and the terrifying appearance of things, almost drowned its voice, or stifled the words in their utterance.

Ther. If you allow no difference between faith and confidence, I am very sure St. John puts a difference between babes, young men, and fathers.

Asp. He does, Theron; and so would I. Neither can I think of any thing more proper to explain my meaning, or establish my tenet, than your own comparison. In some fruitful family, you may see one child in leading-strings; another able to walk by itself; a third come home, improved and cultivated, from the school of literature. Observe their speech. One lisps out a few broken sentences; another talks intelligibly, but very incorrectly; the last has learned to express himself with tolerable propriety. Yet each speaks the same language, notwithstanding the various degrees of fluency in their utterance, or purity in their diction. —So faith always speaks one and the same uniform language. Whether she lisps or stammers; whether she whispers in faint accents, or raises her voice in a more manly tone; this is still the unvaried import of her speech: "God, even our own God, will give us his blessing." Can you forget, how St. John addresses even his little children? "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven." 1 John ii. 12.

Ther. Will not this account discourage

* I must beg of the candid reader to take particular notice of this limitation; and must entreat the impartial examiner, not to forget this concession. We nowhere suppose, that a freedom from all fears, or a superiority to all doubts, are included in the nature of faith. We only affirm, that an appropriating persuasion or assurance are necessary to the being of faith. This assurance may be encumbered with doubts, and may conflict with fears. But still it is assurance —real assurance—and proves itself to be such, by opposing and struggling with the contrary principle.

some, and offend others, who are not arrived at such an exalted pitch?

Asp. I would not offend the meanest, nor discourage the weakest of my Redeemer's servants. As for offence, that cannot be given, and ought not to be taken, when all we advance is strictly conformable to the unerring oracles. Whereas, to qualify and attenuate the scriptural descriptions of faith, in complaisance to our own experience; to make the unhappy fluctuations and unworthy suspicions, which possess the breasts of some particular Christians—to make them the rule of explaining, or the measure of enforcing so capital a duty; this, sure, would be an offence to God, an injury to his word, and detrimental to the welfare of souls.

With regard to discouragement, I cannot conceive how this should ensue, from informing the poor sinner that he has a right to apply Christ, and all Christ's merits, to himself; or from exhorting the poor sinner to do this, without any hesitation, and with a resolute dependence. In this case, to doubt is to be discouraged: as much as you want certainty, so much you want consolation. The proper way to comfort these distressed people is, not to allow, but to dissipate their doubts; to blow away those dead ashes, that the smothered embers may shine and glow.

Were we to inquire after the cause of that disquietude and despondency which are so common among modern professors, I am inclined to suspect we should find it lying hid in their wrong apprehensions, both of Christ and of faith. They look upon Christ, as a rigorous and forbidding monarch, who insists upon some hard terms and high qualifications. Whereas, his heart and his arms are ever open; his heart as open, as infinite love can set it; his arms as open, as infinite merit can make them. They look upon faith as containing a possibility only, or, at most, a probability, of salvation through his name. It is with them a kind of peradventure; a situation of mind, fluctuating and pendulous. "Perhaps I may succeed, and be eternally blessed: Perhaps I may be rejected and eternally ruined." Such a state of suspense, in an affair of everlasting consequence, cannot but create uneasiness and anxiety.

This uneasiness and anxiety seem to have been little known in the earlier and better days of the church. And why? Because Christians were then exposed to the rage of persecution? Because they were placed nearer the time of Christ's sojourning on earth! I rather think, because they were taught this particular and comfortable application of Christ and his righteousness. They exercised a confident affiance on Jesus, as their own Redeemer; and were shown a more direct way to obtain this assurance, than merely to search after their own renewed qualities.

Ther. Surely, Aspasio, in this particular you differ, not from me only, but from the generality of the orthodox.

Asp. I am sorry to find myself under a necessity of differing from any worthy persons, much more of disagreeing with the generality. This I can safely aver, that it is not from any affectation of novelty, or any fondness for disputing, but from a disinterested regard to the truth of the gospel. I should be glad to have the concurrence of all the serious, and all the pious; but I dare not purchase their approbation, I dare not attempt a coalition of sentiments, by diminishing the boundless riches of grace, or restricting the absolute freeness of salvation by Christ.

You are pleased to remind me of the orthodox. Pray, my dear friend, what is the standard of orthodoxy? Is it the word of revelation? This speaks once, yea twice, nay, some hundreds of times, in our favour. Is it the doctrine of our reformers from Popery? With these we jar not, but exactly harmonize. Is it to be taken from the old confessions of faith, and the catechisms of Protestant churches? To these we appeal, and have the sanction of their authority. Has the modern way of treating and stating this momentous subject so much to allege for its support?

Let me farther ask,—Are we better than our fathers? Is Christianity in a thriving condition, or practical religion on the advancing hand? The reverse, the melancholy reverse, is undeniably true. When our writers enforced, and our preachers urged what I am defending, professors were alive, and animated with the power of godliness: Whereas now we seem to be degenerated into the mere form; we "have a name to live, but are" languid, listless, and if not "dead," Rev. iii. 1, yet ready to die. It behoves us therefore to consider whether the declension, the decays, the unfruitfulness, so justly lamented in the present age, be not owing to the absence of this appropriating belief, or this assured persuasion.

A sweet assurance of pardon, a comfortable persuasion of our reconciliation with God, an established hope of eternal glory through Jesus Christ; these will be operative in the soul, as "a torch in the sheaf." These will enkindle love, and increase watchfulness; these will beget the true humility of mind, and work an unfeigned abhorrence of sin; these will enlarge the heart with charity, and exalt the affections above the world. These are the proper, and the only effectual means of "making the man of God perfect," that is, "thoroughly furnished to every good work."*

* For the display and confirmation of these points,

But the doubting frame is not fitted to yield any of these fruits. Nay, I am apprehensive there are several graces which can hardly be exercised, several duties which can scarcely be performed, so long as this spirit of diffidence prevails.

Ther. Name them, Aspasio.

Asp. I am afraid, lest I should seem to arrogate the office of a teacher; which neither becomes my condition, nor is agreeable to my temper.

Ther. I beseech you, my dear friend, let us wave ceremony, and have nothing to do with compliments. My soul is in jeopardy. My present comfort, and my everlasting happiness are at stake. And shall we suffer any little punctilios to overbear such weighty considerations?

Suppose you are a teacher; I have great need, and am very desirous to become your scholar. For I freely confess, that, knowing as I may seem in other instances, I am very ignorant in the great peculiarities of the gospel. Nay, though I have read the scriptures in a critical view, I have been an utter stranger to their spiritual meaning. Here I am uninstructed as a babe. Here, therefore, I ought to be teachable as a babe. Yes, in this respect I would become as a little child, that I may enter into the knowledge, and possess the privileges of the kingdom of heaven.

Asp. Your answer, Theron, shall be a law. "Love to God," is the first commandment; and, without all peradventure, is the principal grace. But is it easy, is it possible, to love God, before we have any persuasion of his love to us? This is what the apostles did not, could not do. And, if it exceeded their ability, it will doubtless be above the reach of our capacity. The thing may be attempted; the practice may be urged; we may see the necessity of it, and desire to perform it; but we shall never, never be able to exercise it, till we have some comfortable apprehension of God's reconciliation and good-will to us. "We love Him." Wherefore? from what inducement? "Because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 10, and because this love hath been made evident to our consciences by the light of faith.

What think you of "delight in God?" This also is a Christian grace. But "how can two walk together, except they be agreed?" We never covet an intimacy with the person who declares himself our enemy. Nay, if there be only a suspicion that he bears us a secret ill-will, we shall be jealous of trusting him, and averse to approach him. This was the case of our first parents immediately after the fall. Instead of drawing near to their Creator with pleasure and gratitude, they fled from him with anxiety and terror. And why? Because they were under the alarming apprehensions of his displeasure. Whereas, let us once believe what the apostle affirms, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Rom. v. 10. Let us cordially credit what the prophet repeatedly declares, "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you." Isa. xxx. 18. Then we shall seek his face with alacrity. Our affections will be on the wing to salute their Almighty Benefactor. We shall "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ther. To the enjoyment of so many spiritual consolations, and the exercise of several delightful graces, I acknowledge, an assured faith is necessary; but—

Asp. Ay, Theron, you may well hesitate. It will be difficult to fill up the chasm in your discourse. For my part, I know not any duty of holiness, which can be performed aright, without some degree of this confiding faith. We are to "walk worthy of Him who hath called us to his kingdom and glory." 1 Thess. ii. 12. But if we doubt whether we in particular are called, how can this influence our conversation? We are to be "followers of God, as his dear children." Eph. v. 1. But if we do not, cannot, will not believe, so as to cry "Abba, Father," how can such a consideration sway our hearts? Nay, upon what principles can such a person address himself to discharge any office of the Christian life? We are to "abound in the works of the Lord," from the animating prospect of a glorious resurrection. 1 Cor. xv. 58. This he cannot do; because he apprehends himself to have no lot or portion in the blessed hope. We are to open our hands in charity to others, from a view of that heavenly kingdom which was prepared for us from the foundation of the world. Matth. xxv. 34. We are to cleanse

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I do, with great pleasure, and without any diffidence, refer to Mr. Marshall's "Gospel Mystery of Sanctification;" which I shall not recommend in the style of a critic, or like a reader of taste, but with all the simplicity of the weakest Christian; I mean from my own experience. It has been made one of the most useful books to my own soul: I scarce ever fail to receive spiritual consolation and strength from the perusal of it. And was I to be banished into some desolate island, possessed only of two books besides my Bible, this should be one of the two, and perhaps the first that I would choose.

Should any person, hitherto a stranger to the work, purchase it on this recommendation, I must desire to suggest one caution: That he be not surprised, if, in the beginning he meets with something new, and quite out of the common road; or, if surprised, that he would not be offended, but calmly and attentively proceed. He will find the author's design opening itself by degrees: He will discern more and more the propriety of his method; and what might, at the first view, appear like a stumbling-block, will prove to be a fair, compendious, and ample avenue—to the palace of truth—to the temple of holiness—and to the bowers of happiness.—Our author's particular recommendation of this invaluable book, in a preface to an edition printed of it in London, is inserted in the 5th volume of the works.

ourselves from all filthinesss of flesh and spirit, on account of those precious promises which are freely given to us in Christ Jesus. 2 Cor. vii. 1. But where unbelieving doubts predominate, these endearing and invigorating motives are lost. The man has no interest in the encouraging promises, has no title to the blissful inheritance; consequently, these sinews of evangelical obedience, with respect to him, are benumbed, withered, dead.

Ther. Such a man may make prayers and supplications. Though he cannot rejoice in the privileges, he may request them at the throne of grace.

Asp. Prayer is a great duty, and as great a privilege. I wish, my dear Theron, the spirit of grace and supplication. This will be better, incomparably better, and more advantageous, than a key to hidden treasures. But how can you pray with humble boldness, or with lively hope, unless you believe? believe that Christ is your High-Priest—is your Intercessor with the Father, and, with the incense of his infinite merit, presents your petitions? Then, and then only, can you have what the apostle calls "boldness and access with confidence."* Take notice of these vigorous expressions, and at your leisure consider whether they countenance the suspicious and misgiving temper. At present observe how yonder lark warbles and mounts in the firmament, as if she was bidding adieu to the earth, and going to mingle with the skies! An image this of believing prayer.—Should a fowler shoot the soaring songster through the wing, how would she fall from her elevation, and flutter on the ground! An emblem that of distrusting prayer.

I know not how to leave this subject, without attending to the testimony of St. James, than which nothing can be more awful, or more decisive. It should really alarm the doubting disposition as much as any solicitation to the most horrid sin. It should alarm the whole religious world, as much as the beacons suddenly kindled, and all on a flame, would alarm the inhabitants of the maritime coasts. "Let him pray in faith, nothing doubting;†for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind, and tossed." James i. 6. Nay, the apostle adds,—and it is an addition greatly to be regarded; it should abide with weight on our consciences; for it comes from a casuist, who could neither be too indulgent, through an excess of compassion, nor too rigorous, through an extravagance of zeal,—"Let not that man," the doubting supplicant, "think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

Never then, my worthy friend, never more be an advocate for doubtings. Pursue them with fire and sword. Give them no quarter. Deal with them as Saul was commanded to treat the Amalekites.

Ther. If we are grieved at the remembrance of past sin, and feel an aversion to all sin; if the prevailing bias of our affections be to the divine Redeemer, and the habitual breathing of our souls after a conformity to his image; may we not suppose ourselves possessed of the truth and reality, though we have not the confidence and rejoicing of faith? I say we, because I apprehend this is not my peculiar case, but common to myself and many other Christians of the weaker sort. I ask, therefore, in their name and in my own, may we not humbly suppose our condition safe, though we do not presume to use the language of the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his?"

Asp. So you are still inclined to spare Agag, because delicately and speciously disguised under the appearance of tenderness to weak souls. I should have thought the text from St. James must have done execution, like the prophet Samuel's sword; but since corrosives succeed not, let us make trial of lenitives.

When the great Jehovah is pleased to say "I am the Lord thy God," then, upon this authentic warrant, to use the language of the spouse is neither more nor less than to declare, "I am persuaded that Christ is faithful and true, that he speaks what he thinks, and will do what he says." Whereas, to deny this by downright unbelief, or to question this, by living in suspense, is not humble duty, but proud disobedience. Might not the Lord Jesus justly complain, "What iniquity have sinners found in me?" what unkindness, or what unfaithfulness, that they are so much afraid of confiding in my grace, and of believing my word?

You ask, Whether the state of these persons is safe, and their faith real? I answer, why should not their state be happy, and their faith assured? Why should you, or

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* Eph. iii. 12. Προσαγωγη, "access with a cheering and graceful assurance," such as those petitioners enjoy who are introduced into the royal presence by some distinguished favourite. Παρρησια, "a boldness or unrestrained liberty of speech;" such as children use, when they present their addresses, and make known their requests to an indulgent father.—Εν πεποιθησει, "with a well grounded and steady confidence," that we shall both obtain a favourable acceptance, and a gracious answer.—And all this, "through the faith of Christ;" through the worthiness of his person, and the prevalence of his intercession.

† Jam. i. 6. "Nothing doubting," is the apostle's explanation of faith. Μηδεν διακρινομενος is, in our translation, "nothing wavering." But the very same expression is rendered, Acts x. 20, "Nothing doubting." The sense is, either way, alike; Though I think, "nothing wavering" corresponds too nearly with the comparison, "like a wave," makes something of a disagreeable jingle; and flattens the force, or supersedes the necessity, of the following illustration.

they, or any one, plead the cause of unbelief, and veil it with the plausible pretext of humility? Let these persons know, whatever their names or their circumstances are, that they have as good a right to adopt the words of the spouse, as we have to walk in these gardens, and enjoy their refined delights. Yet they will do well to remember, that those qualifications, however amiable, are by no means the ground of their right. They are to advance their claim, and hold fast the blessing, not as men ornamented with fine endowments, but as poor, indigent, guilty sinners. For such the Saviour is provided; to such his benefits are proposed, and on such his grace will be magnified.

Ther. Do you elude my question, or give up your point? One or the other my Aspasio certainly does.

Asp. Since my friend so peremptorily affirms, I will not have the ill manners to deny. I will own the former charge; the latter I cannot admit. I will own, that at present I had much rather act as a comforter, than as a disputant. On some other occasion I will undertake to consider, and endeavour to answer all your objections. In the mean time, I am far from giving up the point, barely by inquiring, why such persons should lose their time, and perhaps embarrass their minds, in these less profitable suppositions, when there is a direct, a compendious, and a certain method of obtaining peace, by appropriating Christ and his merits, without recurring to any such qualifications?

Nevertheless, if you insist upon a positive reply, I am obliged to declare, that faith consists in none of those qualifications which you describe. The language of faith is not —"I feel such an aversion; I am actuated with such a bias; or I breathe such a desire:" But—"God has freely loved me; Christ has graciously died for me; and the Holy Ghost will assuredly sanctify me in the belief, the appropriating belief, of these precious truths."*

But see, Theron! Yonder black and low-hung cloud points this way. It seems big with a shower; it marches on apace, and will soon be over our heads. We must instantly fly to shelter.

Ther. It is well we have this summer-house for our shelter. The thickest boughs would be insufficient to screen us. I think I never saw a more impetuous burst of rain. A shower! No, it is a descending deluge. The large, ropy, reeking drops come down like a torrent. Surprising! What a dreadful flash was there! A sheet of sulphureous fire, launched from the dismal gloom, and wrapping the whole skies in a blaze! Not a moment's interval between the lightning's rage and the thunder's roar. How sudden and vast the explosion! What a deep, prolonged, tremendous peal ensues! It seems as if the poles of earth and the pillars of nature cracked!

See, my dear Aspasio, see the direful havoc, the horrid effects of this elementary tumult. Yonder oak, which reared its towering head aloft, and spread wide its graceful branches, is, in the twinkling of an eye, turned into a naked trunk. There it stands, singed and tore; stripped of its verdant honours,* and surrounded with its own shattered fragments. How fearful is the artillery of heaven!

Asp. And why—why did not the blow fall on this guilty breast? Why was not the fiery bolt, which flew so near, commissioned to pierce our hearts? If our heavenly Father has been so tenderly careful of these perishing bodies, will he not be much more gracious to our immortal souls? Will he not clothe them with that immaculate robe, which is the only security from the stroke of eternal vengeance? And let me ask, Can this be a security to us, unless we are vested with it? Could this building, though very substantial, have secured us from the rushing rains, if we had not betaken ourselves to its friendly covert?

Christ is represented, in the prophecy of Isaiah, by this very image; as "a place of refuge, and as a covert from the storm and from rain," Isa. iv. 6. That is, his merits and death are a sure protection from the curse of the law, and the damnation of hell. No fury of the elements so terrible as these; no bulwark of stone so impregnable as those. If this is a proper emblem of Christ, to what shall we liken faith? To a persuasion, that the shelter of the summer-house is free for our use? To a high esteem of its accommodation, an earnest desire after its protection, or an habitual tendency towards it? Would this defend us from the inclemencies of the weather? Would this keep us dry, amidst (what you call) the descending deluge? Would this esteem, desire, or tendency, unless carried into actual entrance and possession, be a proper safeguard, or indeed any manner of advantage to our persons?

Ther. No, Aspasio; neither would a persuasion that the summer-house is mine.

Asp. True; but a belief that Christ is mine, is like entering the summer-house. When the divine Spirit reveals the obe-

* If the reader finds this Dialogue too long, here he will have a convenient resting-place.

* Does not this give us the most awful and grand sense of Psalm xxix. 9? "The voice of the Lord," when uttered in thunder, and accompanied with lightning, not only "discovereth the thick bushes, but strips the forest;" lays bare the branching woods; reduces the most magnificent and flourishing cedars to naked and withered trunks.

dient and dying Saviour in my heart; when I am enabled to believe, that his death was the desert of my sins, and his obedience is the matter of my justification; when I live in the exercise of this appropriating faith, then I find that comfort, and I receive that benefit, which correspond with the repose and security we now enjoy from this hospitable structure.

Ther. May I then, from this instant, look upon Christ, his glorious person, his perfect righteousness and his precious death, as my certain inheritance? May I firmly believe, that, through this grand and immensely-meritorious cause, I shall have pardon and acceptance, true holiness, and endless salvation?

Asp. Why should you not believe all this firmly? You have the same reason to believe with a steady confidence, as to believe with any degree of affiance. It is the free promise of the gospel, addressed to sinners, that warrants the latter; and the very same promise, under the same circumstances of unmerited munificence, authorizes the former.

You have heard my opinion; hear now what our Lord himself says: "Let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. He may partake of my spiritual and unspeakable blessings, as freely as he makes use of the most common refreshments; as freely as he drinks of the running stream. This is his royal proclamation: Here his gracious invitation. Look unto me, and be ye saved," Isa. xlv. 22, saved from your disquieting fears, by justification; saved from your domineering corruptions, by sanctification; saved from every evil, by complete and eternal redemption. To whom is this most affectionate call directed? Not to a few distinguished favourites only, but to "all the ends of the earth." None are excepted; none are prohibited; and can my Theron imagine that he is excluded?

Nay farther, hear our Lord's earnest entreaty; hear his tender and repeated importunity: As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20. Hark! It is the voice of infinitely-condescending love, speaking by his ambassador:—Sinners, accept my great salvation. Enjoy what I have purchased for you by my dying agonies. Do not suspect my kindness, or refuse my gifts. This will wound me deeper than the spear which pierced my heart."—O! the grace of our exalted King. He bows from his celestial throne. He almost kneels to his guilty creatures. He begs, he even begs of obnoxious sinners, not to reject his mercies. After all this, can you entertain the least doubt, Theron, whether, you have a permission to believe firmly?

Ther. This is extraordinary goodness indeed! I have often read these passages, but never saw them, till this hour, in a light so engaging and so encouraging.

Asp. Should not this threefold cord be strong enough to draw my dear friend, let me add (what must absolutely supersede all objections) the plain, express, peremptory command of the Almighty. "This is his command, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John iii. 23. Pray, examine the language; not he allows only, or barely advises, but commands. We are not only permitted, but strictly required. It is not only our privilege, but God's positive injunction. Upon the discovery of such a Saviour, methinks every heart should cry, "O that I might be allowed to approach him! to solicit an interest in him! How gladly would I wait, ever so long a time, in ever so mean a posture, if I might at the last receive him as my portion!" The superabundant goodness of God prevents our wishes and exceeds our hopes. "I freely give my Son," saith the Lord, "and all his riches to you. I beseech you as a compassionate friend, not to refuse him. I enjoin you as an uncontrollable sovereign, to believe on him."—How gracious! most amazingly gracious is this command! And give me leave to hint, it is the greatest and most important command that ever issued from the throne of glory. If this be neglected, no others can be kept; if this be observed, all others will be easy. Now, Theron, will you not receive Christ, and look upon his all-sufficient merits as your own? Is not your warrant clear and unexceptionable? nay, is not your obligation strong and indispensable?

Ther. Truly, Aspasio, you put all my mistrustful apprehensions to the stand. Here is a proclamation from the blessed God,—seconded by his invitation—accompanied by his entreaty—and all enforced by his command. I know not what can be a fuller proof of your point, or a stronger inducement to believe.

Asp. Yes, my friend, I can produce (if such a thing be possible) stronger proof still; such as, I hope, will totally route unbelief, and drive all her forces from the field.

God has not only invited you, entreated you, and commanded you to live under the sweet persuasion, that his Son is your Saviour: but he has given you the grandest ratification of this precious truth. He has passed his word; he has made you a firm promise; nay, he has given you many and various promises, of this inestimable blessing. And "God is not a man, that he should lie; or the Son of man, that he should repent; Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he

not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. Heaven and earth may drop into nothing, sooner than one promise, or indeed one jot or tittle of his promise, should fall to the ground.

Besides this, he has given you, if I may so speak, a note under his own hand. He has recorded his promises in the Bible, and written them with an everlasting pen; so that they will stand conspicuous and indelible, like a bill drawn upon heaven, and a basis laid for faith, so long as the sun and moon endure.

Nay, he has confirmed all by the most solemn sanction imaginable—by his oath; by his own oath; by the oath of a God. Though his word is sure, and his promise immutable, he adds, astonishing condescension! adorable benignity! he adds his oath to all. He not only speaks, but swears; swears by himself, swears by his own eternal existence, that his promises belong—to whom? Mark this particular with the most exact attention: To whom do those promises belong, which are ratified in this unequalled and inviolable manner? To the holy, the upright, the accomplished?—To those, says the scripture, "who fly for refuge to the hope set before them," Heb. vi. 17, 18; the hope set before them in the propitiation, the righteousness, the ineffable merits of Christ.

Ther. May I then believe, firmly believe, assuredly believe, that Jesus the Mediator, and all the rich benefits of his mediation, are mine? Pardon me, Aspasio, for reiterating the question. I am really, with respect to the obedience of faith, too much like that Saxon monarch, who, for his remissness and inactivity, was surnamed the "Unready."*

Asp. I do more than pardon my dear Theron: I feel for him, and I sympathize with him. If there is some of that Saxon prince's disease running in his religion; I am sure there is too much of it in mine; and I fear it is an epidemical distemper: but let us reflect a moment: Suppose any neighbour of substance and credit should bind himself by a deliberate promise, to do you some particular piece of service; if he should add to his promise a note under his hand; if he should corroborate both by some authentic pledge; if he should establish all by a most awful and solemn oath: could you suspect the sincerity of his engagement, or harbour any doubt with regard to its execution? This would be most unreasonable in any one; and to your generous temper, I am very certain, it would be impossible. Let us remember that God has given us all this cause for an assurance of faith, and more. Nay, I will defy the most timorous and suspicious temper to demand from the most treacherous person on earth, a greater, stronger, fuller security, than the God of infinite fidelity has granted to you and me. After all this, one would think, diffidence itself could no longer hesitate, nor the most jealous incredulity demur. Shall we, can we withhold that affiance from the unchangeable Creator, which we could not but repose on a fallible creature?

Ther. You rouse and animate me, Aspasio. O! that I may arise, and, with the divine assistance, shake off this stupor of unbelief. Certainly, it can never be honourable to God, nor pleasing to Christ, nor profitable to ourselves.

Asp. If it be, then cherish it; maintain it, and never relinquish it. But how can it be honourable to God? it depreciates his goodness; it is a reproach to his veracity; nay, the apostle scruples not to affirm, that it "makes him a liar," 1 John v. 10. Whereas, they who believe his testimony, glorify his faithfulness; glorify his beneficence; and, as John the Baptist speaks, "set to their seal that God is true. John iii. 33. I have been informed, that when the late Elector of Hanover was declared, by the parliament of Great Britain, successor to the vacant throne, several persons of distinction waited upon his Highness, in order to make timely application for the most valuable preferments. Several requests of this nature were granted, and each was confirmed by a kind of promissory note. One gentleman particularly solicited for the mastership of the Rolls. Being indulged in his desire, he was offered the same confirmation which had been vouchsafed to other successful petitioners. Upon which he seemed to be under a pang of graceful confusion and surprise; begged that he might not put the royal donor to such unnecessary trouble; at the same time protesting, that he looked upon his Highness' word as the very best ratification of his suit. With this conduct, and this compliment, the Elector was not a little pleased. "This is the gentleman," he said, "who does me a real honour; treats me like a king; and whoever is disappointed, he shall certainly be gratified."—So we are assured by the testimony of revelation that the patriarch, "who staggered not through unbelief, gave," and in the most signal, the most acceptable manner, "glory to God." Rom. iv. 20.

Is it "pleasing to Christ?" Quite the reverse. It dishonours his merit; it detracts from the dignity of his righteousness; it would enervate the power of his intercession. Accordingly, you may observe, there is nothing which our Lord so frequently reproved in his followers as this spirit of unbelief. What says he to his disciples when he came down from the mount of transfi-

* Ethelred.

guration? "O faithless and perverse generation!"* They were perverse, because faithless. What says he to the travellers whom he overtook in their journey to Emmaus? "O fools, and slow of heart to believe!" Luke xxiv. 25. They were fools because slow to believe. What says he to the apostles after his resurrection? "Jesus upbraided them with their unbelief." Mark. xvi. 14. He took no notice of their cowardly and perfidious behaviour; he inveighed against none of their other follies and infirmities; but he upbraided them with their unbelief. Not gently rebuked. No; this was a fault so unreasonable in itself, so reproachful to their Master, so pernicious to themselves, that he severely reprimanded them for it; with an air of vehemence, and with a mixture of invective.

Is it "profitable to ourselves?" Nothing less. It damps our love, and diminishes our comfort. It subjects us to that fear which hath torment; and disqualifies us for that obedience which is filial. In a word, this distrustful and unbelieving temper weakens every principle of piety, and impoverishes the whole soul. Whence come spiritual oscitancy and remissness? whence proceed sterility and unfruitfulness in the knowledge of Christ? St. Peter ascribes them all to an habitual unbelief. Such persons, he says, "have forgotten that they were purged from their former sins." 2 Pet. i. 8, 9. In the regenerate, where it remains, it is very detrimental; for "they that will not believe shall not be established." Isa. vii. 9. In the unregenerate, where it prevails, it is absolutely destructive; and though it may not kill like an apoplexy, it wastes like a consumption. "They could not enter in because of unbelief." Heb. iii. 19.

Let us then, my dear friend, cast away this sin, which so easily besets us both. It clogs our feet; it hampers all our powers; and hinders us from running, with alacrity and speed, "the race that is set before us." What says David? "God hath spoken in his holiness," Psalm lx. 6, hath made an express and inviolable promise, that I shall be ruler of his people Israel. "I will rejoice therefore;" away with every alarming apprehension; I will even exult and triumph. Nay more; "I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth;" I will look upon the whole land as my own. I will divide it, and dispose of it, just as if it was already in my possession. Why should not you and I also say, "God hath spoken in his holiness; hath expressly and solemnly declared, The promise of an all-sufficient Saviour is to you." "We will rejoice therefore;" confiding in this most faithful word, we will bid adieu to all disquieting fears, and make our boast of this glorious Redeemer. Yes; notwithstanding all our unworthiness, Christ and his atonement, Christ and his righteousness, are ours. God hath passed his word; and amidst all our temptations his word is our anchor; its hold is firm, and its ground immoveable.*

Ther. I have heard some people distinguish between the faith of reliance, and the faith of assurance; between the reflex and the direct act of faith. Methinks, I approve these sentiments, though I dislike the terms. The sentiments are happily adapted to the relief of human infirmity; though the terms are rather too abstruse for ordinary capacities to understand.

Asp. I cannot say that I am very fond either of the one or of the other. In my opinion, they both partake too much of the subtilty of the schools; and are more likely to create perplexity, than to administer godly edifying. For which reason, I should choose to drop the difficult phrases, and not to dwell on the nice distinctions: Yet, it we must not dismiss them without some notice, I would just remark—

That the faith of reliance, in its true scriptural sense, includes or presupposes a degree of assurance. Includes; for what is reliance but a repose of the mind, which is attended with tranquillity, and excludes perturbation? How can this take place, if there be no sort of conviction, that "the Lord is my light and my salvation?"—Presupposes; for who would rely on a satisfaction made, without being persuaded that the satisfaction is for him and his iniquities? Reliance, separated from this persuasion, seems to be neither comfortable nor reasonable.

As to those who insist upon what they call the reflex act of faith; sure, they mistake the nature of the thing. This, if I understand them aright, is their way of arguing:—"I am a new creature; I love the Lord Jesus in sincerity; I have the fruits of the Spirit: From whence it is plain, that Christ and his salvation are mine." Now, in all this procedure, I cannot discern the least footstep of faith; no, not the least

* Διεστραμμενη, Matth. xvii. 17. A believing state of mind is like some well-arranged and beautiful system of limbs. Unbelief dislocates the parts, distorts the harmonious frame, and disfigures its comely proportion.

* This very important doctrine is more copiously displayed in some sermons of Mr Ebenezer Erskine on the "assurance of faith," vol. iii. p. 201.†—Was I to read, in order to refine my taste, or improve my style, I would prefer Bishop Atterbury's sermons, Dr. Bate's works, or Mr Seed's discourses. But was I to read, with a single view to the edification of my heart, in true faith, solid comfort, and evangelical holiness, I would have recourse to Mr. Erskine, and take his volumes for my guide, my companion, and my own familiar friend.

† This refers to a select collection of Mess. Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine's sermons published at London, in three volumes octavo. The sermons on the "assurance of faith" are to be found in the first volume of Mr Ebenezer Erskine's sermons printed at Edinburgh in 1761.

trace of receiving a testimony, or relying upon a Saviour. Here is nothing more than a logical deduction of one proposition from another; a conclusion drawn from given premises. Grant the latter, and any person, without any aid from the Spirit, will infer the former. It may, therefore, more properly be reckoned an act of reasoning than of believing; it is founded on what we ourselves feel, not upon the record of a faithful God; and it is styled by judicious writers, the assurance of sense rather than of faith.

When, in conformity to the aforementioned opinion, we are advised to prove our title to comfort, by genuine marks of conversion, and taught on this column to fix the capital of assurance, I would rather propose a question than advance objections. Is not this somewhat like placing the dome of a cathedral upon the stalk of a tulip?

Ther. No, say they; it was the practice of the apostle himself; and he has left it upon record, as a pattern for all posterity to copy. "We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Asp. Observe, Theron, the process of the apostle's reasoning. It is like the form of an inverted cone; where you have first the point, and from thence proceed to the base. So the sacred writer begins with the less, and ascends to the greater proof. He says, in one of the following verses; "Hereby perceive we the love of God,* because he laid down his life," 1 John iii. 16, not merely for sinners, but for us in particular. Here, you see, is assurance by the direct act of faith. From this truth believed, from this blessing received, the love of the brethren takes its rise; which may very justly be admitted as an evidence that our faith is real, and our assurance no delusion: As yonder leaves may serve to distinguish the particular species, and ascertain the healthy state of the trees on which they grow.

When your tenants bring in their rent, this affords no contemptible evidence that the lands which they respectively occupy are yours. But this is a proof which does not occur every day, or every week; it is occasional only, and of the subordinate kind. The grand demonstration, that which is always at hand, and always forcible, is your possession of the deeds of conveyance. Thus, the promise of God in his divine word is our charter, or the authentic conveyance of our right to pardon and salvation. Make just the same difference between this promise and your own holiness, as you make between the writings of your estate and the receival of the revenues; you will then judge aright, because your judgment will coincide with the apostle's.

Besides, this method of seeking peace and assurance, I fear, will perplex the simple-minded, and cherish, rather than suppress, the fluctuations of doubt. For, let the marks be what you please, a love of the brethren or a love of all righteousness, a change of heart or an alteration of life; these good qualifications are sometimes like the stars at noon-day, not easily, if at all discernible; or else they are like a glow-worm in the night, glimmering rather than shining; consequently will yield, at the best, but a feeble, at the worst, a very precarious evidence. If, in such a manner, we should acquire some little assurance, how soon may it be unsettled by the incursions of daily temptation, or destroyed by the insurrection of remaining sin! At such a juncture, how will it keep its standing! how retain its being! It will fare like a tottering wall, before the tempest; or be "as the rush without mire, or the flag without water." Job viii. 11.

Instead therefore of poring on our own hearts, to discover, by inherent qualities, our interest in Christ, I should rather renew my application to the free and faithful promise of the Lord—assert and maintain my title on this unalterable ground: "Pardon is mine, I would say grace is mine, Christ and all his spiritual blessings are mine. Why? because I am conscious of sanctifying operations in my own breast? Rather because 'God hath spoken in his holiness;' because all these precious privileges are consigned over to me in the everlasting gospel, with a clearness unquestionable as the truth, with a certainty inviolable as the oath of God."

Cast your eye into yonder meadow. Take notice of that industrious fisherman, how intent he is upon the pursuit of his business. He has just thrown his net, and taken a considerable booty. You do not see him spending his time in idle triumphs, on account of his success: He does not stand to measure the dimensions of the fish, or compute the value of his prize: But having, without delay, secured the captives, he prepares for another cast, and hopes for another draught.

So let us, instead of exulting in any past acquisitions, seek afresh to the inexhausti-

* The word God is not in the original. It was omitted by the apostle, just as the particular name is omitted by Mary, when she speaks to the gardener; Sir, if thou hast borne him hence:—and by the church, when she addresses the sacred object of her affection; Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, John xx. 15. Cantic. i. 1.—In all which places there is a language, a very emphatical language, even in the silence. It declares, how deeply the heart was penetrated, how totally the thoughts were possessed, by the beloved and illustrious subject. It expresses also the superlative dignity and amiableness of the person meant; as though he, and he only, either was or deserved to be known and admired by all. For which reason, to mention his name, or display his excellencies, seemed as needless as to show light to the open eye.

ble fulness of our Saviour for renewed communications. If we have been blessed with any taste of his goodness, or any tokens of his love, let us not too fondly dote upon the sweetness of such experiences. Let us not make them the foundation of our confidence, but only so many encouragements to persevere and advance in believing; that, having life and having peace from our divine Head, we may have them "more abundantly." John x. 10. Then will be fulfilled the saying which is written, The just—the righteous in Jesus Christ—shall live; shall not only be delivered from condemnation and death, but shall thrive in comfort, and flourish in holiness—How? by reflecting on their sanctification, or viewing their own attainments? No; but by the infinitely more encouraging views of their completeness in Christ, and by a fresh, a repeated, a never-ceasing exercise of faith, Rom. i. 17, on that Holy One of God.

This, I verily think, nay, this the apostle testifies, is the most effectual way of feeding that lamp, and quickening that flame, which, having cheered us in our earthly pilgrimage, will be brightened up into immortal glory in the heavens.

Here they went in; and after a slight refreshment took coach. As they were returning home, Theron observed, not without concern, the changed and melancholy aspect of things in the territories of the husbandman. The fields of corn, which a little while ago were gracefully erect, or softly inclining to the breeze, lay sunk and flatted under the impetuous rains. Such, added Aspasio, such I apprehend will be our faith, if it aspires not after assurance, or if its assurance is erected on any endowments of our own.

Ther. If this is the case, what can be the reason why so many people are totally destitute of all religious assurance? have no notion of it, much less aspire after it? and as to full assurance, they would be much surprised, perhaps highly disgusted, at the very mention of such a doctrine?

Asp. If people never aspire after the assurance of faith, or an appropriating interest in Christ, I very much question whether they are truly awakened, or really in earnest. They are like the men of Ephraim, whom the prophet styles "a cake not turned," Hos. vii. 8. Neither bread, nor yet dough; neither absolute reprobates, nor real saints; or, as our Lord explains the proverb, in his charge against the church of Laodicea, they are "neither hot nor cold." Rev. iii. 15. Not frozen in insensibility, it is true; at the same time not fervent in spirit, but indifferent and lukewarm in the concerns of religion. As to a full assurance, or the highest degree of this grace, was I to declare myself more explicitly upon this point, it should be in the calm and moderate words of a judicious divine: "I do not affirm, that without a full assurance there is no faith. But this I maintain, that wherever the latter exists, there will be a sincere pursuit of the former."

Among the reasons why so few persons attain this eminent blessing, we may reckon the following:—They understand not the perfect freeness of grace, nor the immense merits of Christ: They never consider the unspeakable value of an assured faith; neither are they aware that it is intended for the enjoyment of sinners: Either they seek it not at all, or else they seek it where it is not to be found; from some works of righteousness in themselves, rather than from the gracious promise of God in his word; which is altogether as ill-judged, and as sure to issue in disappointment, as if a person should go in quest of ice amidst the torrid zone, or expect to find spicy islands under the northern pole.

But whether people consider it or no, the value of an assured faith is indeed unspeakable. When this is wrought in the heart, peace will stand firm, and afflictions drop their sting. Prayer will return laden with treasures, and death will approach stripped of its terrors. The soul will be as a watered garden, and all her graces blossom as a rose. When this is wrought in the heart, the gospel of Christ will appear with new charms, and operate with new energy. Its hymns will no longer be a strange language to your ear, nor its privileges as forbidden fruit to your palate. You will then, as you peruse each sacred page, feel it to be the power of God, and "taste that the Lord is gracious." 1 Pet. ii. 3. You will reap a benefit, and enjoy a delight, as much superior to those of the doubting reader, as the pleasure of eating this delicious peach is superior to the mere description of its agreeable relish.

Bear with me a moment longer, Theron: For you can hardly imagine what an improvement and exaltation this will give to every truth you contemplate, and every object you behold. When you contemplate the rise of kingdoms, and the fall of empires; when you recollect the many great and astonishing events recorded in the history of nations; how highly delightful must it be to say, "All these passed under the superintendency of that hand which was pierced with the bloody nail, and fastened to the cursed cross for me!" When you behold the magnificence of creation, and the richness of its furniture—the grandeur of nature, and the variety of her works—what a heightened pleasure must they all impart, if, as you view the glorious scene, your thoughts make answer to your eyes, "All these were brought into existence by that

adorable Person who sustained my guilt, and wrought out my justifying righteousness!"

O that we may possess this "precious faith!" 2 Pet. i. 1, that it may grow incessantly, "grow exceedingly," 2 Thess. i. 3, till it be rooted like those full-grown oaks under which we lately walked, and grounded* like that well-built edifice which is still in our view.

Ther. I join with my Aspasio in this wish; and must beg of him to inform me how I may attain so desirable a blessing.

Asp. You have entirely cured me, Theron, of making apologies: would to God I might be as successfully instrumental in delivering my friend from his doubts! that the gospel might come to us as it came to the Thessalonians, "not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." 1 Thess. i. 5.

Prayer is the first expedient. Every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights. Christ is not only the object, but the author and finisher of our faith. "Lord, increase our faith!" was the request of his disciples, and should be the prevailing language of our hearts.

Lay up many of the divine promises in your memory. Stock that noble cabinet with this invaluable treasure. "Faith cometh by hearing,"† Rom. x. 17, by meditating on, by praying over this word of life and word of grace. And never, never forget the freeness with which the promise is made, and its good things are bestowed. You are to receive the one, and apply the other, not with a full but with an empty hand; not as a righteous person, but as an unworthy creature.

Make the trial. Exercise yourself in this great secret of true godliness. I am satisfied it will be productive of the most beneficial effects. Look unto Jesus as dying in your stead, and purchasing both grace and glory for your enjoyment. Come unto God as a poor sinner, yet with a confident dependence: expecting all spiritual blessings through Him that loved you, and gave himself for you. "He that believeth," with this appropriating faith, "shall not be confounded." 1 Pet. ii. 6, nor frustrated in his expectations. "He that believeth," with this appropriating faith, "shall have the witness in himself," 1 John v. 10. Nothing will bring in such light and peace, such holiness and happiness to his soul. The Ephesians, thus believing, "were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,"‡ Eph. i. 13. The dispersed of Israel, thus believing, "rejoiced with joy unspeakable," 1 Pet. i. 8. Those were marked out as rightful heirs, these were blessed with some delightful foretastes and both were prepared for the complete fruition of life and immortality. O! that we may "be followers of their example, and sharers of their felicity!"

As for those doubts which have given you so much perplexity, and cost us so long a disquisition, look upon them as some of your greatest enemies. Oppose them with all the resolution and all the vigour of your mind. Nay, look upon those unreasonable doubts, as some of your greatest sins. Confess them with the deepest shame; and pray against them with the utmost ardour. With equal assiduity and zeal, let us press after a steadfast, an immoveable, a triumphant faith. Faith is the vehicle and the instrument of every good: "All things are possible to him that believeth," Mark ix. 23. Faith is the immediate and grand end of the whole gospel: "These things are written, that ye might believe," John xx. 31. Let us therefore covet, earnestly let us covet this best of gifts, and "shew all diligence to the full assurance of hope." Heb. vii. 11.

DIALOGUE XVII.

THE next morning Theron ordered a cold collation to be prepared, and his pleasure-boat to hold itself in readiness. Breakfast being despatched, and some necessary orders relating to the family given—Now, says he to Aspasio, let me fulfil my promise; or rather, let us execute our mutual engagement; and consign the remainder of this mild and charming day to a rural excursion.

We will take our route along one of the finest roads in the world: A road incomparably more curious and durable than the famous causeways raised by those puissant hands which conquered the globe: A road which has subsisted from the beginning of time; and though frequented by innumerable carriages, laden with the heaviest burdens, has never been gulled, never wanted repair to this very hour.—Upon this they stept into the chariot, and are conveyed to a large navigable river, about three quarters of a mile distant from the house. Here they launch upon a new element, attended

* Rooted and grounded "ἐρριζωμενοι και τεθεμελιωμενοι. These are the apostle's beautiful ideas, or rather expressive similitudes, each comprehended in a single word. Eph. iii. 18.

† On which account the scriptures are styled the words of faith, 1 Tim. iv. 6.

‡ "Πιστευσαντες ἐσφραγισθητε, not after that ye believed, ye were sealed; but believing ye were sealed. In the way of believing, ye became partakers of this sealing and sanctifying Spirit. Conformably to the expostulation of the apostle on another occasion, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

by two or three servants, expert at handling the oar and managing the nets.

Is this the road, replied Aspasio, on which my friend bestows his panegyric? It is indeed more curious in its structure, and more durable in its substance, than the celebrated Roman causeways; though I must assure you, the latter have a very distinguished share of my esteem. I admire them far beyond Trajan's pillar, or Caracalla's baths; far beyond the idle pomp of the Pantheon, or the worse than idle magnificence of the amphitheatre. They do the truest honour to the empire; because, while they were the glory of Rome, they were a general good;* and not only a monument of her grandeur, but a benefit to mankind.

But more than all these works, I admire that excellent and divinely gracious purpose to which providence made the empire itself subservient. It was a kind of road or causeway for the everlasting gospel, and afforded the word of life a free passage to the very ends of the earth. The evangelical dove mounted the wings of the Roman eagle, and flew with surprising expedition through all nations. Who would have thought that insatiable ambition, and the most bloody wars, should be paving a way for the Prince of humility and peace? How remote from all human apprehension was such a design, and how contrary to the natural result of things was such an event! Most remarkably, therefore, was that observation of the Psalmist verified, "His ways are in the sea, and his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." Psal. lxxvii. 19.

Conversing on such agreeable subjects, they were carried by the stream through no less agreeable scenes. They pass by hills clothed with hanging woods, and woods arrayed in varying green. Here, excluded from a sight of the outstretched plains, they are entertained with a group of unsubstantial images, and the wonders of a mimic creation. Another sun shines, but stript of his blazing beams, in the watery concave; while clouds sail along the downward skies, and sometimes disclose, sometimes draw a veil over the radiant orb. Trees, with their inverted tops, either flourish in the fair serene below, or else paint, with a pleasing delusion, the pellucid flood. Even the mountains are there, but in a headlong posture; and notwithstanding their prodigious bulk, they quiver in this floating mirror, like the poplar leaves which adorn their sides.

Soon as the boat advances, and disturbs the placid surface, the waves, pushed hastily to the bank, bear off in broken fragments the liquid landscape. The spreading circles seemed to prophesy, as they rolled, and pronounced the pleasures of this present state —the pomp of power, the charm of beauty, and the echo of fame—pronounced them transient, as their speedy passage; empty, as their unreal freight. Seemed to prophesy! It was more, imagination heard them utter, as they ran,

Thus pass the shadowy scenes of life away!

Emerging from this fluid alley, they dart amidst the level of a spacious meadow. The eye, lately immured, though in pleasurable confinement, now expands her delighted view into a space almost boundless, and amidst objects little short of innumerable. Transported for a while at the numberless variety of beauteous images poured in sweet confusion all around, she hardly knows where to fix, or which to pursue. Recovering at length from the pleasing perplexity, she glances, quick and instantaneous, across all the intermediate plain, and marks the distant mountains; how cliffs climb over cliffs, till the huge ridges gain upon the sky; how their diminished tops are dressed in blue, or wrapped in clouds: while all their leafy structures, and all their fleecy tenants, are lost in air.

Soon she quits these aerial summits, and ranges the russet heath; here shagged with brakes, or tufted with rushes; there interspersed with straggling thickets or solitary trees, which seem, like disaffected partizans, to shun each other's shade. A spire, placed in a remote valley, peeps over the hills. Sense is surprised at the amusive appearance; is ready to suspect that the column rises, like some enchanted edifice, from the rifted earth. But reason looks upon it as the earnest of a hidden vale, and the sure indication of an adjacent town: performing in this respect, much the same office to the eye as faith executes with regard to the soul, when it is "the evidence of things not seen." Heb. xi. 1.

Next she roves, with increasing pleasure, over spacious tracts of fertile glebe, and cultured fields, where cattle of every graceful form, and every valuable quality, crop the tender herb, or drink the crystal rills. Anon, she dwells with the utmost complacency on towns of opulence and splendour, which spread the sacred dome, and lift the social roof; towns no longer surrounded with the stern forbidding majesty of unpassable entrenchments, and impregnable ramparts; but encircled with the delicate, the inviting appendages of gardens and orchards; those decked with all the soft graces of art and elegance, these blushing and pregnant with the more substantial treasures of fruitful nature. Wreaths of ascending smoke in-

* These roads ran through all Italy, and stretched themselves into the territories of France. They were carried across the Alps, the Pyrenean mountains, and through the whole kingdom of Spain. Some of them towards the south, reached even to Ethiopia, and some of them towards the north, extended as far as Scotland. The remains of several of them continue in England to this day, though they were made, it is probable, above 1600 years ago.

termingled with turrets and lofty pinnacles, seem to contend which shall get farthest from the earth, and nearest to the skies. Happy for the inhabitants, if such was the habitual tendency of their desires!* if no other contention was known in their streets.

Villas, elegant and magnificent, seated in the centre of an ample park, or removed to the extremity of a lengthened lawn, not far from a beautiful reservoir of standing waters, or the more salutary lapse of a limpid stream. Villages, clad in homely thatch, and lodged in the bosom of clustering trees. Rustics, singing at their works; shepherds tuning their pipes, as they tend their flocks; travellers pursuing each his respective way, in easy and joyous security.

How pleasing, said Aspasio, is our situation! How delightful is the aspect of all things! One would almost imagine that nothing could exceed it, and that nothing can increase it. Yet there is a method of increasing even this copious delight, and of heightening even this exquisite pleasure.—Let me desire my friend, answered Theron, to explain his remark; and not only to explain, but to exemplify.—If we view, resumed Aspasio, our own prosperous, and compare it with the afflicted condition of others, the method I propose will be reduced to practice. Such a dark and mournful contrast must throw additional brightness, even upon the brightest scene.

Above, the skies smile with serenity; below, the fields look gay with plenty; all around the sportive gales

> Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
> Native perfumes; and whisper, whence they stole
> Those balmy spoils.†

With us, all circumstances are as easy as the wafture of the boat; as smooth as the flow of the stream. But let us not forget those grievous calamities which befal our brethren in some remote tracts of the earth, or distant parts of the ocean. How many sailors are struggling, vainly struggling, with all the fury of rending winds and dashing waves! while their vessel, flung to and fro by tempestuous billows, is mounted into the clouds, or plunged in the abyss. Possibly the miserable crew hear their knell sounded in the shattered mast, and see destruction entering at the bursting planks. Perhaps this very moment they pour the last, dismal, dying shriek; and sink, irrecoverably sink, in the all-overwhelming surge.—The traveller, in Africa's barren wastes, pale even amidst those glowing regions, pale with prodigious consternation, sees sudden and surprising mountains rise; sees the sultry desert ascending the sky, and sweeping before the whirlwind. What can he do? whither fly? how escape the approaching ruin? Alas! while he attempts to rally his thoughts, attempts to devise some feeble expedient, he is overtaken by the choking storm, and suffocated amidst the sandy inundation. The driving heaps are now his executioner, as the drifted heaps will soon be his tomb.

While we possess the valuable privileges, and taste the delicious sweets of liberty, how many partakers of our common nature are condemned to perpetual exile, or chained to the oar for life! How many are immured in the gloom of dungeons, or buried in the caverns of the mines, never to behold the all-enlivening sun again! While respect waits upon our persons, and reputation attends our characters, are there not some unhappy creatures, led forth by the hand of vindictive justice, to be spectacles of horror and monuments of vengeance? sentenced, for their enormous crimes, to be broke limb by limb on the wheel, or to be impaled alive on the lingering stake. To these, the strangling cord, or the deadly stab, would be a most welcome favour; but they must feel a thousand deaths, in undergoing one. And this, too probably, is but the beginning of their sorrows—will only consign them over to infinitely more terrible torment.

While ease and pleasure, in sweet conjunction, smooth our paths, and soften our couch, how many are tossing on the fever's fiery bed, or toiling along affliction's thorny road! Some under the excruciating but necessary operations of surgery; their bodies ripped open, with a dreadful incision, to search for the torturing stone; or their limbs, lopt off by the bloody knife, to prevent the mortification's fatal spread. Some, emaciated by pining sickness, are deprived

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* This comparison, I think, cannot appear vulgar to those persons who have read, and who reverence the book of Canticles. There the church, ascending continually in devout affections to her beloved Jesus and to her heavenly home, is characterised by this very similitude. Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke? Cant. iii. 6. Though it must be confessed, that this similitude, like many of the illustrations used in scripture, might have a sort of local propriety peculiar to the people of that age, country, and religion. It might probably refer to those columns of smoke which arose from the burnt offering, or fumed from the altar of incense. If so, this circumstance must give a solemnity and dignity to the idea, of which many readers are not at all aware, and which indeed no modern reader can fully conceive.

May I take leave to mention another comparison of this kind? "The enemies of the Lord shall consume as the fat of lambs; yea, even as the smoke shall they consume away," Psalm xxxvii. 20. As the fat of lambs, is not to us a striking representation. But to those who attended the altar, who saw the unctuous and most combustible parts of the victim blazing in the sacred fire, it presented a very lively image, which was still more apposite and significant, if this psalm was sung while the sacrifice was burning. None, I believe, in such a case, could forbear either observing or admiring the beautiful gradation, "They shall perish as yonder fat which is so easily set on fire, and when once in a flame, is so speedily consumed. Nay, they shall be as the smoke, which is still more transient, whose light unsubstantial wreaths but just make their appearance to the eye, and in a moment vanish into empty air."

†Milton, book 4.

of all their animal vigour, and transformed into spectres, even before their dissolution.* These are ready to adopt the complaint of the Psalmist: "I am withered like the grass: my bones are burnt up, as it were a firebrand; I go hence like the shadow that departeth." While health, that staple blessing, which gives every other entertainment its flavour and its beauty, adds the gloss to all we see, and the *gout* to all we taste; health plays at our hearts, dances in our spirits, and mantles in our cheeks, as the generous champaign lately sparkled in our glass.

We are blessed with a calm possession of ourselves: with tranquillity in our consciences, and an habitual harmony in our temper! whereas many, in the doleful cells of lunacy, are gnashing their teeth, or wringing their hands; rending the air with vollies of horrid execrations, or burdening it with peals of disconsolate sighs. And O! what multitudes, even amidst courts and palaces, are held in splendid vassalage by their own domineering passions, or the vanities of a bewitching world! far less innocently, far more deplorably disordered,† than the fettered madman, they are gnawed by the envenomed tooth of envy; they are agitated by the wild sallies of ambition; or feel the malignant ulcer of jealousy rankling in their breasts. In some, avarice, like a ravening harpy, gripes: In some, revenge, like an implacable fury, rages: While others are goaded by lordly and imperious lusts, through the loathsome sewers of impure delight; and left, at last, in those hated and execrable dens, where remorse rears her snaky crest, and infamy sharpens her hissing tongue.——

Why this long pause? replied Theron. Your observations are as useful as they are just. We should all be acquainted, at least in speculation acquainted, with grief; and send our thoughts, if not our feet, to visit the abodes of sorrow;—that in this school we may learn a sympathising pity for our distressed fellow-creatures; and see in this glass our inexpressible obligations to the distinguishing goodness of Providence, which has crowned our table with abundance, and replenished our cup with delicacies; permitting neither penury to stint the draught, nor adversity to mingle her gall. Go on, I must entreat you, with your description of comparative felicity. We have a large circuit still to make, before we arrive at our intended port; and I could wish, that your discourse might keep pace with the current.

Since you approve the subject, answered Aspasio, I will pursue it a little farther.—We, the inhabitants of this favourite isle, breathe an air of the most agreeable temperature, and most wholesome qualities. But how many nations languish under brazen skies, vaulted as it were with fire! They welter amidst those furnaces of the sun, till their "visage is burnt, and as black as a coal." Lam. iv. 8. What is far more disastrous, beds of sulphur, and combustible materials lie in subterraneous ambush, ready to spring the irresistible mine; ere long, perhaps, on some day of universal festivity,* or in some night of deep repose, to be touched by heaven's avenging hand. Then with what outrageous violence will they burst! rock the foundations of nature! wrench open the ponderous jaws of the earth! and swallow up astonished cities in the dark, tremendous, closing chasm!

These earthquakes, it may be, both precede and portend "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the sickness that destroyeth at noon-day," Psal. xci. 6. They are, at once, a fearful omen and a ruinous blow. The stagnating atmosphere, rank with malignant vapours, becomes a source of deadly infection; or, replete with poisonous animalculæ, is one vast incumbent cloud of living bane. If the active gales arise, they arise only to stir the seeds of disease, and diffuse the fatal contagion far and near. Unhappy people! The plague, that severer minister of divine indignation, fixes her headquarters in their blasted provinces; and sends death abroad "on his pale horse," Rev. vi. 8, to empty their houses, depopulate their towns and crowd their graves.

Our island is seldom visited with either of these dreadful judgments; and has never sustained any very considerable calamity from

* A very little excursion of thought will easily convince the reader, that there is no period of time, in which some of these calamities do not befal our fellow-creatures, in one part of the world or another.

† Give me any plague, says an apocryphal writer, but the plague of my heart, Ecclus. xxv. 13. Upon which judicious and weighty apothegm, Masinissa's speech in Mr. Thomson's Sophonisba, is a very pertinent and affecting paraphrase;

O! save me from the tumult of the soul!
From the wild beast within!—For circling sands,
When the swift whirlwind whelms them o'er the lands;
The roaring deeps, that to the clouds arise,
While thwarting thick the mingled lightning flies;
The monster-brood, to which this land gives birth,
The blazing city, and the gaping earth,
All deaths, all tortures in one pang combined,
Are gentle to the tempest of the mind!

* There is a remakable passage in Psal. lviii. 9, which seems to denote some such unexpected, but speedy and inevitable doom. The sense is darkened not a little by the version admitted into our liturgy. I believe the true translation may be seen in the following, and the true meaning learned from the interwoven paraphrase.—"Speedily, or before your pots can perceive the warmth of blazing thorns, shall he that ruleth over all sweep away the wicked; sweep him away by a stroke of righteous indignation, as by a fierce and mighty tempest; so that, even from the fulness of his sufficiency, and the height of his prosperity, he shall be plunged into utter destruction.—The Hebrew word, which is very unhappily rendered raw, signifies a state of prosperity or pleasurable enjoyment, 1 Sam. xxv. 6. The whole verse, in a gradation of striking images, gives us a most awful display of divine vengeance; vengeance quite sudden, utterly irresistible, and overtaking the secure sinner, amidst all the caresses of what the world calls fortune.

he former. However, let us not be presumptuously secure. We have not long ago received an awful warning. The road has been shaken; or rather the sword has been brandished over our territories. Who can forget the general consternation which seized our metropolis on occasion of the late earthquake? And not without reason: For, of all divine visitations, this is the most terribly vindictive. The whirlwind is slow in its progress, war is gentle in its assaults, even the raging pestilence is a mild rebuke, compared with the inevitable, the all-overwhelming fury of an earthquake. When it begins, it also makes an end, 1 Sam. iii. 12, puts a period, in a few minutes, to the work of ages, ruins all without distinction; and there is no defence from the destructive stroke.

Should Almighty vengeance stir up again those fierce subterranean commotions; should the Most High God bid strong convulsions tear the bowels of nature, and make the foundations of the world tremble like a leaf; what "O ye careless ones," Isaiah xxxii. 11, what will you do? whither will you fly? See! the pavement sinks under your feet. Your houses are tottering over your heads. The ground, on every side, cracks and opens like a gaping grave; or heaves and swells like a rolling sea. "A noise of crashing," Zeph. i. 10, is heard from without, occasioned by the rending streets, and falling structures. Thunders, infernal thunders,* bellow from beneath, mingled with despairing shrieks and dying groans from those wretched creatures, who are jammed between the closing earth, or going down alive into the horrible pit.† Where now will you fly? To your strong towers? They were shattered in pieces.—To the strong rocks? They were thrown out of their place.—To the open fields? They are a frightful gulf, yawning to devour you. Wherever you fly; in the wildness of your distraction, wherever you seek for shelter; it shall be, "as if a man fled from a lion and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand upon the wall, and a serpent bit him." Amos v. 19.

Yet there is one place of refuge, which will prove an inviolable sanctuary, and a perfect security. I mean, the great, the gracious, the adorable Redeemer's righteousness. Hither let us betake ourselves. Now, before the day of desolation cometh, let us betake ourselves to this stronghold. Then shall we have no reason to fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea. For thus saith God, the omnipotent and faithful God: "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem. The heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord Jesus Christ will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel iii. 15, 16. Or, if the true believer is involved in the same undistinguished ruin with the ungodly, even this shall turn to his gain. It shall exempt him from the lingering pains and the melancholy solemnities of a dying bed. Like Elijah's fiery chariot, it shall speedily waft his soul to the bosom of his Saviour; while the hideous cavern, that whelms his body in the centre, shall be its chamber of rest till the beloved Bridegroom comes, and the day of resurrection dawns.

We lift up our eyes, and behold the radiant colours which flush the forehead of the morning; we turn, and gaze upon the no less beautiful tinges, which impurple the cheek of evening. We throw around our view, and are delighted with numberless forms of fertility, which both decorate and enrich our plains: whereas, other countries are over-run with immense swarms of locusts, which intercept, wherever they fly, the fair face of day; and destroy, wherever they alight, the green treasures of the ground.

Ah! what avails it, that the laborious hind sows his acres, or the skilful husbandman

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* Before the overthrow of Catania by an earthquake, a noise was heard, vast and horrid, as if all the artillery in the world was discharged at once.

† Very memorable, and equally tremendous, is the account of the earthquake, that visited Sicily, in the year 1693.—It shook the whole island. The mischief it caused is amazing. Fifty-four cities and towns, besides an incredible number of villages, were either demolished, or greatly damaged. Catania, one of the most famous and flourishing cities in the kingdom, was entirely destroyed. Of 18,914 inhabitants, 18 000 perished.

Another earthquake, almost as dreadful, and in the same year, spread desolation through the colony of Jamaica. In two minutes time, it shook down, and laid under water, nine tenths of the town of Port-Royal. In less than a minute, three quarters of the houses, and the ground they stood on, together with the inhabitants, were quite sunk; and the little part left behind was no better than heaps of rubbish. The shock was so violent, that it threw people down upon their knees or their faces, as they were running about for shelter. The ground heaved and swelled like a rolling sea; and several houses, still standing, were shuffled some yards out of their places. The earth would crack and yawn; would open and shut, quick and fast. Of which horrid openings, two or three hundred might be seen at once. In some whereof, the people went down and were seen no more. In some they descended, and rose again in other streets, or in the middle of the harbour. Some swiftly closing, seized the miserable creatures, and pressed them to death; leaving their heads or half their bodies above ground, to be a spectacle of terror, and a prey to dogs. Out of others would issue whole rivers of water, spouted to a great height in the air, and threatening a deluge to that part which the earthquake spared. Scarce a planting-house or sugar-work was left standing in all the island. Two thousand lives were lost, and a thousand acres of land sunk. The whole was attended with frightful noises, with brimstone blasts, and offensive smells. The noisome vapours belched forth, corrupted the air, and brought on a general sickness; which swept away more than three thousand of those who escaped the fury of the earthquake. See CHAMB. *Dict.* on the word *Earthquake.*

prunes his vineyard? that spring, with her prolific moisture, swells the bud; or, with her delicate pencil, paints the blossom? Nor grain, nor fruit, can hope for maturity, while these rapacious and baleful creatures infest the neighbourhood. They ravage the gardens. They strip the trees, and shave the meadows. Scarce a single leaf remains on the boughs, or so much as a single stalk in the furrows. "A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth; the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing can escape them." Joel ii. 3.*

Now, let the dreadful artillery roar from all its iron throats, and disgorge the heaviest glut of mortal hail. Now, ye sons of slaughter, men "skilful to destroy," Ezek. xxi. 31, now hurl the sulphureous globes, which kindle into a hurricane of fire, and burst in ragged instruments of ruin.—To no purpose. The linked thunderbolts are turned into stubble, the bursting bombs are accounted as straw. These armies of the air laugh at all the formidable preparations of war; "and when they fall on the sword, they shall not be wounded."† Surprising and awful destination of the everlasting God! at once to stain the pride and chastise the guilt of man! These are a despicable and puny race; clad in no coat of mail, but crushed by the slightest touch. They wear neither sword nor scimitar, nor any offensive weapon: Yet, in spite of opposing legions, they carry on their depredations, and push their conquests. Terror marches in their front, and famine brings up the rear. They spread universal devastation as they advance; and frequently give the signal for the pestilence to follow. Potent armies lose their hands, and haughty tyrants tremble for their dominions.

O that the natives of Great Britain would bethink themselves! would break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by cherishing the influences of the divine Spirit! lest this "overflowing scourge," under which some neighbouring kingdoms have severely smarted, should be commissioned to visit our borders, and avenge the quarrel of its Maker's honour. Distant as those countless legions are, with interposing seas between; yet, if God lift up a standard from far, or but hiss* unto them from the ends of the earth, "they come with speed swiftly." Who will convey this wish to the ears, who will transmit it to the hearts of my countrymen? that our land may always appear as it does at present, like the darling of Providence; may always resound with the voice of joy, and be filled with the fruits of plenty; may always wear the robe of beauty, and be adorned with the smile of peace.

How great are the advantages of peace! said Theron. Peace, at her leisure, plans, and leads our industry to execute, all the noble and commodious improvements, which we behold on every side. Peace sets the mark of property on our possessions, and bids justice guarantee them to our enjoyment. Peace spreads over us the banner of the laws, while we taste, free from outrage, and secure from injury, the milk and honey of our honest toil.†—Amidst the tumultuous confusions of war, who could have a heart to contrive, or a hand to accomplish, any such works of dignity and use? In those days of darkness and distraction, how languid to the sight are all the dewy landscapes of spring? How insipid to the ta are all the delicious flavours of autu

* A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth. This is one of those bold and expressive metaphors, in which the Hebrew language delights, and by which it is eminently distinguished. It signifies a total devastation of the vegetable produce; such as must ensue, if a raging and resistless fire attended the progress of these pernicious animals; burning with such vehement impetuosity, that none could quench it; spreading such extensive havoc, that nothing could escape it.

† The prophet Joel, foretelling the plague of locusts, gives, under the image of an embattled host, a most alarming display of their terrible appearance; their impetuous progress; the horrible dread they raise, as they advance; and the irreparable mischief they leave, as they depart; adding, among other amazing circumstances, When they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. Which implies, I apprehend, that no method of slaughter should prove destructive to their troops; or, that every expedient, contrived for their suppression, should be utterly baffled; being, through their immense numbers, as invincible, as if every one was absolutely invulnerable. For, though millions and millions should perish by the weapons of war; even such blow, in reference to their whole collective body, should scarce be perceived as a loss, scarce be felt as a wound; neither diminishing their strength, nor retarding their march, Joel. ii. 8.

* "Hiss unto them," Isa. v. 26. With great significancy, and peculiar grandeur, the prophet applies this expression to the Lord God of Hosts influencing the most powerful armies; q. d. They come without a moment's delay, and from the remotest regions of the earth, to execute all his pleasure. Formidable and innumerable as they are, they come, I say not upon his repeated injunctions, or at his strict command, but at the first, the very smallest intimation of his will; such as the shepherds use to their flocks, such as the bee-men, of old, to their swarms; or such as we in these days to some of our domestic animals. The Hebrew word I would not translate, at his whistle: because this phrase, in our language, creates a vulgar sound, and conveys a low idea; but such is the import of the original; which denotes all that unconcerned ease of action, without any of the offensive familiarity of diction.

† "Pax optima rerum," says the Latin poet. But the Orientals, I think, discover the most superlative esteem for this blessing, by making it the constant form of their salutations, and the subject of their most cordial wishes for their friends: "Peace be unto thee." In this short sentence, they seem to have comprised a whole volume of mercies; meaning by their single שלום all that the Greeks expressed by their χαιρειν, υγιαινειν, ευπραττειν; *i. e.* a confluence of that joy of mind, that health of body, that prosperity of outward circumstances which complete the happiness of mankind.

We have a fine description of peace, and its various blessings, 1 Maccab. xiv. 8, 9, &c. The picture is very exact, though perfectly artless. Nothing should hinder me from transcribing the passage, but a fear of being too diffusive in my notes. Lest the reader who expects a treat, should complain of a glut; or have reason to object, that the sideboard is more copiously furnished than the table.

When the nation is overrun with armies, and embroiled in slaughter, "a trembling of heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind," Deut. xxviii. 65, are the dismal distinction of the times. Instead of a calm acquiescence in our portion, our very life hangs in continual suspense.

But what are all the benefits of external peace, though displayed in the fairest light, and enlivened by the strongest contrasts; what are they all, compared with the blessings of the gospel? by which sinners may have "peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

This, resumed Aspasio, suggests a fresh instance of happiness, which others want, and we possess; an instance never to be omitted in our catalogue of peculiar mercies; I might add, never to be forgotten by any Christian on any occasion. While many kingdoms of the earth are ignorant of the true God, and know neither the principles of piety, nor the paths of felicity; "the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give the knowledge of salvation, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." While millions of rebellious angels, cast from their native thrones, are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; we, though rebellious and apostate sinners of mankind, are delivered from the wrath to come. The holy Jesus (blessed be his redeeming goodness!) has endured the cross, and despised the shame, on purpose to rescue us from those doleful and ignominious dungeons, where the prisoners of almighty vengeance

> ——Converse with groans,
> Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
> Ages of hopeless end. MILTON.

Yes, my dear Theron, let me repeat your own important words: "What are all the benefits of external peace, though displayed in the fairest light, and enlivened by the strongest contrasts—what are they all, compared with the blessings of the gospel?" This brings the olive-branch from heaven, and glad tidings of reconciliation with our offended God. This composes the tumult of the mind; disarms the warring passions; and regulates the extravagant desires. This introduces such an integrity of heart, and benevolence of temper, as constitute the health of the soul. This spreads such an uniform beauty of holiness through the conduct, as is far more amiable than the most engaging forms of material nature.

O! that thou wouldst bow the heavens! that thou wouldst come down, celestial Visitant, and make thy stated, thy favourite abode in our isle! that every breast may be animated with thy power; and every community, every individual, may wear thy resplendent badge! Then shall it be the least ingredient of our public felicity, that the sword of slaughter is beaten into a ploughshare, and the once bloody spear bent into a pruning-hook. It shall be the lowest upon the list of our common blessings, that "violence is no more heard in our land, wasting and destruction within our borders. Our very officers will be peace, and our exactors* righteousness. We shall call" (and the event will correspond with the name) "our walls salvation, and our gates praise." Then shall every harp be taken down from the willows, and every voice burst into a song. —"In other climes"—will be the general acclamation—

"In other climes, let myriads of curious insects spin the delicate thread, which softens into velvet, stiffens into brocade, or flows in glossy sattin; which reflects a lovelier glow on the cheek of beauty, and renders royalty itself more majestic. We are presented with infinitely finer robes, in the imputed righteousness of our Redeemer, and the inherent sanctification of his Spirit; which beautify the very soul, and prepare it for the illustrious assembly—of saints in light—of angels in glory.

"Let eastern rocks sparkle with diamonds, and give birth to gems of every dazzling tincture. We have hid in the field of our Scriptures, the 'Pearl of great price; the white and precious stone,' Rev. ii. 17, of perfect absolution; a diadem which will shine with undiminished lustre, when all the brilliant wonders of the mind are faded, extinguished, lost.

"Let richer soils nourish the noblest plants, and warmer suns concoct their exquisite juices;—the lemon, pleasingly poignant; the citron, more mildly delicious; or that pride of vegetable life, and compendium of all the blandishments of taste, the pine-apple. We enjoy far more exalted dainties, in having access to the "Tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations," Rev. xxii. 2, whose boughs are replenished with a never-failing abundance of heavenly fruits; and the nutriment they dispense is bliss and immortality.

"Let Iberian vines swell the translucent cluster, and burst into a flood of generous wine; let the Tuscan olive extract the fat-

* Isa. lx. 17. Officers and exactors signify persons vested with public authority, who have it in their power to rule with rigour. But these, instead of abusing their power, shall conduct the administration with all possible equity and gentleness; with a paternal tenderness, rather than a magisterial austerity; so that, though the title and office of exactor may remain, nothing of the domineering insolence, or oppressive severity, shall continue. The prophet, who always delivers his sentiments with the utmost emphasis, says, They shall be, not barely peaceable and righteous, but possessed of these qualities in the highest degree. Or, which implies more than any words can express, they shall be peace and righteousness itself. The same beautiful figure is used in the next clause, which describes the inviolable security of the city, together with the universal joy and piety of the inhabitants.

ness of the earth, and melt into a soft mellifluous stream: We shall neither envy nor covet these inferior gifts, so long as we may draw water out of the wells of salvation; so long as we may receive that unction from the Holy One," 1 John ii. 20, those influences of the Comforter, which not only make a cheerful countenance, but gladden the very heart; imparting such a refined satisfaction, as the whole world cannot give—such a permanent satisfaction, as no calamities can take away.

"Let Ethiopian mountains be ribbed with marble, and Peruvian mines embowelled with gold: We want neither the impenetrable quarry, nor the glittering ore; having, in our adored Messiah a sure foundation for all our eternal hopes, and an inexhaustible fund of the divinest riches.

"Be it so, that our Isis is but a creeping drop, and the Thames itself no more than a scanty rivulet, compared with the magnificent sweep of the Ganges, or the stupendous amplitude of Rio de la Plata.* The wretched natives, even on the banks of those stately rivers, are at a distance from all the springs of true consolation: whereas we have a fountain, we have a river, that issues from the ocean of eternal love. With incomparable dignity, and with equal propriety, it is styled, 'the river of life.' Rev. xxii. 1. It visits the house of the mourner, and revives the spirit of the sorrowful. It makes glad the city, and makes happy the servants of our God: It quickens even the dead; and every human creature that drinks of its water lives for ever.

"Let Asiatic islands boast their mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincense; let Arabian groves, with a superior liberality, distil their healing gums, and ripen for vigorous operation their vital drugs. We have a more sovereign remedy than their most powerful restoratives, in the great Mediator's atoning blood; we have a more refreshing banquet than all their mingled sweets, in commemorating his passion, and participating his merits.

"In short, we have an equivalent, far more than an equivalent, for all those choice productions which bloom in the gardens, or bask in the orchards of the sun. We have a gospel, rich in precious privileges, and abounding with inestimable promises: we have a Saviour, full of forgiving goodness, and liberal of renewing grace; at whose auspicious approach, fountains spout amidst the burning desart; under whose welcome footsteps, the sandy waste smiles with herbage; and beneath his potent touch, 'the wilderness buds and blossoms as a rose,' Isa. xxxv. 1. Or, to speak more plainly, the desolate and barren soul brings forth those fruits of the Spirit, which are infinitely more ornamental than the silken gems of spring; infinitely more beneficial than the salubrious stores of autumn.

"We have a Saviour,—tell it out among the Heathen, that all the nations on earth may partake of the gift, and join in the song—a Saviour we have, whose radiant eye brightens the gloomy paths of affliction; whose efficacious blessing makes 'all things work together for the good of his people,' Rom. viii. 28. Death, gilded by his propitious smile, even death itself looks gay. Nor is the grave, under his benign administration, any longer a den of destruction, but a short and shady avenue to those immortal mansions, whose 'foundations are laid with sapphires; whose windows are of agate; the gates of carbuncle; and all the borders of pleasant stones.'" Isa. liv. 11, 12.

Pardon my rhapsody, dear Theron. Your own remark, added to the grand and lovely views, have warmed, have animated, have almost transported me.—Theron answered not a word, but seemed fixed in thought. While he is indulging his contemplation, we may just observe some other peculiarities of the prospect.

Here and there, a lonesome cottage scarcely lifts its humble head. No pompous swell of projecting steps surrounds the door; no appendent wings of inferior offices skirt the edifice; no stately hall, slabbed with marble, and roofed with sculpture, receives the gazing stranger: but young-eyed Health, and white-robed Innocence, with sweet-featured Contentment, adorn the habitation; while Virtue lends her graces, and Religion communicates her honours, to dignify the abode; rendering the blameless hut superior in real majesty to a dissolute court.

At some distance appear the hoary remains of an ancient monastery. Sunk beneath the weight of revolving years, the once venerable fabric is levelled with the dust. The lofty and ornamented temple lies rudely overgrown with moss, or still more ignobly covered with weeds. The walls, where sainted imagery stood, or idolized painting shone, are clasped with twining ivy, or shagged with horrid thorn. Through aisles, that once echoed to the chanter's voice, mingled with the organ's majestic sound, the hollow winds roar, and

* This river is near two hundred miles broad, where it discharges itself into the sea. It pours such an immense quantity of the liquid element into the Atlantic Ocean, that fresh water may be taken up for the space of many a league. It continues thus amazingly vast through a course of six hundred miles; when it divides into two mighty branches, the Parana and the Paraguay, which, having run in separate channels, several thousand miles along the country, unite at last, and form, by their conflux, this magnificent and spacious stream, which is supposed to be the largest in the world. To conceive a proper idea of its prodigious dimensions, we may imagine a current of waters taking its rise beyond Jerusalem; and, after having received all the rivers of Europe into its capacious bed, making its entry on the British ocean, by a mouth extended from Dover to Bristol.

the dashing storm drives. Where are now the silent cells, the vocal choirs, the dusky groves, in which the romantic saints prolonged their lonely vigils by the midnight taper; or poured their united prayers before the lark had waked the morn; or strolled, in ever-musing melancholy, along the moonlight glade? Surely those mouldering fragments now teach (and with a much better grace, with a much stronger emphasis) what formerly their unsocial and gloomy residentiaries professed;—they teach the vanity of the world, and the transitory duration of all that is most stable in this region of shadows.

Behold, on yonder eminence, the rueful memorials of a magnificent castle. All dismantled, and quite demolished, it gives a shading of solemnity to the more lively parts of nature's picture; and attempers the rural delight with some touches of alarming dread.—War, destructive war, has snatched the scythe from the hand of Time, and hurried on the steps of Destiny. Those broken columns, and battered walls; those prostrate towers, and battlements dashed to the ground, carry evident marks of an immature downfall. They were built for ages, and for ages might have stood a defence and accommodation to generations yet unborn, if haply they had escaped the dire assaults of hostile rage. But what vigilance of man can prevent the miner's dark approach? or what solidity of bulwark can withstand the bellowing engine's impetuous shock?

Those, perhaps, were the rooms in which licentious Mirth crowned with roses the sparkling bowl, and tuned to the silver-sounding lute the syren's inchanting song. Those, the scenes of voluptuous indulgence, where Luxury poured her delicacies; where Beauty, insidious Beauty, practised her wiles, and spread with bewitching art her wanton snares. Now, instead of the riotous banquet, and intrigues of lawless love, the owl utters her hated screams by night, and the raven flaps her ominous wing by day. Where are the violet couches, and the woodbine bowers, which fanned with their breathing sweets, the polluted flame? The soil seems to suffer for the abuses of the owner. Blasted and dishonoured, it produces nothing but ragged briars and noisome nettles, under whose odious covert the hissing snake glides, or the croaking toad crawls: Fearful intimation of that ignominious and doleful catastrophe which awaits the sons of riot! when their momentary gratifications will drop like the faded leaf, and leave nothing behind but pangs of remorse, keener far than the pointed thorn, and more envenomed than the viper's tooth.

Perhaps they were the beauteous and honoured abodes, where Grandeur and Politeness walked their daily round, attended with a train of guiltless delights; where amiable and refined Friendship was wont to sit and smile, looking love, and talking the very soul; where Hospitality, with Economy always at her side, stood beckoning to the distressed but industrious* poor, and showered blessings from her liberal hand. But war, detested war, has stretched over the social and inviting seat "the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." Isa. xxxiv. 11. Now, alas! nothing but desolation and horror haunt the savage retreat. The ample arches of the bridge, which so often transmitted the wondering passenger along their pensile way, lie buried in the dreary moat.—Those relics of the massy portals, naked and abandoned, seem to be-

* I say distressed but industrious poor; because I would not be understood as encouraging in any degree the relief of our common beggars. Towards the former, I would cultivate a tender and ever-yearning compassion; I would anticipate their complaints; and, as a sacred writer directs, would even seek to do them good. But as to the latter, I frankly own, that I look upon it as my duty to discourage such cumberers of the ground. They are, generally speaking, lusty drones; and their habitual begging is no better than a specious robbing of the public hive. For such sturdy supplicants who are able to undergo the fatigue of travelling; able to endure the inclemencies of the weather, and consequently much more able, were they equally willing, to exercise themselves in some species of laudable industry;—for these, the house of correction would be a far more salutary provision than any supply from our table: and confinement to labour, a much more beneficial charity than the liberality of the purse.

We should remember, that they should be taught that the law ordained by the court of heaven is: "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." If then we contribute to support them in idleness, do we not counteract and frustrate this wise regulation established by the great Sovereign of the universe? Is it not also a wrong to the deserving poor, if we suffer these wens on the body politic to draw off the nourishment which ought to circulate amongst the valuable and useful members! Money or victuals bestowed on these worthless wretches is not real beneficence, but the earnest-penny of sloth. It hires them to be good-for-nothing, and pays them for being public nuisances.

Let us then unanimously join to shake off these dead weights from our wheels, and dislodge these swarms of vermin from our state. Let us be deaf to their most importunate clamours, and assure ourselves that by this determined inflexibility, we do God, we do our community, we do them, the most substantial service. Should they implore by the injured name of Jesus—for the honour of the Lord Jesus, let us resolutely withhold our alms. Their meaning is—"I cannot go on in my present shameful and iniquitous course; I can no longer continue to act the wicked and slothful servant, unless you will administer some kindly pernicious assistance. For Christ's sake, therefore, assist me to dishonour my Christian name, and to live more infamously than the vilest beasts. For Christ's sake, help me to be a reproach and burden to my native country, and to persist in the way that leads to eternal destruction." This is the true import of their petitions; and whether the sanction of that most venerable name, added to such a request, should move our commiseration, or excite our abhorrence, let every thinking person judge.

I trust the reader will be so candid as to excuse this long digressive note, and do me the justice to believe that I am not pleading against, but for the real poor: not to harden any one's heart, but rather to direct every one's hand. Give out of gratitude to Christ, out of compassion to the needy, and be for ever blessed: but give not to incorrigible vagrants, to maintain impiety, and pamper indolence, lest it be demanded one day, Who hath required this at your hand? Lest, by supporting dissolute creatures, in that abandoned sloth which is the nurse of all vice, we become partakers of their guilt, and accessory to their ruin.

moan their melancholy condition. No splendid chariots, with their gay retinue, frequent the solitary avenues. No needy steps, with cheerful expectation, besiege the once bountiful gate. But all is a miserable, forlorn, hideous pile of rubbish.

Since riches so often take to themselves wings, and fly away; since houses great and fair, reel upon their foundations, and so tumble into dust; how wise, how salutary, is our divine Master's advice! "Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness; that when the world fails around you, when the springs of nature fail within you, they as witnesses of your charity, and vouchers for the sincerity of your faith, "may receive you into everlasting habitations," Luke xvi. 9. This is to lay up treasure "for ourselves," Matth. vi. 20; whereas, whatever else we amass, is for our heirs, for our successors, for we know not who. This wealth is truly and emphatically called "our own," Luke xvi. 12; it is an advowson; we have the perpetuity. Whereas, whatever else we possess, is ours only for a turn, or in trust.

See the dreadful, dreadful ravages of civil discord! Wherever that infernal fury stalks, she marks her steps in blood, and leaves opulent cities a ruinous heap.*—What thanks then, what ardent and ceaseless thanks, are due to that all-superintending, ever-gracious Lord, who has dashed the torch from her hand; has broke her murderous weapons, and driven the baleful pest from our island!—May the same Almighty goodness shortly banish the accursed monster from all lands!—banish the monster, with her hated associate Rapine, and her insatiable purveyor Ambition, to the deepest hell. Branded with everlasting infamy, and bound in adamantine chains, there let them gnash their teeth, and bite the inevitable curb! While Peace, descending from her native heaven, bids her olives spring amidst the joyful nations; and Plenty, in league with Commerce, scatters blessings from her copious horn. While Gladness smiles in every eye; and Love, extensive, universal love, levelling the partition-wall of bigotry, cements every heart in brotherly affection.

Near those heaps of havoc lies the spot, ever memorable and still revered, on which an obstinate and fatal battle was fought. The husbandman, as he breaks his fallow land, or rends the grassy turf, often discovers the horrid implements, and the more horrid effects, of that bloody conflict. He starts to hear his coulter strike upon the bosses of a rusty buckler, or gride over the edge of a blunted sword. He turns pale to see human bones thrown up before his plough; and stands aghast to think, that in cutting his furrow he opens a grave.—The grey-headed sire often relates to his grandsons, hanging with eager attention on the tale, and trembling for the event—relates the dismal, the glorious deeds of that important day:—How the fields, now covered with waving crops, were then loaded with mangled and ghastly corpses; how the pastures, now green with herbage, were then drenched and incrimsoned with human gore.

"On that extended common," he says, "where the busy shepherd is erecting his hurdled citadel, the tents were spread, and the banners displayed; the spears bristled in air, and the burnished helmets glittered to the sun.—On yonder rising ground, where the frisking lambs play their harmless frolics, stood the martial files, clad in mail, and ranged in battle array; stood war, with all its collected horrors, like some portentous cloud, ready to burst into an immediate storm.—On the nearer plain, where the quiet steed grazes in safety, and those sober oxen chew the juicy herb, the fierce encounter mixed. There, the javelins, launched from nervous arms, and aimed by vengeful eyes, flew and re-flew, whizzing with death. The arrows lightened* from the strings, and drenched their keen points, and dipped their feathery wings in blood. Soon as this shower of

* The effects of what Virgil calls *bella, horrida bella,* were never displayed in colours that glow, and with figures that alarm, like those which are used by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. iv. 19, &c. As this is perhaps the greatest master-piece of the kind, the reader will permit me to enrich the notes with a transcript of the passage.

First we see, or rather we feel, the effects of war on the human mind; the keenest anguish, and the deepest dismay. "My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace: because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the land is spoiled. Suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?"

Then we see the dismal devastations of war; and who does not shudder at the sight? the whole country laid in ruins! deprived of all its ornaments, and all its inhabitants! reduced to a solitude, and a chaos. "I beheld the earth, and lo it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.—I beheld the mountains, and lo! they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.—I beheld, and lo! there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.—I beheld, and lo! the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down, at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger.

If, after all this profusion of imagery, bold and animated even to astonishment, we can have any relish for the cold correctness of a Heathen Genius, we may find something of the same nature in Horace, lib. 2. Od. 1.

* Hab. iii. 11. The original words, literally translated, present us with that beautifully-bold figure, the "lightning of thy spear;"—which, with innumerable other graces of speech, that give dignity and spirit to our modern compositions, are borrowed from the language of Zion; are transplanted from the school of the prophets. If we start into a pleasing amazement, at Homer's δουρ μαινεται; have we not equal reason to be charmed and surprised at Nahum's החזללו הרכבו? every chariot raged with violence and impetuosity—was eager, was even mad to destroy. Nah. ii. 5.

missive steel ceased, instantly outsprung thousands of flaming swords. They clash on the brazen shields, they cut their way through the riven armour, and sheath their blades in many a gallant dauntless heart. Here, on this distinguished level, the proud presumptuous enemy, confident of victory, and boasting of their numbers, poured in like a flood. There, a bold determined battalion, of which myself was a part, planted themselves like a rock, and broke the fierce attack.

"Then," adds the brave old warrior, "then the coward herd fled before the vengeance of our conquering arms. Then, these hands strewed the plains with a harvest, different far from their present productions. Then the fathers, smitten with inexpressible dread, looked not back on their children,* though shuddering at the lifted spear, or screaming under the brandished sword. The fathers looked not back on their children, though they fell among the slain, gashed with deadly wounds; or lay expiring, in groans of agony, under our feet."

We leave the warrior to repeat his shocking story, and enjoy his savage satisfaction. For calmer scenes and softer delights, we willingly leave him: The eye is pleased with the elegant gaiety of the parterre; the ear is soothed with the warbling melody of the grove; but grand objects, and the magnificence of things, charm and transport the whole man. The mind on such occasions seems to expand with the prospect, and secretly exults in the consciousness of her greatness. Intent upon these large and excursive views, our friends scarce advert to the minuter beauties, which address them on every side. The swan with her snowy plumes, and loftily-bending head, notwithstanding all her superb air, and lordly state, rows by without exciting admiration, or obtaining notice. Equally unnoticed is both the array and the action of the duck; her glossy neck, and finely checkered wings; her diving into the deep, or her darting up into day. The swallow, skimming the air in wanton circles, or dipping her downy breast in the flood, courts their observation in vain. Nor could the finny shoals attract their regard, though they played before the boat in sportive chase; or, glancing quick to the surface, shewed their pearly coats bedropt with gold. Thus they, engaged in sublime, neglect inferior speculations! And if the sons of religion overlook the diminutive, transient, delusory forms of pleasure, which float on the narrow stream of time, or flit along the scanty bounds of sense; it is only to contemplate and enjoy a happiness in their God, which is elevated, substantial, and immortal. Compared with which, whatever the eye can survey, from pole to pole, from the rising to the setting sun, is a cockle-shell, a butterfly, a bubble.

From this open and enlarged scene, they enter the skirts of a vast, umbrageous, venerable forest. On either side, the sturdy and gigantic sons of earth rear their aged trunks and spread their branching arms. Trees of every hardy make, and every majestic form, in agreeable disorder and with a wild kind of grandeur, fill the ærial regions. The huge expansive roaming boughs unite themselves over the current, and diffuse "their umbrage, broad and brown as evening." The timorous deer start at the clashing of the waves. Alarmed with the unusual sound they look up and gaze for a moment, then fly into covert, by various ways, and with precipitate speed; vanishing, rather than departing, from the glade.

How awful to reflect, as they glide along the shelving shores, and the moss-grown banks, as they sail under the pendant shades of quivering poplar, of whistling fir, and the solemn sounding foliage of the oak, how awful to reflect: "These were the lonely haunts of the Druids two thousand years ago! Amidst these dusky mazes, and sympathetic glooms, the pensive sages strayed. Here they sought, they found, and, with all the solemnity of superstitious devotion, they gathered the misletoe.* Here the visionary recluses shunned the tumultuous ways of men, and traced the mysterious paths of Providence. Here they explored the secrets of nature, and invoked their fabled gods."

Sometimes wrapt in a sudden reverie of

* For this very striking and most terrific image, we are obliged to the prophet Jeremiah; who, in a few words, but with all the pomp of horror, describes the din of approaching war, and the consternation of a vanquished people. "At the notice of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands." Jer. xlvii. 3.

Not to mention the thunder-like sound of the diction; and that in language much less sonorous than the original; I appeal to every reader, whether the last circumstance does not awaken the idea of so tremendous a scene, and so horrible a dread as no words can express. Virgil has imitated the prophet's manner, in that very delicate descriptive touch; where, representing the prodigious alarm, excited by the yell of the infernal fury, he says,

"Et trepidæ matres pressere ad pectora natos."

That is, "Each frighted mother clasped the infant to her fluttering bosom."

No one, I believe, need be informed, that the panic is painted, with a very superior energy, by the poet of heaven. In the Pagan's draft, the effect of fear results from the constitution, and coincides with the bias of humanity: whereas in the prophet's picture, it counteracts, it suspends, it entirely overbears, the tenderest workings and strongest propensities of nature, though instigated, on one hand, by the most importunate calls of exquisite distress; and stimulated on the other, by all the solicitations of the most yearning compassion.

* If the reader please, he may see these pompous solemnities described in *Vanierii Præd. Rust.* p. 125, &c. where the curious narrative of Pliny is embellished with the harmonious numbers of Virgil.

thought, sometimes engaged in conversation on the solemn appearance of things, the voyagers scarce perceive their progress. Before they are aware, this venerable scene is lost, and they find themselves advanced upon the borders of a beautiful lawn. The forest retiring to the right hand, in the shape of a crescent, composed what Milton styles, "A verdurous wall of stateliest aspect;" and left in the midst an ample space for the flourishing of herbage.

Here, said Theron, if you please, we will alight, and leave the bearer of our floating sedan to pursue his ceaseless course; to enrich the bosom of other valleys, and lave the feet of other hills; to visit cities, and make the tour of counties; to reflect the image of many a splendid structure which adorns his banks, and which is far more amiable, to distribute, all along his winding journey, innumerable conveniences both for man and beast; acquiring, the farther he goes, and the more benefits he confers, a deeper flow, and a wider swell; to the remarkable confirmation of that beneficent maxim, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." Prov. xi. 24.

Theron and Aspasio, walking across the spacious amphitheatre, seated themselves at the extremity of the bend. Before them lay a verdant area, quite even, perfectly handsome, but far from gay. Green was all the dress, without any mixture of gaudy flowers, or glittering colours; only, now and then, a gentle breeze, skimming over the undulating mead, impressed a varying wavy gloss on its surface. The whole seemed to resemble the decent and sober ornaments of maturer age, when it has put off the trappings, and bid adieu to the levities of youth. The broad transparent stream ran parallel with the lips* of the channel; and drew a line of circumvallation, as it were, to guard the calm retreat. It appeared, where shaded with boughs, like a barrier of polished steel; where open to the sun, like a mirror of flowing crystal. The eastern edges of the river were barricaded with a kind of mountainous declivity, on whose rude and rocky sides the timorous rabbit burrowed, and the bearded goat browsed. Not far from the summit two or three fountains gushed, which, uniting their currents, as they trickled down the steep, formed a natural cascade: here it was lost in the rushy dells, or obscured by the twisting roots; there it burst again into view, and, playing full in the eye of day, looked like a sheet of spouting silver.

In this romantic retirement, said Theron, we are quite sequestered from society. We seem to be in a world of our own; and should almost be tempted to forget that we are encompassed with a kindred species, did not the music of those silver-tongued bells, poured from a distant steeple, and gliding along the gentle stream, bring us news of human kind.

Escaped from man and his busy walks, methinks we are come to the house of tranquillity. Such a deep undisturbed composure reigns all around! It is, as if some august personage was making his entrance, or some majestic being was upon the point to speak, and all nature stood fixed in attentive expectation. No place better fitted to cherish, or to inspire a contemplative sedateness.

Observe the simplicity and grandeur of those surrounding trees; the noble plainness of their verdure, and the prodigious stateliness of their aspect. What a speck are our gardens, and what a mere dwarf are our groves, compared with these vast plantations! Here is none of your nice exactness, but all is irregularly and wildly great. Here are no traces of the shears, nor any footsteps of the spade; but the handiwork of the Deity is apparent in all. Give me the scenes, which disdain the puny assistance of art, and are infinitely superior to the low toils of man. Give me the scenes, which scorn to bribe our attention with a little borrowed spruceness of shape, but, by their own native dignity, command our regard. I love the prospects which, the moment they are beheld, strike the soul with veneration, or transport it with wonder, and cry aloud in the ear of reason, "Ascribe ye greatness to our God." Such, I think, in a very eminent degree, is the forest,

> ——High waving o'er the hills,
> Or to the vast horizon wide diffus'd,
> A boundless deep immensity of shade.

Asp. Solomon's refined genius seems to have been fond of the same situation, and delighted with the same objects. Therefore, at a great expense, and in the most curious taste, he built "the house of the forest." Isaiah's divine imagination was charmed with the same grand spectacle. More frequently than any of the prophets, he derives his illustrations from it. One comparison I particularly remember: Speaking of the Assyrian king and his military forces, he likens them to such an assemblage of trees: Numerous, as their amazing multitudes; strong, as their massy trunks: Yet numerous and potent as they were, they should all be brought low, and laid in the dust. "For behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror, and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled; and he shall cut down the thickets of

* The Greek, which is above all languages happy in its beautiful variety of compound words, very neatly expresses this appearance by ισοχειλης της γης.

his forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one," Isaiah x. 33, 34.

Then he passes by a most beautiful transition to his darling topic, the redemption of sinners. He gives us, together with one of the finest contrasts* imaginable, a view of the Messiah and his great salvation. When those lofty cedars are levelled with the ground, "there shall come a rod," a twig shall spring "from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots," Isaiah xi. 1. which, notwithstanding its mean original and unpromising appearance, shall rear its head to the skies, and extend its shade to the ends of the earth.

Ther. You do well, Aspasio, to recall my roving thoughts. This magnificent solitude had captivated my imagination, and I was giving a loose to the usual sallies of my fancy; but with a willing compliance, I turn to a more excellent subject. Only I must assure you, that your remark awakens a painful idea in my mind, though a joyful one in your own: For my hopes, which were once high and lifted up, are now too much like that devoted prostrate forest.

Asp. My dear Theron, give me leave to say, they were never rightly founded. They were what Shakespeare calls, "the baseless fabric of a vision." Now the shadowy and transient hopes are demolished, that solid and everlasting joys may succeed. Let them rest on Christ, the infinitely glorious Redeemer, and they shall never be overthrown, never be removed any more.

Cast a look upon yonder ivy. What can be more feeble? It has not strength enough to withstand the slightest blast. Nay, if left to itself, its own weight would crush it to the earth. Yet, by twining around the oak, how high it rises, and how firm it stands! An emblem of our state, and a pattern for our imitation.—Thus let us, who in ourselves are nothing, of ourselves can do nothing, let us fly to Christ—rely on Christ—and as Barnabas (that true son of consolation) speaks, "cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ with full purpose of heart." Acts xi. 23. Let us determine to know nothing, to desire nothing, to depend on nothing, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Let this be the motto for our faith, this the language of our souls, "Christ is all." Then shall our virtues, though hitherto smitten with a blast, revive as the corn; then shall our hopes, though in themselves weaker than the ivy, mount like the cedars.

Ther. You can hardly imagine how a sense of guilt and unworthiness oppresses my mind. I am often discouraged, and cannot bring myself to be steadfast in faith, or joyful through hope.

Asp. You cannot bring yourself, but God Almighty's power and grace can bring to pass these desirable effects. And hear what the prophet says farther, upon the charming topic which introduced our discourse. Whenever the eloquent Isaiah undertakes to display a truth, he gives it all the energy, all the beauty, and every heightening touch which it is capable of receiving. This humble shoot, springing from the stem of Jesse, shall rise to such a pitch of elevation, that it shall be conspicuous far and near, and "stand for an ensign of the people." It shall be seen, not like a beacon upon the top of an hill, by the Israelites only, or the natives of a single territory; but, like the great luminaries in heaven, shall be visible in every country, and by the whole inhabited world. "To it shall the Gentiles seek," not only from the remotest, but from the most barbarous and idolatrous climes. These, even these persons, though savage in their nature, and detestable in their manners, shall be freely admitted, and find rest under his shadow. Nay, the refreshment which he yields, and the comfort which they receive, shall be not seasonable only, but of sovereign efficacy; "his rest shall be glorious." Isaiah xi. 10.

From this we learn, that all the blessings of Christ's mediation are designed for Gentiles—for the most abandoned and abominable sinners; that they are so full and consummate, as to create a calm of tranquillity, a "glorious rest," in the most troubled, afflicted, guilty consciences. And I dare challenge even my Theron's misgiving mind, to specify any want which is not supplied, any grievance which is not redressed, by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I formerly encountered your objections, let me now combat your scruples.

Ther. Sometimes I have a deep and distressing conviction of my extreme sinfulness. It is like a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear. It is like the vilest filth, and renders me odious to myself: how much more loathsome to the all-seeing eye? It appears like a debt of ten thousand talents, and I have nothing, no, not any thing to pay. Then I experience what the psalmist so pathetically laments; "My sins have taken such hold upon me, that I am not able to look up; yea, they are more in number than the hairs of my head:" and my heart is ready to fail; my hopes are upon the point to expire.

Asp. Then, Theron, fly to that just and righteous One, who is the strength of our hearts, the life of our hopes, and our portion for ever.

If sin is a sore burden; look unto

* This fine contrast, and that artful transition, are, by the injudicious division of the two chapters, very much obscured, if not quite lost to many readers. The chapters, I think, should by no means be separated; but the tenth and the eleventh, as a continuation of the same prophecy, should be united.

Christ, who bore it all in his own body on the tree, and removed, entirely removed, that tremendous load, which would otherwise have sunk the whole world into the nethermost hell. If sin renders us filthy; let us have recourse to that blood of sprinkling which cleanses, not from a few stains only, but from all guilt; by which the most defiled transgressors become fair as the fairest wool, nay, whiter than the virgin snows. Psal. li. 7. If sin is a debt,* subjecting us to wrath, and binding us over to punishment; let us confide in that gracious Surety who has taken the debt upon himself, and made it all his own; and not only so, but has paid it to the uttermost farthing, to the very last mite; so that justice itself can demand no more.

Let me confirm and illustrate this comfortable truth by a scriptural similitude. No similitudes are more exact, and none so striking. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins," Isa. xliv. 22. A little while ago, the whole expanse of yonder sky was covered with clouds. Nothing could more strongly represent a multitude of corruptions besieging the heart, and a multitude of iniquities overspreading the life. But where is now that immense arrangement of gloomy vapours? The sun has shown them, and the wind has swept them clean away. There are none, neither great nor small, remaining. From one end of the wide extended hemisphere to the other, we see nothing but the clear and beautiful blue of the firmament. So saith the Spirit of God to the true believer, so totally is your guilt, however horrid and enormous, done away through the dying Jesus.

Ther. It is not possible to conceive, nor will the whole creation afford, a more exquisitely fine comparison. Perhaps nothing can so emphatically describe the most prodigious multitude entirely obliterated, without the least trace of their former existence. But I am not only chargeable with past iniquities; I am also liable to daily miscarriages. I relapse into sin; and when I would do good, evil is present with me. Nay, my best hours are not free from sinful infirmities, nor my best duties from sinful imperfections, which like a worm at the core of the fruit, eat away the vigour of my graces, and tarnish the beauty of my services.

Asp. Because, through the frailty of your mortal nature, you cannot always stand upright; because even the just man falleth daily, and daily contracteth defilement; therefore "a fountain is opened for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. xiii. 1. The blood and atonement of Christ are compared to a heavenly fountain, in which polluted sinners may wash daily, wash hourly, and be constantly, perfectly clean. A cistern may fail, may be broken or exhausted; but it is the property of a real fountain, never to be dried up, always to yield its waters. Such is the efficacy of Christ's death; not to be diminished by universal and by incessant use. It "removes the iniquity of the land." Zech. iii. 9. "It takes away the sin of the world." John i. 29. It is new for our application every morning; new, for this blessed purpose, every moment. On which account it makes complete provision for our cleansing, our restoration, and our comfort. Especially, as it is not only sovereign in itself, and always free for our approach, but is ever pleaded by a great High-priest in our behalf. Therefore the inspired casuist directs us to this source of consolation under all the upbraidings of conscience, and all the remains of inbred depravity. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 1.

We:—St. John reckons himself in the number of those frail offending creatures, who stand in need of Christ, as a perpetual Intercessor. This is written, not to encourage us in the commission of sin, but that we may be the less discouraged under a sense of our infirmities. We have:—not we possibly may, but we actually have. A soul burdened with guilt cannot be satisfied, cannot be eased, with a bare perhaps. It is therefore positively affirmed, as a matter of established certainty, of which we should not admit a doubt. We have for our advocate:—not a mean person, but him who received an illustrious testimony from the most excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son." 2 Pet. i. 17. Not a guilty person, who stands in need of pardon for himself, but "Jesus Christ the righteous."—Not a mere petitioner, who relies purely upon liberality; but one who has merited, fully merited, whatever he asks: "he is the propitiation for our sins," has paid our ransom, and purchased our peace.—In consequence of which he claims, rather than asks our renewed, our irrevocable forgiveness. This he claims, not from an unrelenting Judge, but from his Father and our Father. And can such a plea meet with a repulse? Can

* By these three images, the Psalmist displays the horrible and destructive malignity of sin, together with the free nature and invaluable worth of evangelical forgiveness. Blessed is he whose transgression, as an insupportable load, is bore or taken away; whose sin, as being the most abominable filth, is covered; unto whom the Lord imputeth not that most ruinous of all debts, iniquity. It is pleasing to observe the vehemence and ardour, with which the royal penitent speaks on this favourite topic. He breaks out with a kind of holy abruptness, and pours his soul in a variety of warm expressions; as one who thought he could not possibly enter upon the subject too soon, nor dwell upon it too long, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.

such an advocate miscarry in his suit? If the prophets of old were reckoned "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof,"* 2 Kings ii. 12; xiii. 14. because, like their ancestor Jacob, they had power with God, and prevailed in prayer: O! what a defence, what a security, is the divinely-excellent, and ever-prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ!

"Your graces," you complain, "are sullied, and your services defective." Then, my dear friend, renounce them in point of confidence; and gladly receive, cordially embrace, the all-perfect righteousness of your Lord. So shall your justification be complete and your services, though deficient in themselves, be "accepted in the Beloved." I have somewhere seen, painted upon a flat surface, an awkward and disagreeable countenance: in which was nothing regular, nothing graceful, but every feature disproportionate. Yet this very face, reflected from a cylindrical mirror, has put off its deformity; the lineaments became well adjusted; symmetry connected every part, and beauty smiled throughout the whole. Like the former our virtues appear, when compared with the immaculate purity of God, or the sublime perfection of his law; but they acquire the amiableness of the latter, when presented to the Father by our divine Mediator, and recommended by his inconceivably precious oblation.†

Milton, taking his hint from the revelations of St. John, represents our great High-Priest in this glorious and delightful attitude; represents him offering up the supplications and penitential duties of our first parents; mixing with them the incense of his own merits, and thus interceding before the throne:—

> See, Father! what first fruits on earth are sprung
> From thy implanted grace in man! These sighs
> And prayers, which, in this golden censer mixed
> With incense, I thy Priest before thee bring.
> ——Now therefore bend thine ear
> To supplication; hear his sighs though mute!
> Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
> Interpret for him, me his advocate
> And propitiation. All his works on me,
> Good, or not good, ingraft: my merit those
> Shall perfect; and for these my death shall pay.*

The poet's words are very emphatical. Yet words can no more express the prevalence of our Lord's negotiation, than the picture of the sun can diffuse its splendour, or convey its warmth.

Ther. My spiritual wants are many. I have many duties to discharge, and many temptations to withstand; many corruptions to mortify, and many graces to cultivate, or rather to acquire. Yet have I no stock, and no strength of my own.

Asp. I rejoice that my Theron is sensible of his own indigence. The good Lord keep us both in this respect, as little children, whose whole dependence is upon their nurse's care, or their parent's bounty! Then may we, having such a sense of our poverty, and having a great High-Priest over the house of God, come boldly to the throne of grace. We may apply, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for all needful succour, and for every desirable blessing. If Solomon could say, "Lord, remember David, and all his trouble:" If Moses could say, "Lord remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thy servants:" how much more confidently may we say, "Lord, remember Jesus, the Son of thy love! remember Jesus, and all his sufferings; Jesus, and all his merits. Shall they be sent empty away, who have their Saviour's obedience to plead?" No verily. Though they are altogether unworthy in themselves, "yet worthy is the Lamb that was slain," for whose sake their petitions should be granted, and their every necessity supplied.

Let me repeat to you a most beautiful and encouraging portion of Scripture, which you may look upon, under all your wants, as a carte-blanche put into your hand by God all-sufficient: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High-Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Heb. x. 19—22.

The apostle, in this place, and throughout this whole epistle, alludes to the Mosaic ordinances, in order to show that the privileges of the Christian dispensation were typified by, yet are greatly superior to, those of the Jewish. Among the Jews, none but the high-priest was permitted to set a foot within the holy of holies; and he only on the solemn day of expiation: Whereas, all Christians are allowed to enter into the im-

* There is a peculiar beauty, and most apposite significancy, in this proverbial saying, as used by the ancient Israelites. Horses and chariots were deemed, in those ages, the principal strength of the battle, the most formidable apparatus of war. Of these the Israelites were entirely destitute. Their God had expressly forbidden them to multiply horses; and we never read of their bringing any considerable number of cavalry into the field. But, so long as they enjoyed the presence of their prophets, they wanted not this arm of flesh. They had more than an equivalent for chariots and horses, in the fervent, the effectual prayers of those holy men of God.

† They, the persons and performances of frail men, "shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, saith the Lord," Isa. lx. 7. Which is explained by St. Peter's comment; "Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter ii. 5. and still farther ascertained by St. Paul's practice, who, when he addresses the majesty of heaven with any petition, or presents the tribute of praise, presumes not to do either the one or the other, but in the blessed Mediator's name; because, secluded from this grand recommendation, they would be offensive to the awful Jehovah, "as smoke in his nostrils;" accompanied with it, they are acceptable, "as the sweet-smelling incense."

* Paradise Lost, *Book* xi. l. 22, &c.

mediate presence of the most high God; may have the nearest access to him who dwells in the heaven of heavens; and this, not once in the year only, but at all times, and on all occasions. The high-priest never made that awful approach but with the blood of a slaughtered animal: We have blood of infinitely richer value to atone for our failings and recommend our addresses, even the blood of the crucified Jesus. Aaron entered through the vail of the temple, a way which was soon to become antiquated, and for ever to be abolished: We enter by a far more noble way; by the flesh of our blessed Redeemer, given as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins; which way is both new and living, such as never waxes old, will subsist to the end of time, and leads to eternal life. —Trusting in this sacrifice, and entering by this way, which are consecrated on purpose for our use, we may not only draw near, but draw near "with boldness," with an humble filial confidence, and present our supplications with *faith*—with *assurance* of faith—with *full* assurance of faith.

How strong is the contrast, and how fine the gradation! how precious the doctrine, and how free the privilege? What shall we fear, if we believe this doctrine? what can we lack, if we improve this privilege! And why should not we believe the former, why should not we improve the latter? since they both are founded, not on any excellent endowments, not in any recommending actions of our own, but purely, solely, entirely on the blood of Jesus Christ.

Ther. There may come seasons of desertion when all graces are languid, if not dead; when the light of God's countenance is suspended, if not turned into darkness; and the man is more like a lifeless log than a zealous Christian. These frames of mind I have heard mentioned, and I begin to know something of them by experience.

Asp. Then, Theron, when you "walk in darkness and see no light" of sensible comfort, "trust in the name," the unchangeable grace, "of the Lord; and stay upon" the righteousness, the consummate righteousness, of "your God." Isaiah l. 10. This is not barely my advice, but the direction of an infallible guide. This agrees also with the character of a real Christian, as it is most exactly drawn by an unerring pen: "We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;"* no reliance on any thing of our own, either for present joy, or future glory.

To rely on the elevation of our spirits, or the enlargement of our devotion, is like building our house upon the ice, which may abide for a season, but, upon the first alteration of weather, ceases to be a foundation, and becomes "water that runneth apace:" Whereas, to derive our consolation from the Mediator's righteousness and Jehovah's faithfulness, is to build our edifice upon the rock, which "may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever." The former of these, even amidst all our changes, is invariably the same; the latter, notwithstanding all our unworthiness, is inviolably sure. Therefore the fruit of that righteousness is peace, and the effect of this faithfulness is, if not rapturous joy, yet "quietness and assurance for ever." Isaiah xxxii. 17.

So that, when it is winter in my soul, and there seems to be a dearth on all my sensible delights, I would still say with the Psalmist, "Why art thou so disquieted, O my soul? Christ is the same amidst all thy derelictions. 'He is a green fir-tree,' Hos. xiv. 8. which never loses its verdure. Under his shadow thou mayest always find repose. His merit and atonement are still mighty to save; they constitute an everlasting and infinite righteousness. The promises of God, through his mediation, 'are yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20; are unquestionably and inalienably thine."

Ther. It is very probable I may meet with afflictions—death in my family, or disease in my person. Disappointment may frustrate my designs. Providence may wear a frowning aspect, as though the Lord had a controversy with his sinful creature, and was making him to possess the iniquities of his youth. And what will be sufficient to support and to cheer in such a gloomy hour?*

Asp. The righteousness of Christ.—Nothing is so sovereign to calm our fears, and remove all apprehensions of the divine wrath. Apprehensions of the divine wrath would draw the curtains of horror around our sick-beds, and throw upon our languishing eye-lids the shadow of death;† but a believing improvement of Christ's satis-

* Phil. iii. 3. *Exactly drawn.*—Perhaps there is no where extant, a finer, a more complete, or so lively a picture of the true Christian. It is in miniature, I own; but it comprehends all the master-lines and every distinguishing feature. "We are they, who worship God in the spirit; with the spiritual homage of a renewed heart; with faith, love, resignation. "And rejoice in Christ Jesus;" in him look for all our acceptance with God; from him derive all the peace of our minds; and on him place all the hope of our final felicity. "And have no confidence in the flesh;" renouncing ourselves, in every view, as unprofitable servants; disclaiming all our own works and attainments, as defective services.

* The sufficiency of Christ's righteousness to answer all these important and delightful ends, is excellently displayed in Mr. Rawlin's sermons, on Christ the righteousness of his people; in which the public have seen the grand and amiable essentials of the gospel, delivered in masculine language, defended by nervous reasoning, and animated with a lively devotion.

† Alluding to that description of tribulation and anguish, which, I believe, no person of sensibility can read without shuddering: "My face is foul with weeping, and on my eye-lids is the shadow of death." Job xvi. 16.

faction for our offences, clears up the mournful scene, and takes away the sting of tribulation.

Attending to this great propitiation, the sufferer sees his sins forgiven, and his God reconciled. From whence he concludes, that the severest afflictions are only fatherly corrections; shall not exceed his ability to bear; and shall assuredly obtain a gracious issue. He can fetch comfort from that cheering word, "I will be with him in trouble;" and expect the accomplishment of that most consolatory promise, "I will deliver him, and bring him to honour." Psalm xci. 15. These supports have enabled the saints to kiss the rod, and bless the hand which chastised them; to possess their souls, not in patience only, but in thankfulness also; while they have looked inward, and discerned their absolute need of these bitter but salutary medicines; have looked upward, and beheld the cup in a most wise and tender Physician's hand; have looked forward, with a joyful hope, to that better world, where God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow, nor any more pain.

Ther. The last occasion of need is the trying hour of death, and the tremendous day of judgment. Will this righteousness carry us with safety through the darksome valley, and present us with acceptance at the dreadful tribunal?

Asp. It will, it will.—This silences all the curses of the law, and disarms death of every terror. To believe in this righteousness, is to meet death at our Saviour's side; or rather, like good old Simeon, with the Saviour in our arms. "They overcame," says the beloved disciple, they overcame the last enemy, not by natural fortitude, or philosophic resolution, but "by the blood of the Lamb," Rev. xii. 11; by a believing application of the victorious Redeemer's merit. "I know," adds the heroic apostle, "whom I have believed," 2 Tim. i. 12; I am assured, that my Jesus is infinitely faithful, and will not desert me; that his ransom is absolutely sufficient, and cannot deceive me. Therefore, with a holy bravery, he bids defiance to death; or rather, triumphs over it, as a vanquished enemy: "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!" 1 Cor. xv. 57. Nay, through the wonderful efficacy of Christ's propitiation, "death is ours," 1 Cor. iii. 22; not our foe, but our friend and deliverer. We may number it among our treasures; and rest satisfied that "to die, is gain."

What though our flesh see corruption? though this body, vile at present, be made viler still, by dwelling amidst worms, and mouldering in the dust? yet through his righteousness, who is the resurrection and the life, it shall shake off the dishonours of the grave; it shall rise to a new and illustrious state of existence; it shall be made like the glorious and immortal body of our triumphant Lord. If the body be so refined, so exalted, what will be the dignity, what the perfection, of the soul? or rather of soul and body both, when they are happily and indissolubly united at the resurrection of the just?—Shall they have any thing to fear when the judgment is set, and the books are opened? It is probable there will be no accusation, it is certain "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1. Who shall lay any thing to their charge? "It is God,"—not man, or angel, or any creature, but God—"that justifies them." The God whose law was broke, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, he himself pronounces them innocent, because their iniquities have been laid upon Christ; he himself pronounces them righteous, because they are interested in the obedience of their Redeemer; on these accounts, he himself pronounces them blessed, and gives them an abundant entrance into the joy of their Lord.

But what can express, or who can imagine their happiness, when they take up their abode in the palaces of heaven, amidst the choirs of angels, and under the light of God's countenance! when they possess the "hope of righteousness," Gal. v. 5.; when they wear "the crown of righteousness," 2 Tim. iv. 8. and receive that great, that eternal salvation, which is an adequate recompense for the humiliation and agonies of "Jesus Christ the righteous," 1 John ii. 1.

Come then, my dear Theron, let us henceforth be as branches ingrafted into the heavenly Vine; derive all our sap, all our moisture, all our consolation, from his fulness. Let us live upon our all-sufficient Redeemer, as the Israelites subsisted on their manna from heaven, and their waters from the rock, and not wish for other, as we cannot possibly enjoy better sustenance.

Ther. Is this the meaning of our Lord's exhortation, when he shews the necessity of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood?

Asp. It is the very same. A repeated and incessant application of our Saviour's merits, for all the purposes of piety and salvation, is the kernel of this nut, the meaning of this metaphor. When we habitually advert to Jesus Christ, as dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification; performing all righteousness, that we may be entitled to an eternal crown; and interceding in heaven, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God; then we eat his flesh, and drink his blood; then we derive a life of solid comfort, and real godliness,

from the mediatorial offices; just as we derive the continuance of our natural life from the daily use of alimentary recruits.

Ther. Your discourse brings to my remembrance that magnificent and beautiful passage in scripture, where Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness. Your doctrine sets the comparison in a very advantageous light; gives it the utmost force and the greatest propriety. The righteousness of Christ, according to your account, is as extensively useful in the Christian life, as the beams of that grand luminary are in material nature. The sun fills the air; where it diffuses light, and creates day. The sun penetrates the ocean; from whence it exhales vapours, and forms the clouds. In the vegetable creation, the sun raises the sap, and protrudes the gems; unfolds the leaves, and paints the blossom; distends the fruit, and concocts the juices. Turn we to the animal world; the sun delights the eye, and gladdens the heart; it awakens millions of insects into being, and imparts that general joy which every sensible creature feels. Indeed there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Asp. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, that true and only Sun of Righteousness, arises on his people with healing in his wings, Mal. iv. 2; so various, so efficacious and so extensive are his influences. Like a sun, he enlightens and enlivens; like wings, he cherishes and protects; like a remedy, he heals and restores; and all, by virtue of his righteousness, on account of his righteousness. Nor can we doubt, nor need we wonder, if we consider its nature and its author. Its nature; it is consummately excellent, has every kind and every degree of perfection. Its author; it is the righteousness and obedience of that incomparable Person, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead.

It must therefore—you will permit me to sum up in a word what has been displayed at large,—it must be fully answerable to the demands of the law, even in its highest purity and utmost exactness. It is infinitely superior to the demerit of sin, and entirely absolves from all guilt, entirely exempts from all condemnation. It is a most valid and never-failing plea against the accusations of Satan, and the challenges of conscience. It establishes an undoubted title to every blessing, whether in time or in eternity, whether of grace or of glory. It is a sure support for the Christian, in an hour of desertion, and in the agonies of death. Casting anchor on this bottom, he may dismiss every fear, and ride out every storm. Leaning upon this staff, he may go down to the repose of the grave; and neither be appalled at the solemn harbingers of dissolution, nor terrified at its far more awful consequences. The merit of this righteousness, and the power of its Divine Author, will unseal the tomb; will bring forth the sleeping dust from the chambers of putrefaction, and build up the whole man into immortality and glory. By this he will be presented "without spot," Eph. v. 27.; presented faultless, Jude 24.; yea, be presented perfect, Col. i. 28., and with exceeding joy before the throne.

What a gift then is the righteousness of Christ! Blessed be God for all the indulgent dispensations of providence! Blessed be God for all the benefical productions of nature! But, above all, blessed be God for the trancendent and unspeakable gift of Christ—for the unsearchable and infinite treasures of "his righteousness."

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ASPASIO VINDICATED,

IN

ELEVEN LETTERS

FROM

MR HERVEY TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

PREFACE.

THE following letters were written by my late brother in answer to a piece which was first sent him from the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, by way of private letter, containing some remarks which that gentleman had made on reading Theron and Aspasio. When my brother had read it over, he thought it best to be silent, as it contained nothing which could materially affect his judgment in regard to the work it censured. For this reason, as well as for peace sake, he laid it by him unanswered. Mr. Wesley then published a pamphlet, which he entitled, a Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion; in which he printed the above-mentioned letter.

This my brother looked upon as a summons to the bar of the public, and upon this occasion, in a letter to a friend, dated June 23, 1758, writes as follows:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I little thought, when I put Mr. Wesley's manuscript into your hand, that I should see it in print so soon. I took very little notice of it, and let it lie by me several months, without giving it an attentive consideration.* It seemed to me so palpably weak, dealing only in positive assertions and positive denials, that I could not imagine he would adventure it into the world, without great alterations. But it is now come abroad, just as you received it, in a two shilling pamphlet, entitled, a Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion. Of this pamphlet, what he has wrote against me makes only a small part. Now, then, the question is, whether I shall attempt to answer it? Give me your opinion, as you have given me your assistance; and may the Father of mercies give you an increase of knowledge and utterance, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Between this and the October following, my brother began the letters contained in this volume, of which he thus speaks in another letter to his friend, dated October 24, 1758.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Let me repeat my thanks for the trouble you have taken, and for the assistance you have given me in relation to my controversy with Mr. Wesley. He is so unfair in his quotations, and so magisterial in his manner, that I find it no small difficulty to preserve the decency of the gentleman, and the meekness of the Christian, in my intended answer. May our divine Master aid me in both these instances, or else not suffer me to write at all."

When in the December following I was sent for to Weston, in the very last period of my brother's long illness, I asked him the evening before he died, "what he would have done with the letters to Mr. Wesley; whether he would have them published after his death?" He answered, "by no means, because he had only transcribed about half of them fair for the press, but as the corrections and alterations of the latter part were mostly in short-hand, it would be difficult to understand them, especially as some of the short-hand was entirely his own, and others could not make it out; therefore, he said, as it is not a finished piece, I desire you will think no more about it."

As these were his last orders concerning these letters, I thought it right to obey them, and therefore I withstood the repeated solicitations of many of his friends who wanted to have them printed; alleging the service they might be of to allay the groundless prejudices, which the *Preservative* might occasion in the minds of many against my brother's other writings, as well as the utility of them in general, as they contain so masterly a defence of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

But notwithstanding the regard I had for the persons who solicited the publication, I could not be persuaded to print the letters; and they never had appeared in

* Afterwards he read it again, and gave it, what he calls in the beginning of the first letter, "*a careful perusal.*"

public with my consent, had not a surreptitious edition of them lately made its way from the press, and was I not under a firm persuasion that it will be followed by more.

As this is the case, I think it my duty to the memory of my late brother, to send forth as correct an edition as I possibly can; for as to that which has appeared (from what editor I know not,) it is so faulty and incorrect, that but little judgment can be formed from it, of the propriety and force of my brother's answers to Mr. Wesley.

As to the unfairness of publishing my brother's letters without my consent, and the injustice to his memory, in sending so mangled a performance out under his name, they are too apparent to need any proof; and though the editor, as I have been informed, gave away the whole impression, so that it is plain, lucre was not the motive of his proceeding, and I would charitably hope he did it with a view of benefiting his readers, yet it is so like doing evil that good may come, as, in my opinion, to be quite unjustifiable.

However, as the only way now left to remedy in some sort what has been done, and to prevent a further imposition on the public from worse motives than actuated this publisher, I have called a friend to my assistance, and by this means present the reader with as perfect a copy of these letters, as can possibly be made out from the original manuscript in my hands.

That the reader may judge more clearly of the state of the controversy between my late brother and Mr. Wesley, I have thought it right to subjoin Mr. Wesley's letter, word for word, as it stands in the Preservative.

Mr. WESLEY'S LETTER.*

Dear Sir,—A considerable time since, I sent you a few hasty thoughts, which occurred to me on reading the Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio. I have not been favoured with any answer. Yet upon another and a more careful persual of them, I could not but set down some obvious reflections, which I would rather have communicated before those Dialogues were published.

In the first Dialogue there are several just and strong observations, which may be of use to every serious reader. In the second, is not the description often too laboured, the language too stiff and affected? Yet the reflections on the creation make abundant amends for this.

"Is justification more or less than God's pardoning and accepting a sinner through the merits of Christ?" That God herein "reckons the righteousness and obedience which Christ performed as our own," I allow, if by that ambiguous expression you mean only, as you here explain it yourself, "These are as effectual for obtaining our salvation, as if they were our own personal qualifications."

"We are not solicitous as to any particular set of phrases. Only let men be humbled, as repenting criminals at Christ's feet, let them rely as devoted pensioners on his merits, and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blissful immortality." Then for Christ's sake, and for the sake of the immortal souls which he has purchased with his blood, do not dispute for that particular phrase, the *imputed righteousness of Christ.* It is not scriptural, it is not necessary. Men who scruple to use, men who never heard the expression, may yet be humbled as repenting criminals at his feet, and rely as devoted pensioners on his merits. But it has done immense hurt. I have had abundant proof, that the frequent use of this unnecessary phrase, instead of furthering men's progress in vital holiness, has made them satisfied without any holiness at all; yea, and encouraged them to work all uncleanness with greediness.

"To ascribe pardon to Christ's passive, eternal life to his active righteousness, is fanciful rather than judicious. His universal obedience from his birth to his death, is the one foundation of my hope."

This is unquestionably right. But if it be, there is no manner of need to make the imputation of his active righteousness a separate and laboured head of discourse. O that you had been content with this plain scriptural account, and spared some of the Dialogues and Letters that follow!

The third and fourth Dialogues contain an admirable illustration and confirmation of the great doctrine of Christ's satisfaction. Yet even here I observe a few passages, which are liable to some exception.

"Satisfaction was made to the divine

* The quotations from Theron and Aspasio are distinguished by *double* inverted commas.

law." I do not remember any such expression in Scripture. This way of speaking of the law, as a person injured and to be satisfied, seems hardly defensible.

"The death of Christ procured the pardon and acceptance of believers, even before he came in the flesh." Yea, and ever since. In this we all agree. And why should we contend for any thing more?

"All the benefits of the new covenant are the purchase of his blood." Surely they are. And after this has been fully proved, where is the need, where is the use, of contending so strenuously for the imputation of his righteousness, as is done in the fifth and sixth Dialogues?

"If he was our substitute as to penal sufferings, why not as to justifying obedience?"

The former is expressly asserted in Scripture;—the latter is not expressly asserted there.

"As sin and misery have abounded through the first Adam, mercy and grace have much more abounded through the second. So that none can have any reason to complain." No, not if the second Adam died for all; otherwise all for whom he did not die, have great reason to complain. For they inevitably fall by the first Adam, without any help from the second.

"The whole world of believers" is an expression which never occurs in Scripture, nor has it any countenance there: The *world* in the inspired writings being constantly taken either in an universal or in a bad sense; either for the whole of mankind, or for that part of them who know not God.

"In the Lord shall all the house of Israel be justified." It ought unquestionably to be rendered, *by* or *through* the Lord: This argument therefore proves nothing.—"Ye are complete in him." The words literally rendered, are, *Ye are filled with him.* And the whole passage, as any unprejudiced reader may observe, relates to sanctification, not justification.

"They are accepted for Christ's sake; this is justification through imputed righteousness." That remains to be proved. Many allow the former, who cannot allow the latter.

"*Ther.* I see no occasion for such nice distinctions and metaphysical subtleties."

"*Asp.* You oblige us to make use of them by confounding these very different ideas, that is, Christ's active and passive righteousness."

I answer, we do not confound these; but neither do we separate them; nor have we any authority from Scripture, for either thinking or speaking of one separate from the other; and this whole debate on one of them separate from the other, is a mere metaphysical subtlety.

"The righteousness which justifies us, is already wrought out." A crude unscriptural expression! "It was set on foot, carried on, completed." O vain philosophy! The plain truth is, Christ lived and tasted death for every man; and through the merits of his life and death, every believer is justified.

"Whoever perverts so glorious a doctrine, shews he never believed." Not so; They who turn back as a dog to the vomit, had once escaped the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of Christ.

"The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." This is unquestionably true. But the nice, metaphysical doctrine of imputed righteousness, leads not to repentance, but to licentiousness.

"The believer cannot but add to his faith, works of righteousness." During his first love, this is often true. But it is not true afterwards, as we know and feel by melancholy experience.

"We no longer obey, in order to lay the foundation for our final acceptance." No; that foundation is already laid in the merits of Christ. Yet we obey, in order to our final acceptance through his merits. And in this sense, by obeying we lay a good foundation, that we may attain eternal life.

"We establish the law; we provide for its honour, by the perfect obedience of Christ." Can you possibly think St. Paul meant this? That such a thought ever entered into his mind? The plain meaning is, we establish both the true sense and the effectual practice of it; we provide for its being both understood and practised in its full extent.

"On those who reject the atonement, just severity." Was it ever possible for them not to reject it? If not, how is it just to cast them into a lake of fire, for not doing what it was impossible they should do? Would it be just (make it your own case) to cast you into hell, for not touching heaven with your hand?

"Justification is complete the first moment we believe, and is incapable of augmentation."

Not so: There may be as many degrees in the favour as in the image of God.

"St. Paul often mentions a righteousness imputed: [Not a righteousness—never once; but simply righteousness.] What can this be, but the righteousness of Christ?" He tells you himself. Rom. iv. 5, 'To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, faith is imputed for righteousness.' "Why is Christ styled Jehovah our righteousness?" Because we are both justified and sanctified through him.

"My death, the cause of their forgiveness, my righteousness, the ground of their acceptance."

How does this agree with "To ascribe pardon to Christ's passive, eternal life to his active righteousness, is fanciful rather than judicious."

"He commends such kinds of beneficence only as were exercised to a disciple as such." Is not this a slip of the pen? Will not our Lord then commend, and reward eternally, all kinds of beneficence, provided they flowed from a principle of loving faith? Yea, that which was exercised to a Samaritan, a Jew, a Turk or a Heathen? Even these I would not term "transient bubbles," though they do not procure our justification.

"How must our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees! Not only in being sincere, but in possessing a complete righteousness, even that of Christ!" Did our Lord mean this? Nothing less. He specifies, in the following parts of his sermon, the very instances wherein the righteousness of a Christian exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

"He brings this specious hypocrite to the test." How does it appear that he was an hypocrite? Our Lord gives not the least intimation of it. Surely he loved him, not for his hypocrisy, but his sincerity.

Yet he loved the world, and therefore could not keep any of the commandments in their spiritual meaning. And the keeping of these is undoubtedly the way to, though not the cause of eternal life.

"By works his faith was made perfect —appeared to be true." No: the natural sense of the word is, by the grace superadded while he wrought those works, his faith was literally made perfect.

"He that doeth righteousness is righteous, manifests the truth of his conversion." Nay; the plain meaning is, he alone is truly righteous, whose faith worketh by love.

"St. James speaks of the justification of our faith." Not unless you mean by that odd expression, our faith being made perfect; for so the apostle explains his own meaning. Perhaps the word *justified* is once used by St. Paul for *manifested*; but that does not prove it is to be so understood here.

"Whoso doeth these things shall never fall into total apostacy." How pleasing is this to flesh and blood! But David says no such thing. His meaning is, whoso doeth these things to the end shall never fall into hell.

The seventh Dialogue is full of important truths. Yet some expressions in it I cannot commend.

"One thing thou lackest, the imputed righteousness of Christ." You cannot think this is the meaning of the text. Certainly the one thing our Lord meant, was the love of God. This was the thing he lacked.

"Is the obedience of Christ insufficient to accomplish our justification?" Rather I would ask, is the death of Christ insufficient to purchase it?

"The saints in glory ascribe the whole of their salvation to the blood of the Lamb." So do I; and yet I believe he obtained for all a possibility of salvation.

"The terms of acceptance for fallen men were a full satisfaction to the divine justice, and a complete conformity to the divine law." This you take for granted, but I cannot allow.

The terms of acceptance for fallen men are repentance and faith: 'Repent ye and believe the gospel.'

"There are but two methods whereby any can be justified, either by a perfect obedience to the law, or because Christ hath kept the law in our stead." You should say, 'or by faith in Christ.' I then answer, this is true. And fallen man is justified, not by perfect obedience, but by faith. What Christ has done is the foundation of our justification, not the term or condition of it.

In the eighth Dialogue, likewise, there are many great truths, and yet some things liable to exception.

"David, God himself dignifies with the most exalted of all characters." Far, very far from it. We have more exalted characters than David's, both in the Old Testament and the New. Such are those of Samuel, Daniel, yea and Job, in the former; of St. Paul and St. John in the latter.

"But God styles him a man after his own heart." This is the text which has caused many to mistake: For want of considering, *first*, That this is said of David in a particular respect, not with regard to his whole character; *secondly*, The time at which it was spoken. When was David a man after God's own heart? When God found him following the ewes great with young, when he took him from the sheep-folds, Psalm lxxviii. 71. It was in the second or third year of Saul's reign that Samuel said to him, The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and hath commanded him to be captain over his people, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. But was he a man after God's own heart all his life? or in all particulars? So far from it, that we have few more exceptionable characters among all the men of God recorded in Scripture.

"There is not a just man upon earth that sinneth not." Solomon might truly say so, before Christ came. And St. John might, after he came, say as truly, 'Whosoever is born of God sinneth not.' But 'in many things we offend all!' That St. James

does not speak this of himself, or of real Christians, will clearly appear to all who impartially consider the context.

The ninth Dialogue proves excellently well, that we cannot be justified by our works.

But have you thoroughly considered these words, "O children of Adam! you are no longer obliged to love God with all your strength, nor your neighbour as yourselves. Once indeed I insisted upon absolute purity of heart; now I can dispense with some degrees of evil desire. Since Christ has fulfilled the law for you, you need not fulfil it. I will connive at, yea, accommodate my demands to your weakness."

I agree with you, that this doctrine makes the holy one of God a minister of sin. And is it not your own? Is not this the very doctrine which you espouse throughout your book?

I cannot but except to several passages also in the tenth Dialogue. I ask first,

Does the righteousness of God ever mean, (as you affirm) the merits of Christ? I believe not once in all the Scripture. It often means, and particularly in the epistle to the Romans, God's method of justifying sinners. When therefore you say, "the righteousness of God means, such a righteousness as may justly challenge his acceptance," I cannot allow it at all; and this capital mistake must needs lead you into many others. But I follow you step by step.

"In order to entitle us to a reward, there must be an imputation of righteousness." There must be an interest in Christ. And then every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

"A rebel may be forgiven, without being restored to the dignity of a son." A rebel against an earthly king may; but not a rebel against God. In the very same moment that God forgives, we are the sons of God. Therefore this is an idle dispute: For pardon and acceptance, though they may be distinguished, cannot be divided. The words of Job which you cite are wide of the question. Those of Solomon prove no more than this, (and who denies it?) That justification implies both pardon and acceptance.

"Grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life;" that is, the free love of God brings us, through justification and sanctification to glory—"That they may receive forgiveness, and a lot among the sanctified;" that is, that they may receive pardon, holiness, heaven.

"Is not the satisfaction made by the death of Christ, sufficient to obtain both our full pardon and final happiness?" Unquestionably it is, and neither of the texts you cite proves the contrary.

"If it was requisite for Christ to be baptized, much more to fulfil the moral law."

I cannot prove that either the one or the other was requisite in order to his purchasing redemption for us.

"By Christ's sufferings alone, the law was not satisfied." Yes it was, for it required only the alternative, obey or die. It required no man to obey and die too. If any man had perfectly obeyed, he would not have died.—"Where Scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of Christ, a part of his humiliation is put for the whole." I cannot allow this without some proof. 'He was obedient unto death,' is no proof at all, as it does not necessarily imply any more, than that he died in obedience to the Father. In some texts there is a necessity of taking a part for the whole, but in these there is no such necessity.

"Christ undertook to do every thing necessary for our redemption, namely, in a covenant made with the father." It is sure he did every thing necessary; but how does it appear, that he undertook this before the foundation of the world, and that by a positive covenant between him and the Father?

You think this appears from four texts, *First*, From that, 'thou gavest them to me.' Nay, when any believe, the Father gave them to Christ; but this proves no such previous contract. *Second*, 'God hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.' Neither does this prove any such thing. *Third*, That expression, 'the counsel of peace shall be between them,' does not necessarily imply any more, than that both the Father and the Son would concur in the redemption of man. *Fourth*, 'According to the counsel of his will,' that is, in the way or method he had chosen. Therefore neither any of these texts, nor all of them, prove what they were brought to prove. They do by no means prove, that there ever was any such covenant made between the Father and the Son.

"The conditions of the covenant are recorded: Lo, I come to do thy will." Nay, here is no mention of any covenant, nor any thing from which it can be inferred.—"The recompense stipulated in this glorious treaty." But I see not one word of the treaty itself. Nor can I possibly allow the existence of it without far other proof than this.—"Another copy of this grand treaty is recorded Isaiah xlix. from the first to the sixth verse." I have read them, but cannot find a word about it in all these verses. They contain neither more nor less than a prediction of the salvation of the Gentiles.

"By the covenant of works, man was bound to obey in his own person." And

so he is under the covenant of grace, though not in order to his justification.—" The obedience of our Surety is accepted instead of our own." This is neither a safe nor a scriptural way of speaking. I would simply say, 'We are accepted through the beloved. We have redemption through his blood.'

" The second covenant was not made with Adam or any of his posterity, but with Christ, in those words, The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." For any authority you have from these words, you might as well have said, It was made with the Holy Ghost. These words were not spoken to Christ, but of him, and give not the least intimation of any such covenant as you plead for. They manifestly contain, if not a covenant made with, a promise made to Adam and all his posterity.

" Christ, we see, undertook to execute the conditions." We see no such thing in this text. We see here only a promise of a Saviour, made by God to man.

" It is true, I cannot fulfil the conditions." It is not true: The conditions of the new covenant are, repent and believe; and these you can fulfil, through Christ strenthening you.—" It is equally true, this is not required at my hands." It is *equally* true, that is, absolutely false, and most dangerously false. If we allow this, Antinomianism comes in with a full tide.—" Christ has performed all that was conditionary for me." Has he repented and believed for you? You endeavour to evade this by saying, " He performed all that was conditionary in the covenant of works." This is nothing to the purpose; for we are not talking of that, but of the covenant of grace. Now he did not perform all that was conditionary in this covenant, unless he repented and believed. " But he did unspeakably more." It may be so. But he did not do this.

" But if Christ's perfect obedience be ours, we have no more need of pardon than Christ himself." The consequence is good. You have started an objection which you cannot answer. You say indeed, " Yes, we do need pardon; for in many things we offend all." What then? If his obedience be ours, we still perfectly obey in him.

" Both the branches of the law, the preceptive and the penal, in the case of guilt contracted, must be satisfied." Not so; 'Christ by his death alone (so our Church teaches) fully satisfied for the sins of the whole world.' The same great truth is manifestly taught in the 31st article. Is it therefore fair, is it honest, for any one to plead the articles of our Church in defence of absolute predestination? Seeing the 17th article barely defines the terms, without either affirming or denying the thing: whereas the 31st totally overthrows and razes it from the foundation.

" Believers who are notorious transgressors in themselves, have a sinless obedience in Christ." O siren song! pleasing sound, to James Wheately! Thomas Williams! James Reiley!

I know not one sentence in the eleventh Dialogue which is liable to exception: But that grand doctrine of Christianity, original sin, is therein proved by irrefragable arguments.

The twelfth likewise is unexceptionable, and contains such an illustration of the wisdom of God, in the structure of the human body, as, I believe, cannot be paralleled in either ancient or modern writers.

The former part of the thirteenth Dialogue is admirable. To the latter I have some objection.

" Elijah failed in his resignation, and even Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips." It is true: But if you could likewise fix some blot upon venerable Samuel and beloved Daniel, it would prove nothing. For no Scripture teaches, that the holiness of Christians is to be measured by that of any Jew.

" Do not the best of men frequently feel disorder in their affections? do not they often complain, when I would do good, evil is present with me?" I believe not. You and I are only able to answer for ourselves. —" Do not they say, We groan, being burdened with the workings of inbred corruption?" You know this is not the meaning of the text. The whole context shows, the cause of that groaning was their longing to be with Christ.

" The cure" of sin " will be perfected in heaven." Nay, surely, in paradise, if no sooner.—" This is a noble prerogative of the beatific vision." No: It would then come too late; if sin remains in us till the day of judgment, it will remain for ever.— " Our present blessedness does not consist in being free from sin." I really think it does. But whether it does or no, if we are not free from sin, we are not Christian believers. For to all these the apostle declares, 'being made free from sin, ye are become the servants of righteousness.' Rom. vi. 18.

" If we were perfect in piety [St. John's words are, *perfect in love*] Christ's priestly office would be superseded." No; we should still need his Spirit (and consequently his intercession) for the continuance of that love from moment to moment. Besides, we should still be encompassed with infirmities, and liable to mistakes, from which words or actions might follow, even though the heart was all love, which were not exactly right. Therefore in all these respects, we should still have need of Christ's

priestly office; and therefore, as long as he remains in the body, the greatest saint may say,

Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death.

The text cited from Exodus asserts nothing less than that iniquity cleaves to all our holy things till death.

"Sin remains, that the righteousness of faith may have its due honour." And will the righteousness of faith have its due honour no longer than sin remains in us? Then it must remain, not only on earth and in paradise, but in heaven also.—"And the sanctification of the spirit its proper esteem." Would it not have more esteem if it were a perfect work?

"It [sin] will make us lowly in our own eyes." What! will pride make us lowly? Surely the utter destruction of Pride would do this more effectually.—"It will make us compassionate." Would not an entire renewal in the image of God make us much more so?—"It will teach us to admire the riches of grace." Yea, but a fuller experience of it, by a thorough sanctification of spirit, soul, and body, will make us admire it more.—"It will reconcile us to death." Indeed it will not: Nor will any thing do this, like perfect love.

"It will endear the blood and intercession of Christ." Nay, these can never be so dear to any, as to those who experience their full virtue, who are filled with the fulness of God. Nor can any feel their continual need of Christ, or rely on him in the manner which these do.

Dialogue 14. "The claims of the law are all answered." If so, Count Zinzendorf is absolutely in the right: Neither God nor man can claim my obedience to it. Is not this Antinomianism without a mask?

"Your sins are expiated through the death of Christ, and a righteousness given you, by which you have free access to God." This is not scriptural language. I would simply say, 'By him we have access to the father.'

There are many other expressions in this Dialogue, to which I have the same objection, namely, *first*, That they are unscriptural; *second*, That they directly lead to Antinomianism.

The first Letter contains some very useful heads of self-examination. In the second,

I read, "There is a righteousness which supplies all that the creature needs. To prove this momentous point, is the design of the following sheets."

I have seen such terrible effects of this unscriptural way of speaking, even on those 'who had once clean escaped from the pollutions of the world,' that I cannot but earnestly wish you would speak no otherwise than do the oracles of God. Certainly this mode of expression is not momentous: It is always dangerous, often fatal.

Letter 3. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin had reigned unto death, so might grace [the free love of God] reign through righteousness [through our justification and sanctification] unto eternal life." Rom. v. 20, 21. This is the plain natural meaning of the words. It does not appear, that one word is spoken here about imputed righteousness: Neither in the passages cited, in the next page, from the Common-prayer and the Article. In the Homily likewise, that phrase is not found at all; and the main stress is laid on Christ's shedding his blood. Nor is the phrase (concerning the thing there is no question) found in any part of the Homilies.

"If the fathers are not explicit with regard to the imputation of active righteousness, they abound in passages which evince the substitution of Christ in our stead: passages which disclaim all dependence on any duties of our own, and fix our hopes wholly on the merits of our Saviour. When this is the case, I am very little solicitous about any particular forms of expression." O lay aside, then, these questionable, dangerous forms, and keep closely to the scriptural.

Letter 4. "The authority of our church, and of those eminent divines, does not touch those particular forms of expression." Neither do any of the texts which you afterwards cite. As to the doctrine we are agreed.

"The righteousness of God signifies, the righteousness which God-man wrought out." No: It signifies God's method of justifying sinners.

"The victims figured the expiation by Christ's death; the clothing with skins, the imputation of his righteousness." That does not appear. Did not the one rather figure our justification, the other our sanctification?

Almost every text quoted in this and the following Letter, in support of that particular form of expression, is distorted above measure from the plain obvious meaning which is pointed out by the context. I shall instance in a few, and just set down their true meaning, without any farther remarks.

'To shew unto man his uprightness,'—to convince him of God's justice, in so punishing him.

'He shall receive the blessing'—pardon, 'from the Lord; and righteousness,'—holiness,—'from the God of his salvation,'—the God who saveth him both from the guilt and from the power of sin.

'I will make mention of thy righteousness only,'—of thy mercy. So the word frequently means in the Old Testament; so it unquestionably means in that text, 'In

(or by) thy righteousness shall they be exalted.'

'Sion shall be redeemed with judgment,'—after severe punishment; 'and her converts with righteousness,'—with the tender mercy of God following that punishment.

'In (or through) the Lord I have righteousness and strength,'—justification and sanctification. 'He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,'—saved me from the guilt and power of sin: Both of which are again expressed by, 'He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.'

'My righteousness (my mercy) shall not be abolished.'

'To make reconciliation for iniquity'—to atone for all our sins—'and to bring in everlasting righteousness,'—spotless holiness in our souls. And this righteousness is not human but divine. It is the gift and the work of God.

'The Lord our righteousness'—the author both of our justification and sanctification.

"What righteousness shall give us peace at the last day, *inherent* or *imputed?*" Both Christ died for us and lives in us, 'that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.'

Letter 5. 'That have obtained like precious faith through the righteousness'—the mercy, of our Lord. 'Seek ye the kingdom of God and his righteousness;'—the holiness which springs from God reigning in you.

'Therein is revealed the righteousness of God'—God's method of justifying sinners.

"We establish the law, as we expect no salvation without a perfect conformity to it—namely, by Christ." Is not this a mere quibble? and a quibble which, after all the laboured evasions of Witsius, and a thousand more, does totally make void the law? But not so does St. Paul teach. According to him, without holiness, personal holiness, no man shall see the Lord. No one who is not himself conformed to the law of God here, shall see the Lord in glory.

This is the grand, palpable objection to that whole scheme. It directly makes void the law. It makes thousands content to live and die transgressors of the law, because Christ fulfilled it for them. Therefore, though I believe he hath lived and died for me, yet I would speak very tenderly and sparingly of the former, (and never separately from the latter) even as sparingly as do the Scriptures, for fear of this dreadful consequence.

"The gift of righteousness must signify a righteousness not their own." Yes, it signifies the righteousness or holiness which God gives to, and works in them.

"The obedience of one, is Christ's actual performance of the whole law." So here his passion is fairly left out! whereas, his becoming obedient unto death, that is, dying for man, is certainly the chief part, if not the whole, which is meant by that expression.

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us—that is, by our representative in our nature." Amazing! but this, you say, "agrees with the tenor of the apostle's arguing; for he is demonstrating we cannot be justified by our own conformity to the law." No; not here. He is not speaking here of the cause of our justification, but the fruits of it. Therefore that unnatural sense of his words does not at all agree with the tenor of his arguing.

I totally deny the criticism on δικαιοσυνη and δικαιωμα, and cannot conceive on what authority it is founded. O how deep an aversion to inward holiness does this scheme naturally create!

"The righteousness they attained could not be any personal righteousness." Certainly it was. It was *implanted* as well as *imputed.*

"For instruction in righteousness, in the righteousness of Christ." Was there ever such a comment before? The plain meaning is, for training up in holiness of heart and of life.

'He shall convince the world of righteousness;'—that I am not a sinner, but innocent and holy.

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Not intrinsically, but imputatively." Both the one and the other God, *through him,* first *accounts* and then *makes* us *righteous.* Accordingly, the righteousness which is of God by faith, is both imputed and inherent.

"My faith fixes on both the meritorious life and atoning death of Christ." Here we clearly agree. Hold then to this, and never talk of the former without the latter. If you do, you cannot say, "Here we are exposed to no hazard." Yes, you are to an exceeding great one: even the hazard of living and dying without holiness. And then we are lost for ever.

The sixth *Letter* contains an admirable account of the earth and its atmosphere, and comprises abundance of sense in a narrow compass, and expressed in beautiful language.

Gems have "a seat on the virtuous fair one's breast." I cannot reconcile this with St. Paul. He says, "*Not with pearls:*" by a parity of reason, not with diamonds. But in all things I perceive you are too favourable, both to the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eye. You are a gentle casuist as to every self-indulgence which a plentiful fortune can furnish.

"Our Saviour's obedience." O say, with the good old puritans, 'our Saviour's death

or merits.' We swarm with Antinomians on every side. Why are you at such pains to increase their number?

'My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation;'—thy mercy which brings my salvation.

The eighth *Letter* is an excellent description of the supreme greatness of Christ. I do not observe one sentence in it which I cannot cheerfully subscribe to.

The ninth *Letter*, containing a description of the sea, with various inferences deduced therefrom, is likewise a master-piece, for justness of sentiment as well as beauty of language. But I doubt whether "mere shrimps" be not too low an expression; and whether you might not as well have said nothing of "cod, the standing repast of Lent:" Or concerning "the exquisite relish of turbot, or the deliciousness of sturgeon." Are not such observations beneath the dignity of a minister of Christ? I have the same doubt concerning what is said of "delicately flavoured tea, finely-scented coffee, the friendly bowl, the pyramid of Italian figs, and the pistacio nut of Aleppo;" beside that the mentioning these in such a manner, is a strong encouragement of luxury and sensuality. And does the world need this? The English in particular?—*Si non insaniunt satis sua sponte instiga.*

Letter 10. "Those treasures which spring from the imputation of Christ's righteousness." Not a word of his atoning blood! Why do so many men love to speak of his righteousness, rather than his atonement? I fear, because it affords a fairer excuse for their own unrighteousness: To cut off this, is it not better to mention both together? At least, never to name the former without the latter?

"Faith is a persuasion that Christ has shed his blood for me, and fulfilled all righteousness in my stead." I can by no means subscribe to this definition. There are hundreds, yea thousands, of true believers, who never once thought one way or the other of Christ's fulfilling all righteousness in their stead. I personally know many, who to this very hour have no idea of it; and yet have each of them a divine evidence and conviction, Christ loved me and gave himself for me. This is St. Paul's account of faith: And it is sufficient. He that thus believes is justified.

"It is a sure means of purifying the heart, and never fails to work by love." It surely purifies the heart, if we abide in it; but not if we draw back to perdition. It never fails to work by love, while it continues; but if itself fail, farewell both love and good works.

"Faith is the hand which receives all that is laid up in Christ." Consequently if we make shipwreck of the faith, how much soever is laid up in Christ, from that hour we receive nothing.

Letter 11. "Faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ, is a fundamental principle in the Gospel." If so, what becomes of all those who think nothing about imputed righteousness? How many who are full of faith and love, if this be true, must perish everlastingly!

"Thy hands must urge the way of the deadly weapon through the shivering flesh, till it be plunged in the throbbing heart." Are not these descriptions far too strong? May they not occasion unprofitable reasonings in many readers?

Ne puerum coram populo Medea trucidet.

"How can he justify it to the world?" Not at all. Can this then justify his faith to the world?

"You take the certain way to obtain comfort, the righteousness of Jesus Christ." What! without the atonement? Strange fondness for an unscriptural, dangerous mode of expression!

"So the merits of Christ are derived to all the faithful." Rather the fruits of the Spirit; which are likewise plainly typified by the oil in Zechariah's vision.

"Has the law any demand? It must go to him for satisfaction." Suppose, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:' Then I am not obliged to love my neighbour. Christ has satisfied the demand of the law for me. Is not this the very quintessence of Antinomianism?

"The righteousness wrought out by Jesus Christ, is wrought out for all his people, to be the cause of their justification, and the purchase of their salvation. The *righteousness* is the cause, the purchase." So the death of Christ is not so much as named! "For *all* his people:" But what becomes of *all* other people? They must inevitably perish for ever. The die was cast or ever they were in being. The doctrine to pass them by has

Consign'd their unborn souls to hell,
And damn'd them from their mother's womb!

I could sooner be a Turk, a Deist, yea, an atheist, than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the very being of God, than to make him an almighty tyrant.

"The whole world, and all its seasons, are rich with our Creator's goodness. His tender mercies are over all his works." Are they over the bulk of mankind? Where is his goodness to the non-elect? How are his tender mercies over them? "His temporal blessings are given to them." But are they to them blessings at all? Are they not all curses? Does not God know they are? that they will only increase their damnation? Does he not design they should? And this you call *goodness!* This is *tender mercy!*

"May we not discern pregnant proofs of

goodness in each individual object?" No; on your scheme not a spark of it in this world, or the next, to the far greater part of the work of his own hands!

"Is God a generous benefactor to the meanest animals, to the lowest reptiles? And will he deny my friend what is necessary to his present comfort, and his final acceptance?" Yea, will he deny it to any soul that he has made? Would you deny it to any if it were in your power?

> But if you lov'd whom God abhorr'd,
> The servant were above his Lord.

"The wedding-garment here means holiness."

"This is his tender complaint, 'they will not come unto me!'" Nay, that is not the case; they cannot. He himself has decreed, not to give them that grace, without which their coming is impossible.

"The grand end which God proposes in all his favourable dispensations to fallen man, is to demonstrate the sovereignty of his grace." Not so; to impart happiness to his creatures, is his grand end herein. "Barely to demonstrate his sovereignty," is a principle of action fit for the great Turk, not the most high God.

"God hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants. He is a boundless ocean of good." Nay, that ocean is far from boundless, if it wholly passes by nine-tenths of mankind.

"You cannot suppose God would enter into a fresh covenant with a rebel." I both suppose and know he did. "God made the new covenant with Christ, and charged him with the performance of the conditions." I deny both these assertions, which are the central point wherein Calvinism and Antinomianism meet. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen;' viz. with David my servant. So God himself explains it.

"He will wash you in the blood which atones, and invest you with the righteousness which justifies." Why should you thus continually put asunder what God has joined?

"God himself at the last day pronounces them righteous, because they are interested in the obedience of the Redeemer." Rather because they are washed in his blood, and renewed by his Spirit.

Upon the whole, I cannot but wish that the plan of these Dialogues had been executed in a different manner. Most of the grand truths of Christianity are herein both explained and proved with great strength and clearness. Why was any thing intermixed which could prevent any serious Christian recommending them to all mankind? Any thing which must necessarily render them exceptionable to so many thousands of the children of God? In practical writings, I studiously abstain from the very shadow of controversy. Nay, even in controversial, I do not knowingly write one line, to which any but my opponent would object. For opinions shall I destroy the work of God? Then am I a bigot indeed. Much more, if I would not drop any mode of expression, rather than offend either Jew or Gentile, or the church of God. I am, with great sincerity, dear sir, your affectionate brother and servant, J. W.

October 15, 1756.

I have but one thing more to add, which is, concerning the seasonableness of the following publication. It may perhaps, be thought a needless revival of a dispute which happened long ago, and which is now probably forgotten. In answer to which, I can assure the reader, that the above is printed from an edition of the Preservative now on sale at the Foundry. The seasonableness of this publication is therefore apparent; for though my brother died December 25, 1758, the controversy did by no means die with him, but still subsists in the daily publication and sale of the Preservative, which also comes with a special* recommendation from Mr. Wesley, into the hands of all his preachers, to be by them first "carefully read, then to be recommended and explained to the several societies where they labour." So that the controversy is, in the most effectual manner, daily and hourly kept alive by Mr. Wesley himself. This proves very sufficiently the seasonableness, and as things have happened, the expediency, of the present appearance of the following Letters in public. How pertinent an answer they contain to Mr. Wesley's objections, is now to be left to the consideration of the candid reader.

W. HERVEY.

Miles-Lane, December 5, 1764.

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* See the last paragraph of a tract, entitled, Reasons against a separation from the church of England, printed also in the Preservative, p. 237.

LETTERS

TO THE

REV. MR. JOHN WESLEY.

LETTER I.

Reverend Sir,—I received the letter you mention, containing remarks on the Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio. As, after a careful perusal, I saw very little reason to alter my sentiments, I laid aside your epistle without returning an answer, in hopes that my silence (which it seems you mistook for obstinacy) would most emphatically speak my advice; which, had it been expressed more plainly, would have been delivered in the apostle's words, *That ye study* or make it your ambition, *to be quiet.**

Since you have, by printing these remarks, summoned me, though reluctant, to the bar of the public, it should seem that I ought not to discredit the truth once delivered to the saints, by a timid silence: and I am the more willing to answer for myself, as I have now the privilege of an unprejudiced judge, and an impartial jury. If my defence should be lost on my opponent, it may possibly make some useful impressions on the court, and candid audience. However, I will not absolutely despair of convincing Mr. Wesley himself; because it is written, "Give admonition to a wise man, and he will yet be wiser.†" On some very momentous and interesting points, I may probably be a little more copious than the strict laws of argument demand, in order to exhibit some of the great truths of the gospel in so clear a light, that "he may run who readeth them;" in so amiable and inviting a light, that the believer may rejoice in them, and the sinner may long for them. For such digressions I promise myself an easy pardon, both from yourself and the reader.

Thus you open the debate: "In the second Dialogue, is not the description often too laboured, the language too stiff and affected?" I must confess, Sir, this animadversion seems to be as just, as the praise which you have here and elsewhere bestowed, appears to be lavish; the former, if not more pleasing, may be no less serviceable than the latter; for both I acknowledge myself your debtor; and if ever I attempt any thing more in the capacity of an author, I will be sure to keep my eye fixed on the caution you have given.

I am sorry that the next words bring on a complaint so close to my acknowledgment. "You cite the pages according to the Dublin edition, having wrote the rough draught of what follows in Ireland." But should you not, in complaisance to your readers on this side the water, have referred to the pages of the *English* edition? For want of such reference, there is hardly distinction enough in some places to know which are your words, and which are Aspasio's. Should you not also, in justice to the author, before you transcribed the rough draught for the press, have consulted the *last* edition of his work? which, you well knew, was not the copy from which the Irish impression was taken, yet might reasonably suppose to be the least inaccurate.

When I read your next paragraph, I am struck with reverence, I am ashamed and almost astonished at the littleness of the preceding observations; stiffness of style, and a thousand such trifles, what are they all, compared with justification before the infinite and immortal God? This is a subject that commands our most awful regard, a blessing that should engage our whole attention. As this is the grand article to come under our consideration, I would desire to maintain an incessant dependance on

* 1 Thess. iv. 11, Φιλοτιμεισθαι, a beautiful word, rich with meaning, and not adequately translated by *make it your ambition*, still more inadequately by our common version.

† Prov. ix. 9. The original phrase is only *Give*, which may signify, give *admonition*, as well as (what our version has supposed) *instruction*.

the divine Spirit, that my thoughts may be influenced, and my pen guided, by the wisdom which cometh from above; that I may neither pervert the truth by any erroneous representations, nor dishonour it by an unchristian temper. It would be easy to make use of bitter satire, and disdainful irony, the contemptuous sneer, or the indignant frown. And indeed, Sir, you have laid yourself open to every attack of this kind; but these are not the weapons of a Christian's warfare.

——Non defensoribus istis.

We are to give a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear; *meekness*, with regard to those who interrogate or oppose us; *fear*, with regard to him whose cause we plead, and whose eye is ever upon us. "Is justification," you say, "more or less than God's pardoning and accepting a sinner, through the merits of Christ?" I somewhat wonder, Sir, that you should ask this question, when it is professedly answered by Aspasio, who has presented you with a very circumstantial definition of justification, explaining it, establishing it, and obviating several objections advanced against it. If you would animadvert with spirit and force, or indeed to any considerable purpose, should you not lay open the impropriety of this definition, shewing from reason and scripture, that it is neither accurate nor orthodox?

The reader may see Aspasio's account of justification, and find the words *imputation* and *righteousness of Christ* particularly explained; the latter denoting "all the various instances of his active and passive obedience." Accordingly it is affirmed, "the punishment we deserved, he endures; the obedience which we owed, he fulfils." What Aspasio here professes to understand by the righteousness of Christ, the reader is particularly requested to bear in his memory, that he be not misled by Mr. Wesley, who often forgets it, and complains, when the righteousness of Christ is mentioned, that his penal sufferings are quite omitted. I would not wish, Sir, to have a plainer proof that you do not discard the active, than Aspasio has hereby given that he never excludes the passive.

By your question, you hint a dislike, yet without informing us what it is, or wherein Aspasio's illustrations and proofs are deficient. You propose, and only propose, another definition. Well, then, to differ from you as little as possible, nay, to agree with you as far as truth will permit, since you are so loth to admit of our representation, we will accede to yours; especially if it be somewhat explained, and a little improved. For indeed the words, in their present form, are rather too vague to constitute any definition. *Pardoning* and *accepting* may happen to be only diversified expressions of the same idea. The *merits of Christ* will certainly comport either with Popish or Socinian notions. It abounds in writers of the former sort, and it is to be found in the latter. Therefore, to be more explicit—By *pardoning*, I mean God's acquitting a sinner from guilt of every kind, and of every degree. By *accepting*, I mean still more, God's receiving him into full favour, considering and treating him as righteous, yea, perfectly and gloriously righteous.—By the *merits of Christ* I would always be supposed to signify, his active and passive obedience; all that he wrought, and all that he suffered, for the salvation of mankind.* Interested in all this, the believer enters into the divine presence, and stands before the divine majesty, not like David's ambassadors, stealing themselves into Jericho; safe, indeed, but with the marks of Ammonitish insults on their persons: He rather enters like that illustrious exile, Joseph, into the presence of Pharaoh, when his prison garments were taken from him, and he was arrayed in vestures of fine linen, meet for the shoulders of those who appear before kings. With this explication, I am content that your definition takes place of mine.† I would further observe, that you have dropt the word *imputed*, which inclines me to suspect you would cashier the thing. But let me ask, Sir, How can we be justified by the merits of Christ, unless they are imputed to us? Would the payment made by a surety procure a discharge for the debtor, unless it was placed to his account? It is certain the sacrifices of old could not make an atonement, unless they were imputed to each offerer respectively. This was an ordinance settled by Jehovah himself.‡ And were not the sacrifices, was not their imputation typical of Christ, and things pertaining to Christ? The former prefiguring his

* The merits of Christ is certainly an ambiguous phrase, and what I can by no means admire; but as it occurs in Mr Wesley's letter, and in many valuable writers, I have, led by their example, used it in the following debate, still understanding it, and still using it, in the sense explained above.

† To gratify Mr. Wesley I have admitted his phrase, "the merits of Christ," though, as it is a phrase of dubious import, and what almost any sect or heresy will subscribe, I should much sooner choose to abide by Aspasio's language. And why should we not all speak with the Scriptures? Why should we not use the expressions of the apostle? He says, justified by the blood of Christ; he says, made righteous by the obedience of Christ. When therefore we say, sinners are pardoned and accepted through the blood and through the obedience of Christ, we have a warrant for our doctrine, which is indisputable, and a precedent for our language, which is unexceptionable.

‡ Lev. vii. 18. 'If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it;' it shall not be accepted. Why? for this reason, because it shall not be imputed. A plain indication that the latter is the cause of the former: That without imputation, whether it be of the typical or real sacrifice, the blood of the beast, or the death of Christ, there is no acceptance.

all-sufficient expiation, the latter shadowing forth the way whereby we are partakers of its efficacy. The righteousness, (not the righteousness and obedience, Aspasio speaks otherwise,) which Christ performed, is reckoned by God as our own. This you call an ambiguous expression; but if considered in conjunction with the foregoing and following enlargements, I should think can hardly deserve the charge. Aspasio all along labours to be understood. In this place he more fully opens his meaning by giving another view of the nature, and by specifying the effects of imputation. The *nature*—it being the same as placing to our account something not our own. The *effects*—Christ's righteousness thus placed to our account being as effectual for obtaining our salvation, as if it was our own personal qualification. To the latter you expressly agree, to the former you make no objection: To the whole doctrine, thus explained, you elsewhere declare your assent.

If in all this we may depend upon you, Sir, must we not feel an alarming shock at your adjuration in the next paragraph?

"For Christ's sake do not"—What? surely nothing less can excite or justify this vehement exclamation, but the obtrusion of some doctrine that is most glaringly false, and absolutely damnable. Shall we have such a solemn firing, such a thunder of explosion, only to silence a particular phrase? In another person this would look like profane levity; in Mr. Wesley the softest appellation we can give it is idle pomp. All this clamour merely against words! words too, the explication of which, and the doctrine contained in them, yourself allow. Dear Sir, what is a word or a phrase? Can it do either good or harm, but as conveying right or wrong sentiments? Will the mere pronouncing or hearing of a word, (be it *abracadabra*, or *higgajan selah*, or *imputed*) without its idea, poison the principles of men, and induce them to work all uncleanness with greediness? As you have been firing without an enemy (Aspasio is owned for an ally) so you seem to be triumphing without a victory. Aspasio's charity for those who are disgusted at the expression, and have no explicit knowledge of the doctrine, is guarded by the words immediately following, "yet live under the belief of the truth, and in the exercise of the duty:" as well as by the annexed description of the persons, and their temper; who are far enough from fancying, that if they may but be pardoned for the sake of Christ, they can obtain the divine favour, and a title to future happiness, by their own good behaviour. Hence it will appear that he has been too cautious to part with the very thing for which he is contending. And this is more abundantly evident from the close of his charitable paragraph, wherein, though he allows such people to be safe, yet he laments their perplexity, and their deficiency in light, strength, and consolation. "The phrase is not scriptural." Suppose it were not, this would afford but a slight reason for so passionate an outcry: However, this is certain, St. Paul uses the phrase *God imputeth*, Rom. iv. 6, and that *righteousness might be imputed*, Rom. iv. 11. Now, is it possible that there should be righteousness imputed, yet not an imputed righteousness? To assert this must argue either a wonderful subtile refinement, or an exceeding strong prejudice. "It is not necessary." Perhaps so; but is it not necessary Mr. Wesley should either inform us what sense of the phrase it is which he apprehends so likely to mislead men, or else, instead of exclaiming against Aspasio, should join all his force with him, in defending that sense which they both espouse? "It has done immense hurt." When we are made sensible of the immense, or indeed of any real hurt done by the phrase *imputed*; when we see those who dislike it cordially warm for the sentiment expressed in other words, we will then consent to resign it for its equivalent, "reckoned as our own," "placed to our account," "as effectual as if our own personal qualification." Till then we must guard the casket for the sake of the jewel. We prefer the word *imputed*, because it says more at once than any other term we know, and because we are aware of a common practice used in all ages by the opposers of sound doctrine. They pretend a zeal only against the phrase, that by bringing this into disuse, they may cause that to be forgotten. Shall we not then dispute for imputed righteousness? Yes, Sir, we must dispute both for the doctrine and for the phrase, since there are persons who openly strike at the one, and we fear with a view to supplant the other. Shall we not dispute for *imputed righteousness*—though the words are a grand peculiarity of the Scriptures, and the thing the very spirit and essence of the gospel? Not dispute for that which is better to us sinners than all worlds, better than our hearts could wish or our thoughts conceive, which, in short, is the best, the noblest, the completest gift that God himself can bestow?

When such a gift, and such a righteousness, is the subject of disputation, we must not give place, no, not for an hour; we must maintain its matchless excellency so long as we have any breath, or any being. We must say in direct opposition to your fervent, but unadvised zeal, "For Christ's sake," let us contend earnestly for imputed righteousness, because it is the brightest jewel in his mediatorial crown.

"For the sake of immortal souls," let us hold fast and hold forth this precious truth, because it yields the strongest consolation to the guilty conscience, and furnishes the most endearing, as well as the most prevailing inducement to universal obedience.

"To ascribe pardon to Christ's passive, eternal life to his active obedience, is fanciful rather than judicious." The remark is just, not so the quotation: Aspasio is somewhat disfigured by your distortion of his features; he limps a little, by your dislocation of a limb. There is in his language, guard enough to check every attempt either to dissolve the union, or sever the co-agency, of the different parts of our Lord's righteousness.

But let us give Aspasio a fair hearing. Thus he expresses himself: "To divide them (the active and passive righteousness) into detached portions, independent on each other, seems to be fanciful rather than judicious." To divide into detached portions, is more than to distinguish between the one and the other. The latter Aspasio practises, the former he disavows. "Independent of each other:" Do these words stand for nothing? have they no meaning, that here you show them no regard, and never recollect them throughout your whole epistle? Had you honoured them with any degree of notice, several of your objections must have been precluded, and if the more candid reader pleases to bear them in memory, several of your objections will at the very first view fall to the ground. Besides, the person who tells us the case seems to be so, is not so peremptory, as he who roundly affirms it to be so: the former is all that Aspasio has advanced. Though I am willing that you should correct his style, yet I must beg of you, Sir, not to make him quite so positive; let him have the satisfaction of being modest, even where he has the misfortune, in your opinion at least, to be erroneous.

"Christ's universal obedience from his birth to his death, is the one foundation of my hope," says Aspasio. To which you assent, and with a laudable vehemence reply, "This is unquestionably right." I wish, Sir, you would ponder your words before you speak, at least before you print, that there may be something fixed and certain, on which we may depend, and by which you will abide. One would think, after this acknowledgment, pronounced with such an air of solemnity, you could never so far forget yourself, as to open your mouth against the obedience, the universal obedience of Christ, which surely must include both what he wrought, and what he suffered. You confess it to be your foundation, —the foundation of your hope, the only foundation of your hope: Can you then, without the most amazing inconsistency, either wish to secrete the doctrine, or offer to discountenance the expression?

"There is no manner of need to make the imputation of Christ's active righteousness a separate head of discourse." No manner of need, even though you declare that this active righteousness, together with the expiatory death, is the only foundation of your hope! Can you think it possible to treat of such a topic too particularly, too distinctly, too minutely? Aspasio has shown the need, or assigned the reason for this method of handling the subject; because it sets the fulness of our Lord's merit in the clearest light, and gives the completest honour to God's holy law. Have you alleged any thing to disprove, or so much as to invalidate his plea? Ought not this to have been done before your assertion can be valid or even decent?

Besides, are there not persons in the world, who fondly imagine, that if they can but have pardon through Christ, they shall by their own doings secure eternal life? When such persons are in danger of overlooking the active obedience of the Redeemer, why should you not, for their sakes, allow us to make the imputation of his righteousness "a separate head of discourse?" that, seeing the transcendent perfection of Christ's work, they may cease from confiding in their own, Heb. iv. 10; lest it be said to them another day, "I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works, that (for the grand purpose of justification,) they shall not profit thee. Isa. lvii. 12.

We must therefore take leave to dwell upon the active righteousness of our Lord; we must display its perfection, in opposition to all the vain pretensions of human qualifications, endeavours, or attainments; we must demonstrate that, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is this divine obedience higher than all the works of the children of men. Yea, so transcendent in itself, and absolutely perfect, as to be incapable of any augmentation. All the good deeds of all the saints, could they be added to it, would not increase in any degree its justifying efficacy: It is like all the other works of God, concerning which we are told, "nothing can be added to them." This brings to my remembrance a most beautiful and sublime representation, which you must have read in the evangelical prophet, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together." Here mountains are demolished, vallies are elevated, and the earth is levelled into a spacious plain, on purpose to accomplish what Mr. Wesley supposes

unnecessary; on purpose to give the most clear, full, striking view of the great Redeemer, of his wonderful person, and glorious work; that he alone may be distinguished and exalted; may walk majestic and conspicuous through the midst of mankind, as being singly and completely sufficient for the recovery of sinners. That all flesh—not Jews only, but Gentiles also; not men of reputation only, but the meanest of mortals, the most infamous of wretches—may together see his glory, may on equal ground, without any pre-eminence of one above another, contemplate and partake of his precious death and perfect righteousness, which are the one object of divine complacency, and the sovereign glory of the Lord Redeemer. According to the import of this magnificent piece of imagery, all the differences which subsist between one man and another are abolished; nothing but Christ and his complete work are proposed, as the cause of justification and the ground of hope. Faith beholds nothing but the divine Jesus: it never inquires, What have I done? what have I suffered? But, what has that most illustrious personage done, and what suffered? What has Jehovah manifested in our nature, wrought for the benefit and redemption of sinners? Faith is never weary of viewing or reviewing either the active or passive obedience of Immanuel. Faith will declare, that neither of these points can be set forth in too strong or too recommending a light. Faith is ever desiring to see more and more of the Saviour's worthiness, that the soul may rejoice in his excellency, and be filled with all his fulness.

May you, dear Sir, abound in this faith, and live under such views of God our Saviour; then I flatter myself you will be dissatisfied with your present opinion, and not be disgusted at the freedom of speech used by yours, &c.

LETTER II.

Reverend Sir,—I am particularly pleased at my entrance on this epistle, because it presents me with a view of Mr. Wesley in very good humour. Instead of rebuking, he commends. He puts off the frown of censure, for the smile of approbation. I hope to follow the amiable example; to approve and applaud, wherever opportunity offers, and truth permits. And though I shall be sometimes obliged to oppose or refute, yet I shall do both with all the tenderness and lenity which may consist with a proper vindication of the truth.

"The third and fourth Dialogues contain an admirable illustration and confirmation of the great doctrine of Christ's satisfaction." This is generously acknowledged. Yet even here it so unhappily falls out, that complaisance gets the start of judgment. Did you advert, Sir, to the state of the controversy, or see the consequence of Aspasio's arguing, you must either give up a favourite tenet, or else dissent from his doctrine.

Aspasio maintains, that Christ's sufferings were punishment; real, proper punishment. Now, could Christ, an innocent person, be punished, without bearing sin—the very sin of others? Could Christ, a divine person, bear the sin of others, and not do it perfectly away? or can they whose guilt was punished in Christ, and whose sin is perfectly done away by Christ, can they perish eternally? But I forbear. Yourself and the judicious reader, will easily apprehend my meaning, and discern the point to which these questions lead. All the benefit I propose by this remark is, to convince Mr. Wesley that he is not incapable of a mistake; that he has tripped a little in what he commends, and therefore may possibly make a false step in what he condemns.

Unless I may be allowed to propose this additional advantage, the rectifying an impropriety in some people's apprehensions concerning our Lord's vicarious suffering. It is usual to say, "He bore the punishment, not the guilt; the penalty, not the fault:" which seems to be a distinction more scrupulous than judicious; answers no other end, but that of derogating from our Redeemer's grace, and weakening the foundation of our hopes.

The guilt of sin, I take to be what the apostle calls ανομια, the transgression of the law. From hence arises the obligation to punishment. This guilt our Lord so truly bore, that he was no less liable to the arrest of justice, and the infliction of vengeance, than if he himself had committed the most enormous crimes. "He bare (says the Holy Ghost) the sin of many." But punishment cannot be reckoned the same as sin, any more than wages can be accounted the same as work. If, then, our Lord bore sin itself, he must bear every thing criminal that is included in it; no circumstance of demerit or aggravation excepted.

He bore the *fault*; therefore he makes us without fault in the sight of God; and will present us faultless before the throne, with exceeding joy. He bore the *guilt*; therefore our Lord's sufferings were real punishment, justly inflicted by the supreme judge, and on principles of justice, discharge us from all punishment whatever. He bore the *filth*,—therefore he felt what those wretched souls endure, who die in their iniquities; his eternal Father forsook him, and hid his face from him, as from an abominable object.

This renders our Saviour's propitiation great, wonderful, glorious. Seeing this, believing this, we have nothing to fear. Conscience is satisfied, and the accuser of the brethren is silenced. Nothing can be laid to our charge by the righteous law, and nothing remains to awaken the indignation of the righteous judge. Whereas, if this was not done, we have reason to be terribly apprehensive. If Christ bore not the guilt, then sinners must bear it in their own persons; if he took not away the filth, then it must lie on transgressors, and render them loathsome for ever. If the fault was not transferred to him, then it must abide upon us, and be our everlasting ruin.

Neither does this doctrine in any degree detract from our Saviour's dignity. It rather gives him the honour due unto his name, Jesus. As in the scales of a balance, the lower the one descends, the higher the other mounts, so the deeper our Mediator's humiliation sinks, to the more exalted height does his glory rise. The more horrible the condition to which he submitted, the more illustriously his goodness shines, and the more clearly the perfection of his work appears.

Satisfaction was made to the divine law, says Aspasio. "I do not remember any such expression in Scripture," replies Mr. Wesley. But do you not remember this expression in the epistle to the Galatians, "Christ was made under the law?"* Why was he made under the law, but to fulfil its precepts, and undergo its penalty? and is not this a satisfaction to its demands?

The truth is, the divine law was violated by our sins. It was absolutely impossible for us to make any reparation; therefore Christ, in our nature and in our stead, submitted to its obligations, that he might magnify its injured authority, and render it in the highest degree venerable: might make even its tremendous sanctions and rigorous requirements, the very basis of grace, mercy, and peace. Divinely noble contrivance! unspeakably precious expedient! By this means, vengeance and forbearance have met together; wrath and love have kissed each other, in the redemption of sinners. The law says, I am fulfilled: Justice says, I am satisfied. While both concur to expedite and ascertain the salvation of a believer.

"This way of speaking of the law, as a person injured, and to be satisfied, seems hardly defensible." Does not the apostle speak of the law as a person? A person that liveth,* to whom some are married, and to whom others are dead? Aspasio will always think himself, and his manner of speaking, sufficiently defensible, so long as he has the apostolical practice for his precedent.

Having such a precedent, he wants no other; otherwise he might plead the authority of Mr. John Wesley; who, in his explanatory notes on the New Testament, says, "The law is here spoken of (by a common figure) as a person, to which, as to an husband, life and death are ascribed."† And if the law be an husband, may not an husband be injured? May not an injured husband insist upon being satisfied?

"All the benefits of the new covenant are the purchase of Christ's blood;" this is Aspasio's belief. To this you assent, "Surely they are."—With pleasure I should receive your suffrage, was I not afraid that this is your meaning—They are so the purchase of his blood, as not to have any dependence on, or any connexion with, his most perfect obedience. I was alarmed by the close of your last paragraph, and my suspicions are increased by the following negative interrogation: "After this has been fully proved, where is the need, where is the use of contending so strenuously for the imputation of his righteousness?"

Aspasio has informed you, Sir, in the second Dialogue. He has there shewn the advantage of unfolding, circumstantially and copiously, this momentous truth. To give you farther satisfaction, he has quoted the words of an eminent divine, of which the following are a part: "Whoever rejects the doctrine of the imputation of our Saviour's righteousness to man, does, by so doing, reject the imputation of man's sin to our Saviour, and all the consequences of it." If you are not satisfied with Mr. Staynoe's reasons, you are remitted to St. Paul. In Rom. ch. v. (a chapter of distinguished dignity and importance) he teaches mankind that Christ died for the ungodly; that we are justified through his blood, are saved from wrath by his death. After all this had been fully proved, where was the need, where was the use of insisting largely upon that obedience of one by which many are made righteous? ver 19. Or upon that righteousness of one, which is imputed to many for justification of life? Yet this the inspired writer evidently does.

Answer the foregoing question in behalf of the apostle, and you will answer it in behalf of Aspasio. Or if you decline the office, give me leave, Sir, to answer it on be-

* Gal. iv. 4. There is, I think, something uncouth in this expression. Γενομενος, it is true, very well comports with both the clauses, εκ γυναικος and υπο νομον. But in the English translation, the participle might not ungracefully be varied, perhaps in some such manner, "The Son of God was made of a woman, and became subject to the law."

* Rom. vii. 1. 4. The word ζη, at the end of the first verse is spoken of the law, not of the man, as Mr. Wesley and others have very justly observed. It should therefore be translated not *he* but *it*.

† See Explan. Notes, Rom. vii. 1.

half of them both. The blood of Christ is never considered as independent on, or detached from, the righteousness of Christ. They united their blessed efficacy in accomplishing the work of our redemption: we always look upon them as a grand and glorious aggregate, in their agency inseparable, though in mediation distinguishable. Being thus distinguishable, at proper times we meditate upon each distinctly: We display each with all the particularity possible, and cannot but contend for the imputation of one, as well as of the other. The farther we dig into either of these spiritual mines, the greater fund of treasures we discover. The more we glorify the Saviour, the more we strengthen faith, and the greater addition we make to our comfort, our peace, our joy.

Aspasio inquires, If Christ was our substitute as to penal suffering, why not as to justifying obedience? You reply, "The former is expressly asserted in Scripture, the latter is not expressly asserted there." A small inaccuracy here, Sir: The former is no more a Scripture expression than the latter; while the latter is no less the doctrine and sense of Scripture than the former. A little piece of forgetfulness likewise; since you just now acknowledged, that "Christ's universal obedience was the one foundation of your hope." But how can his obedience be any foundation of your hope, if in this capacity he was not your substitute? Take away the circumstance of substitution, and there is no more ground for your reliance on the obedience of Christ, than for your reliance on the obedience of Gabriel. We are made the righteousness of God, because we are in him as our proxy and our head; because he wrought the justifying righteousness, not only in our nature, but in our name; not only as our benefactor, but as our representative.

"As sin and misery have abounded through the first Adam, mercy and grace have much more abounded through the second. So that now none can have any reason to complain." Here indeed we have Aspasio's words, but in a patched and disfigured condition. Let any one read the whole of these passages, and judge whether they can be fairly applied to the doctrines of election or predestination. Yet Mr. Wesley is resolved at all adventures, with or without occasion, to introduce these subjects of deep and perplexed disputation. Therefore he replies, "No, not if the second Adam died for all; otherwise, all for whom he did not die, have great reason to complain."

Here, Sir, do you not force an inference from Aspasio's words, foreign to his design? He is speaking of those who betake themselves to Christ, and are recovered through his righteousness. Such persons he particularly mentions, of such alone he discourses; without considering the case of others, who, despising or neglecting the Redeemer, reject the counsel of God against themselves. Would it not be as edifying to the reader, and as agreeable to your office, if you should join with Aspasio in displaying the free, superabundant, infinitely rich grace of our God; altogether as becoming this, as to divert his aim, and retard his steps, when he is pressing forwards to this prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus?

Aspasio's words are, "When we betake ourselves to Christ Jesus, we shall find, that as sin and misery have abounded," &c. Please to observe, Sir, how he limits his discourse, consequently is obliged to defend nothing but what corresponds with such limitation.

Had the Israelites any cause to be dissatisfied with the provision made for their sustenance and their cure, when the serpent of brass was lifted up on the pole, and when the bread from heaven lay round about their tents? No more have sinners any cause to think themselves aggrieved, when the salvation of God is evidently set before them in the gospel—is brought to their very door in the preaching of the word—and they are allowed, importuned, commanded to receive it by faith. This is enough for me. Enough this for any transgressors, who want, not to gratify curiosity, but to inherit life. If they, or you, Sir, choose to pry further, and to intrude into the divine secrets, I must leave you to yourselves; saying as I depart, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children," Deut. xxix. 29.

"The whole world of believers." "This is an expression which never occurs in Scripture." It affords me a kind of presumptive proof, that solid objections are not at hand, when such shadows are listed in the service. I should be under no pain if you could prove your charge beyond all contradiction. To what would it amount? Why, that Aspasio having occasion to mention a certain topic, happened not to make use of the very syllables and letters made use of in Scripture. And do you or I, Sir, in all our sermons, journals, preservatives, and Christian libraries, undertake to use none but Scriptural expressions? Had we done this, one benefit might indeed have accrued to the public: It would considerably have reduced our volumes.—But I trifle as well as Mr. Wesley. You proceed to enforce your remonstrance by adding, "Neither has the expression any countenance from Scripture." I am really ashamed to detain our readers any longer upon so trivial a point. Therefore what I am going to reply is only a word to yourself. You, Sir,

can tell who it is that affirms in a certain hymn,

> For every man, 'tis finished, 'tis past,
> The world's forgiven for Jesus' sake.

The world forgiven? What, all the world, every child of Adam? They who believe not on Christ and die in their sins? This you cannot mean; this you dare not assert; this, I think, no mortal can suppose. You yourself therefore, by "the world," must intend "the believing world." And are you offended at Aspasio for commenting on your text? for expressing plainly what is implied in your own words?

"In the Lord shall all the house of Israel be justified." This text Aspasio quotes, and acquiesces in the common version, upon which you animadvert: "It ought unquestionably to be rendered *by* or *through* the Lord." How hard is Aspasio's lot! If he does not use the exact language of Scripture, he is arraigned at your bar—witness the preceding objection; if he does use the exact language of Scripture, as in the present instance, you indict him for an erroneous translation. So that it is next to impossible to escape your censure.

In the Lord, you affirm, is not the pure language of Scripture; it is a wrong translation, "and ought unquestionably to be rendered, *by* or *through* the Lord." Yet, *Quisquis adhuc una partam colitasse Minervam.* Whoever has learnt Hebrew no more than a month, will assure our English reader, that the prefix *b* is the very first word in the Bible. Must it there be translated *by* or *through* the beginning? If our young scholar have only his psalter, he can show the same participle occurring three times within the first verse: *In* the counsel—*in* the way—*in* the seat. Twice in the second verse: His delight is *in* the law—*in* his law will he exercise himself. Three times more in the remainder of the Psalm: "Shall bring forth fruit *in* his season"—"shall not stand *in* judgment"—"neither *in* the congregation of the righteous." Now let the English reader judge for himself, whether the Hebrew prefix must "unquestionably be rendered" in all these places "*by* or *through*." *By* or *through* his season! *By* or *through* the congregation! But I stop; there is no need to apply all the passages. Neither is there any need of critical skill in languages to determine concerning any one of them. Common sense in this case is sufficiently qualified to be our critic and our arbitrator. I only wish, Sir, you had produced the evidence for the corrected version. Then the public might have seen on which side the balance were likely to turn, and which were the most cogent logic: "Aspasio's doctrine is false, therefore the translation is wrong; or, the translation is fair, therefore his doctrine is true."

By this time, I believe, the unlearned reader will begin to discern what degree of credit is due to your criticisms upon the original, and to your alteration of the common version, when they are supported by nothing more than your bare assertion. I also begin to be apprehensive that our canvassing the sense of words, and sifting the dead languages, will be no very agreeable entertainment to any reader: I will therefore for the future be more concise in the execution of this business; especially as I have here given a specimen of what might be done. I will try if it is not possible to animate what would otherwise be dull, and to blend godly edifying with critical disquisition.

"Ye are complete in him." With this translation also Mr. Wesley finds fault; "The words literally rendered are, Ye are filled with him." I am ready to grant that places may be found where the preposition εν must be understood according to your sense. But then every one knows that this is not the native, obvious, literal meaning; rather a meaning swayed, influenced, moulded by the preceding or following word. The literal signification of εν αυτω is as we have rendered it. Nor is there the least occasion to depart from the received interpretation; it is suitable to the context, and to the scope of the whole epistle.

However, we will suppose your criticism to be just. Does this destroy or enervate Aspasio's argument? Would you have one meaning contradict or supplant the other? "Ye are filled with him, therefore ye are not "complete *in* him?" Does the former sense include or imply the latter? Can you, or I, or any one, be filled with every requisite for our recovery and happiness, yet not be complete? It seems therefore you get nothing by this criticism, but the satisfaction of doing violence to the phrase, without any improvement of the sense, or any advantage to your cause.

"The whole passage, (you affirm) relates to sanctification, not to justification." Where is your proof, Sir? This we always expect. This Mr. Wesley seldom, if ever, condescends to give. "Yes, (he says,) any unprejudiced reader may observe it." A strange kind of proof! reducible to no figure in logic, unless there be a figure styled *presumption.* Was I to answer for the unprejudiced reader, I think he would observe the very reverse. The words of the apostle are not a little forcible against your sense of the passage, as will appear from the transitive adverb *also.* The next and the subsequent verses, we allow, relate to sanctification: If this verse does the same, such is the manner of the apostle's reasoning, "In

whom ye are sanctified, in whom also ye are sanctified." Whereas, if the first clause denotes the justification of the Colossian converts through the righteousness of Christ; if the following periods describe their sanctification, as a consequence of this most happily operating privilege; then the reasoning is just, and the transition graceful, "In him ye are completely justified, in him also ye are truly sanctified."

The whole passage is calculated to teach us, that Christ is the fulness of our sufficiency. In him, and in him alone, there is enough to answer all the purposes of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It is intended likewise to admonish us, that we should rest satisfied with him alone, in opposition to all the fond inventions of men, who would introduce something else for the ground of our confidence and the cause of our consolation; as though it was said,—

If indeed our Lord Jesus Christ had been an ordinary person, or merely a created being, ye might well be offended at my doctrine: Ye might then with some colour of reason, seek to the maxims of philosophy for wisdom, or to the works of the law for righteousness. But Christ is an immensely glorious person, "for in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:" Christ is an incomparably exalted sovereign, "for he is the head of all principalities and powers:" Yea, Christ is the supreme incomprehensible Jehovah, "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Being therefore transplanted into him by faith, ye are complete partakers of him, ye have every blessing and all good. Thought cannot imagine, nor desire crave, any thing farther, greater, higher.

Matchless privilege! Exalted felicity! O may the knowledge, the experimental knowledge of it, fill our hearts as the waters cover the abyss of the sea! Then will we sing the hymn which once expressed your sentiments, and still expresses mine.

Join earth and heaven to bless
The Lord our righteousness.
The mystery of redemption this,
This the Saviour's strange design;
Man's offence was counted his,
Our's his righteousness divine.

In him complete we shine,
His death, his life is mine.
Fully am I justified;
Free from sin, and more than free;
Guiltless, since for me he died,
Righteous, since he lived for me.*

The text lately quoted from Isaiah, is part of a paragraph eminent for its dignity and usefulness. We then considered a fragment of it in a critical view; let us now examine the whole of it with a devotional spirit. Thus examined, I trust it will be no longer a dry bone, but a feast of fat things full of marrow. Permit me to propose a correct translation of the original, to add a short illustration of the meaning, and then take my leave for the present.

"Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.* By myself have I sworn, the word of righteousness† goeth out of my mouth, the word shall not return. To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, saying, surely in the Lord have I righteousness‡ and strength. To him shall men come, and all that are offended in him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory."

Here the Son of God presents himself in all the glories of his person, and all the riches of his grace: presents himself as the object of faith, and the author of salvation. To be received by sinners without any recommending qualities, or any pre-eminence of one above another. But hear his gracious words:—

"Look unto me," wretched ruined transgressors, as the wounded Israelites looked unto the brazen serpent. Look unto me dying on the cross as your victim, and obeying the law as your surety. Not by doing, but by looking and believing; not by your own deeds, but by my works, and my sufferings, "be ye saved." This is the mysterious, but certain way of salvation. Thus shall ye be delivered from guilt, rescued from hell, and reconciled to God.—Who are invited to partake of this inestimable benefit? "All the ends of the earth." People of every nation under heaven; of every station in life; of every condition and every character, not excepting the chiefest of sinners.

Is it possible that the obedience of one should save innumerable millions? It is not only possible but indubitable. "For I am God," infinite in dignity and power;

* See p. 56 of Hymns and Spiritual Songs. Anonymous, indeed, but universally ascribed to Mr. Wesley. In these excellent lines, how strongly marked are the sentiments of the gospel! Our offences so fully imputed to Christ, as to be accounted his. His righteousness so fully imputed to us, as to be accounted our's. In him we are complete, because his most obedient life, and his all-atoning death are ours. We are guiltless, not through our repentance, or reformation, but because he has died for us. We are righteous, not on account of any graces or attainments of our own, but because he has lived for us. To these truths I most cordially subscribe. This is that good old wine that once made Mr. Wesley's heart glad. He has since tasted new; but I hope he will be brought to say, "The old is better."

* Not any person, nor any thing. *No person* able to lend an helping hand: *No thing* capable of yielding the least assistance.

† "The word of righteousness," signifies, if not the whole gospel, that precious doctrine which is the gospel in epitome.

‡ *Righteousness.* This is the precise signification of the original, which being in the plural number, seems to denote *completeness.* A righteousness, perfect, entire, and lacking nothing: Having every thing necessary for our pardon, our acceptance, our everlasting justification.

therefore all sufficient, yea, omnipotent to save, to save all that come unto me, be the multitudes ever so great, or their cases ever so desperate. Is nothing to be done by transgressors themselves? Are no conditions to be fulfilled on their part? None—"there is nought beside me." No person can take any share in this great transaction. Nothing can in the least degree co-operate with my merits. Should you add to my obedience and death all that saints have performed, and martyrs have endured, it would be like adding a grain to the sands of the ocean, or a moment to the days of eternity.

Such is my compassionate invitation, and this my inviolable decree. "I have not only spoken, but sworn;" sworn by myself and all my incomprehensible excellencies. "The word of righteousness," that which relates to the grandest of all subjects, and most important of all interests, is planned, adjusted, and unalterably determined. Now, even now, "it goes out of my mouth," is declared with the utmost solemnity, and established by veracity itself. The word shall not return, either to be repealed by me, or frustrated by any other. What is the decree confirmed by this most awful oath? We are all attention to hear it. "To me every knee shall bow." Every soul of man who desires to inherit eternal life, shall submit to my righteousness, and as an unworthy creature, as an obnoxious criminal, obtain the blessing wholly through my atonement. "To me every tongue shall swear." Be man's supposed virtues ever so various, or ever so splendid, all shall be disclaimed, and my worthiness alone shall stand. Renouncing every other trust, they shall repose the confidence of their souls on me alone, and make public confession of this their faith before the whole world. But we, O Lord, are ignorant, we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness. This then shall be the form of your oath, such the tenor of your confession.—

Surely—It is a most wonderful, yet a most faithful saying, extremely comfortable and equally certain. *Only*—not in myself, not in a poor frail creature, but *in* the incarnate Jehovah alone, in his divinely excellent deeds, and unutterably meritorious sufferings, *I have righteousness*, a righteousness without spot, without defect, and in all respects consummate; such as satisfies every requirement of the law, and most thoroughly expiates all my iniquities; such as renders me completely accepted before my judge, and entitles me to everlasting life. From the joyful knowledge, the personal appropriation, and the perpetual improvement of this inestimable privilege, I have *strength* for my sanctification. Now do I indeed delight myself in the Lord, who, perfectly reconciled, and infinitely gracious, has done so great things for me; now do I cordially love my neighbour, and being so happy myself, unfeignedly long for his eternal happiness, that he may be a partaker with me of this great salvation.

To this sovereign decree the prophet sets as it were his seal, or else in a transport of joy he foretells the accomplishment of it. Yes, my brethern, *to him*, even to this gracious Redeemer, *shall men come*. I see them flying as clouds for multitude, as doves for speed. They believe the report of his gospel, and receive of his fulness. Whereas, *all they that are offended in him*, that cannot away with his doctrine, which pours contempt upon all human excellency, and will allow no righteousness to avail but that which is divine; who refuse to come unto him, poor and miserable, and stript of every recommendation; all they *shall be ashamed*. The fig-leaves of their own duties, or their own endowments, shall neither adorn them for glory, nor screen them from wrath, but shall abandon them to vengeance, and cover them with double confusion. While, on the other hand, *all the seed of Israel*, every true believer, shall be justified in the Lord. Against those persons no accusation shall be valid; no condemnation shall take place. So magnificent is the majesty, so surpassingly efficacious are the merits of their Saviour, that in him they shall not only confide, *but glory;* not only be safe, but triumphant. Clothed with his incomparable righteousness, they shall challenge every adversary, and defy every danger.

To this portion of Scripture I have led back your thoughts, that I might not close with any disgusting sentiments, but might leave a sweet savour on your mind, on the reader's mind, and on the mind of, Reverend Sir, yours, &c.

LETTER III.

Reverend Sir,—Let me now resume my observations on your epistle; which I do, not for the sake of disputing, but for the cause of truth.

The gospel contains many sublime and glorious truths. But there is one, which, beyond all others, characterises its nature, its import, and design; which makes it most eminently to differ from every other form of religion, professed or known in the world;—I mean the doctrine of free justification, through the righteousness of Christ. This is to the religion of Jesus, what the particular features and turns of countenance are to each individual person.

I have sometimes amused myself with standing by a painter, and observing him at his work. Here, I have been surprised to see, how much a very little stroke would alter the aspect of his draught; would turn the gay into a melancholy, or the composed into a frantic countenance. Several of Mr. Wesley's touches are to appearance small; but, I fear, they will be found to disfigure, more than a little, the heavenly portrait; and give a new, not the native air, to the truth as it is in Jesus. But I proceed; my business being to prove, not to blame.

Sinners who betake themselves to the all-sufficient Saviour for redemption, are fully accepted by God, for his beloved Son's sake. "This is Justification through imputed righteousness," says Aspasio: "that remains to be proved," answers Mr. Wesley. I think it is pretty largely, and I would hope, it is satisfactorily proved, through the whole book. Nay, I find Mr. Wesley himself ere long acknowledging, that, "as to the doctrine we are agreed." Either therefore you have received the proof which you demand, or else you can submit without conviction, and agree without cause of agreement. Not to take advantage of such slips, I would rather enlarge upon what may be useful.

I would ask Mr. Wesley, in what other way sinners can be justified or accepted, save only through imputed righteousness? Through their own good deeds and holy tempers? This supposes the fruits to be good, while the tree is corrupt; and would make salvation to be of works, not of grace. Through their own faith standing in the law? Then they are justified before a perfect God, by an imperfect endowment; and life eternal is obtained by the exercises of their own mind, not by the merits of Jesus Christ. Are they justified without any righteousness, either wrought by themselves, or received* from another? This is an unworthy thought: this were an insufferable practice—Jehovah himself being judge. "He that justifieth the wicked is an abomination."†

Say not, God is a free agent, and not bound to observe his own law. Say rather, the rule of righteousness revealed in the law, is his most steadfast will, unchangeable as his nature. Consider also what this law requires: A satisfaction for sin, not defective, but completely sufficient; a performance of the command, not sincere only, but absolutely perfect. Will God, in justifying a sinner, disregard, contradict, overthrow his own law? in no wise. Since then it insists upon what no mortal can yield, must not all flesh perish for ever?

This would be the unavoidable consequence, if matters rested upon human abilities. But here the blessed gospel comes to our relief; shewing us, that God in his immense mercy and unsearchable wisdom, has found out a way, at once to satisfy the unalterable law, and save insolvent man; to justify even the chief of sinners, yet without the least violation of justice, truth, or holiness. What is this way? his own Son accomplishes the great work. How? By relaxing the precepts of the law, that we may perform them? By disannulling the sentence of the law, that we may escape it? Heaven and earth shall pass away, before any such dishonourable expedient takes place. On the contrary, he gives satisfaction to the sentence, by suffering the tremendous punishment denounced; and he fulfils the precept, by yielding the sinless obedience required. Because this was to be finished in the nature which had transgressed, therefore he was made man; because this was to be truly, or rather infinitely meritorious, therefore the man was one person with the Godhead.

Still it may be inquired, how the obedience of another can relieve my distress? How indeed, but by God's transferring my guilt to him, and imputing his obedience to me. By this method, the thing is clearly and completely effected. In this method, I see a propriety and an efficacy that silence my doubts, and comfort my heart. Accordingly, it is written in the Scriptures, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." *God;* the work was too arduous to be performed by a created agent. Therefore God himself *was in Christ.* None less than the almighty Lord could execute the business. But if he undertake it, how successfully must it be carried on, and how gloriously finished! *Reconciling the world;* not setting poor transgressors to reconcile themselves, but himself contriving all, providing all, doing and suffering all that was needful for this great purpose. Being himself the creditor, the sponsor, and payer of the debt, how was all this brought to pass? By *not imputing our trespasses unto us;* but taking them all upon himself; bearing them all, in his own body upon the tree; and sustaining the vengeance due to all our crimes. Thus was the Holy One and the just "made sin for us; that we (sinful dust and ashes,) might (in the very same manner) be made the righteousness of God in

* "They who receive the gift of righteousness." Rom. v. 17.

† Prov. xvii. 15. This is an invariable maxim. It is that word of God which endureth for ever. Yet it is no objection to his method of justifying the ungodly. Because he first imputes his Son's righteousness unto them; thereby renders them truly and perfectly righteous; then pronounces them such; and as such, receives them to pardon, to favour, and eternal life. Does not the text, thus considered, afford an incontestable argument for the necessity of an imputed righteousness?

him." The former could be only by imputation, and so only can be the latter.

If men talk of being accepted for Christ's sake, yet reject the imputation of righteousness, they must have very inadequate notions concerning the relation which Christ bears to his people, and the nature of his mediatorial undertaking. Does this seem obscure? I explain myself: A person may conduct himself so honourably and excellently, as, on account of his worthy deeds, to obtain favour in behalf of another; and this without being his surety, or any thing like his proper righteousness. Witness the famous instance of the two brothers, Amyntas and Æschylus. The former was a gallant hero, who exposed his life, and lost his arm, in defence of his country: The latter was an abandoned and infamous profligate, whose crimes had brought him to the bar of public justice. The hero, on the day of trial, appeared as an advocate for his brother. He spoke nothing, but only lifted up to view the maimed and dismembered arm. This silent oratory struck the assembly, and pleaded so powerfully that the criminal was unanimously acquitted. Here was an acquittal of one, in consideration of the merits of another; but then the obnoxious party had no special interest in those merits. They were not acquired or exercised with a particular reference to his good. He could not say, They are mine. Neither did they make him, in any degree or in any sense, righteous. Whereas, the reverse of all this is true with regard to Jesus Christ and justified sinners. This you and I, Sir, have asserted. Let us never retract the good confession. But, as it is the truth of the gospel, let us still and for ever say,

In him complete we shine;

Because

Ours is rghteousness divine.

Theron, speaking of the terms *inherent* and *imputed*, calls them nice distinctions and metaphysical subtilties. Mr. Wesley makes Aspasio apply the depreciating remark to the active and passive righteousness of Christ. Whereas, he says no such thing; he means no such thing. He is treating of a subject totally different. And were he to maintain such a sentiment, every one must observe, it would entirely overthrow his whole scheme.

"You oblige us to make use of metaphysical subtilties, by confounding those very different ideas, that is, Christ's active and passive righteousness." I could hardly believe my eyes for some time, though both of them attested that this was produced as a quotation from Aspasio. In which place, and for a considerable space before and after, the subject of debate is the *difference* between *inherent* and *imputed* righteousness. I was, I own, quite vexed to see Aspasio so maltreated; his discourse so misrepresented; and so little regard paid to literary justice. And glad I am, that I did not give vent to my thoughts just at that instant. I might have been too warm, and not have spared the rod. But upon cooler consideration I began to recover, and the prescription of Horace was of service,

Amara lento temperat risu.

I began to call your conduct, not artifice or slight of hand, but incogitancy or thought misapplied. As you had been thinking so long upon the other topic, it dwelt upon your imagination, kept this from your attention, and led you both to mistake and to miscall things. Like a certain preacher, who, having lost his fortune in the bubbles of the year 1719, and having occasion to mention the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, told his audience, that Pharaoh and his host were all drowned in the South Sea! Poor man! He meant the Red Sea.

Mr. Wesley proceeds: "We do not confound the active and passive righteousness." Does Aspasio, Sir? he that considers them particularly and distinctly? he that examines each with a critical and minute exactness? If this be to confound, order and confusion have changed their nature.

"Neither do we separate them." It is somewhat difficult to understand what you mean by separating the active and passive righteousness of our Lord. Separating them as to their influence? Then you must be sensible this is never done by Aspasio. You cannot but know, that he disclaims such a refinement. He protests against such a practice. Do you mean, treating them as things really distinct, though always uniting their agency? Then I am at a loss to reconcile Mr. Wesley with himself. For in the very next paragraph he thus expresses himself: "Through the merits of his life and death, every believer is justified." Are not the merits of his life here distinguished from the merits of his death? Does not the former expression denote his active, the latter his passive obedience? Or would you be understood to mean, "Through the merits of his life, which are nothing else but the merits of his death?" If you would not speak in this manner, so unworthy of your better judgment, you do the very thing which you blame. This is done still more apparently in one of your hymns, where we see, not only a separation, but a distinct use and application of the separated subjects:

Grant this, O Lord, for thou hast died
That I might be forgiven;
Thou hast the righteousness supplied,
For which I merit heaven.

I could easily excuse Mr. Wesley for being a little inconsistent with himself, did he not also venture to confront the apostle by

the following assertion: "Neither have we any authority from Scripture, for either thinking or speaking of one separate from the other." Does not St. Paul in one passage speak of the obedience, in another of the death of Christ? Does he not in one place enlarge upon the righteousness, in another upon the blood, of Christ? If so, we have an authority from Scripture, we have the example of the chiefest apostle, for this way of thinking and speaking.

We have also a concurrent testimony from the genius and import of the original language. Do not υπακοη and δικαιοσυνη signify somewhat different from αιμα and θανατος? Are there any approved writers who use these words promiscuously, as so many synonymous and convertible terms? If not, the voice of grammar will vindicate the propriety of our conduct, while we assign a separate discourse to each subject, and exhibit them severally in the most distinct view.

Are not light and heat always united in the sun? Is the naturalist to blame who considers them distinctly, and examines each property in a separate treatise? You would commend this practice in the philosopher, as the way to enter thoroughly into the knowledge of his subject; and why should you explode or censure it in the Christian divine? Are not theological truths as worthy of a circumstantial and accurate investigation as philosophical? Will they not as amply reward our diligence, and yield as rich advantage to the serious inquirer?

"The righteousness which justifies sinners, is always wrought out," says Aspasio: "A crude unscriptural expression," replies Mr. Wesley. It may be so. But if the expression is plain and true, I will sit down content. This, however, you will allow me to observe, that it is no new one, and is not far from scriptural. *Worketh righteousness*, you know, is a scriptural phrase. Does the word *out* spoil it, or the word *already?* I suppose the latter may be most offensive. Yet you speak, in this very paragraph, of being "justified by the merits of Christ's life and death." Are not these matters already transacted? Is not the merit of them already perfect? Or can any language express these things more clearly, and affirm them more strongly, than those emphatical words in one of your own hymns?

> Let us for this faith contend,
> Sure salvation is its end:
> Heaven *already* is begun,
> Everlasting life is won.

Pardon me, then, Sir, if I still suspect, that the doctrine and its consequences, rather than the expression and its crudity, awaken your jealousy. If this doctrine be admitted, if the justifying righteousness be already wrought, it must absolutely overturn all your prerequisites, qualifications, and conditions—conditions of repentance, obedience, and I know not what besides. We must say to every one of them, as Jehu said to the messengers of Joram, What hast thou to do with the grand article of justification? Get thee behind me. Could they be fulfilled, they would come a day too late; like the sickle, when the harvest is reaped. Could they be fulfilled in all their imaginary dignity, they would, in this relation, be needless; like a proposal for augmenting the splendour of the sun.

"The righteousness which justifies sinful man, was set on foot when God sent forth his Son from the habitation of his holiness and glory, to be born of a woman, and made subject to the law: It was carried on through the whole course of our Saviour's life, in which he always did such things as were pleasing to his heavenly Father: It was completed at that ever-memorable, that grand period, when the blessed Immanuel bowed his dying head, and cried with a strong triumphant voice, It is finished." Upon this extract from Aspasio's discourse, Mr. Wesley exclaims, "O vain philosophy!"—Philosophy! This philosophy, Sir? Never did I hear, till this moment, such doctrines ascribed to philosophy. But this I have heard, and this I believe, that the world, even the learned and philosophic world, by their boasted wisdom knew not God, nor God's method of salvation by the sufferings of an innocent, and the obedience of a divine person. Their philosophy prejudiced them against it, puffed them up with a vain conceit of their own sufficiency, and set them at the greatest distance from submitting to the righteousness of God.

I wish, Sir, you would shew me in which of the philosophers I might find these sacred sentiments; or a grain, or a spice, or a savour of them. I have for a considerable time laid aside my Plato, and have no more inclination to turn over my Seneca; because I can see nothing like this divinely precious truth adorning and enriching their pages. But if you will discover this golden vein in their works, I will immediately renew my acquaintance with them; and will do the philosophers a piece of justice which Mr. Wesley denies them: I will not call their philosophy vain, but the "wisdom of God, and the power of God." A righteousness wrought out, and a redemption obtained for us! The former divine! The latter eternal! These, rightly understood, make us, beyond all the treasures of literature, wise. These, habitually enjoyed, will, more effectually than all the delineations of morality, or exhortations to virtue, render us holy.

A divine righteousness (pardon me for dwelling on my favourite topic) already wrought! A great redemption perfectly

finished! And this by the abasement, the ignominy, the indignities—by the cries, the agonies, the blood of our Saviour; yea, of our God, "in fashion as a man!" in the form of a servant, a slave, an execrable malefactor! What like this did a thousand philosophers teach? What like this do a thousand of their volumes contain, to stab our pride, to tame our fury, and to quench our lust; to kindle our benevolence, to inflame our devotion; to make us, in a word, "wise unto salvation?"

"The plain truth is, Christ lived and tasted death for ever man." "To be sure. then, since every man is not saved by him, he lived and died only to make their salvation possible." From this, and other hints, I guess your opinion to be, that Christ, by his life and death, obtained only a possibility of salvation; which salvation is to become our own, upon performing terms and conditions, bringing with us prerequisites and qualifications. If I mistake you, Sir, in this case, you have nothing more to do, than simply to deny my supposition. This exculpates you at once. I shall rejoice to hear you say, as Christ made us, and not we ourselves; in like manner he saves us, and not we ourselves. No human endowments, no human performances, but Christ alone, is the author of eternal salvation.

Should you reply, True, Christ is the author of eternal salvation, but *to those* only *who obey Him:* I must then ask, what obedience Christ requires? the law says, Do, and live. Christ, the end of the law, says, Believe in me, and live. Be verily persuaded, that I am sufficient for thy salvation, without any working of thine at all. Is not the Son, the Son of the most high God, given unto thee in the divine record? Be satisfied with *his* doing and suffering, without wishing for or thinking of any thing more, to procure thy final acceptance.—Let no one account lightly of this obedience. It is the obedience of faith; the obedience suited to the name of Jesus; obedience to the first and great command of the gospel. Beyond all other expedients, it excludes boasting; and at the same time produces that genuine love, that filial fear, which the law of works requires in vain.

Only to make a thing possible, and to effect it, are widely different. When our king fits out a fleet, and gives his admiral a commission to harass the French coasts, and destroy the French shipping, he makes the thing possible; but to carry the design into execution, to accomplish the enterprise now become practicable, is a far more arduous task, and a far more honourable achievement. How strangely do those writers derogate from the dignity and glory of the Redeemer, who would ascribe to him what corresponds with the former, and attribute to man what bears a resemblance to the latter!

If Christ only made our salvation possible, then we are to execute the plan; we are to face the enemy, to sustain the charge, and silence the battery; we are to climb the steep, to enter the breach, and bring off the standards; and so, in all reason, the honour and praise must be our own. Whereas, the gospel gives all the honour to the Captain of our Salvation: He bore the heat and burden of the dreadful day: He made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness: So that all our officious attempts, like a pinnace arriving after the victory, should be told, 'it is finished;' the great salvation is already wrought. And instead of being dissatisfied or disappointed, methinks we should rejoice, unfeignedly rejoice, in the accomplishment of the glorious work.

If it should occur to the reader's mind, that the Christian life is represented as a warfare; and that we ourselves are commanded to fight, though under the banner of our divine Leader: To this doubt I would answer, the Canaanite is still in the land; and we fight, not to gain the country, but only to subdue the rebels.

"Whoever perverts so glorious a doctrine, shows he never believed." This may be the substance of what Aspasio maintains, though not represented so fully or so clearly as he has expressed himself; however, such a small wrong we will readily excuse. It was done with no sinister intention, but for the sake of brevity.

To this position Mr. Wesley replies, Not so; that is, they did really and truly believe; but after their belief, they apostatized and fell from the faith: They were some time the members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost; but, quickly severed from their divine head, they became the slaves of the devil, and brands for the everlasting burning: Their names were indeed written in heaven; but it seems the heavenly records were less faithful than the parish register: They were quickly erased, and their place in the book of life knew them no more. Or thus: They did as really and truly believe, as those who are now in the mansions of glory; but, after their true knowledge of the name of the Lord Jesus; after their full conviction of his sufficiency and faithfulness for their salvation, even such as inclined and enabled them to put their trust in him alone, for their acceptance with God, they were disappointed. Though Christ called them his sheep, as thus hearing his voice, yet he did not give unto them eternal life according to his promise, but suffered Satan to pluck them out of his hand.

These sentiments have no very probable, much less have they a pleasing or recommending aspect. Let us inquire whether they comport with St. John's determination of the case. Speaking of such backsliders, he says "They went out from us, but they were not of us." Mr. Wesley, to be consistent with himself, should say on this occasion, Not so; they were of you, but they fell away from you. The apostle proceeds, "For if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us." Had they been really converted, they would most undoubtedly have continued in our doctrine and fellowship. Their revolt from our *doctrine* is a manifest proof that they never truly received it, nor with their heart believed it. Their departure from our *fellowship*, is an evident indication that they were, notwithstanding all their professions, still carnal, and never renewed by grace.

Mr. Wesley produces a text from St. Peter, with a view to support his objection. They who "turn back as a dog to his vomit, had once escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ." Here and elsewhere I perceive the cannon roar, but without feeling the ball. Before this piece of sacred artillery can be brought to bear upon us, it will be necessary to prove, that the knowledge of Christ, or even believing in Christ, always signifies true faith. In some places it certainly does; in other places, it signifies no such thing. "Though I have all knowledge, says the apostle, yet even with this specious endowment I may be nothing." There is a knowledge, says the same author, which, instead of edifying, or establishing the soul in godliness, puffeth up with pride. We are likewise assured, that Simon the sorcerer, though in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, yet had "knowledge of the things which concern the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ;" nay, that he also believed, yet had neither lot nor portion in the inestimable blessing.

Let us attend to the apostle's manner, and we shall be led to put the same interpretation upon the phrase, as it is used in the passage before us. These people are not described like the true believers to whom he addresses the epistle. Here is no mention of their being "partakers of a divine nature; of being born again by the incorruptible seed; or of having their souls purified by the Spirit." They are only said to have "escaped the pollutions of the world." Again, the word expressive of these pollutions is μιασματα, which denotes the grossest excesses, and most scandalous iniquities. Consequently, their abstaining from such abominations implies no more than what is called a negative goodness, or a mere external reformation. Their lusts had been restrained only, not subdued. Therefore the unhappy wretches were easily overcome by their old corruptions. It is farther observable, that St. Peter never considers these persons as new creatures. He calls them by no other name than the dog and the sow. Such they were at first; no better, under all their profession of Christianity; and no other, even in their foulest relapses. When they returned again to their vomit, or other filthy practices, they returned to their own.

There is, then, a knowledge of Christ, which is only superficial and notional, floats idly on the understanding, but neither penetrates nor sanctifies the heart. There is also a knowledge of Christ, which is wrought out by the Spirit, and ingrafted into the soul; which receives the gift of righteousness, and brings justification into the conscience: the comfort and joy of which mortify the love of sin, and produce the life of holiness. This knowledge, Sir, may you and I teach; in this knowledge may our hearers and readers abound; and may the divine power give us, by means of this knowledge, all things pertaining to life and godliness.

"The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." "This is unquestionably true;" says Mr. Wesley; "but the nice metaphysical doctrine of imputed righteousness —." Should you not rather have said, the nice metaphysical *phrase?* since, as to the doctrine, we are, according to your own confession, agreed; bound, therefore, each of us equally bound, to clear it of the consequences with which it may be charged by the author of the Preservative, or any other objector. And as to the phrase, I cannot understand by what authority Mr. Wesley calls it *metaphysical*. Theron, it is true, uses the word, and applies it to the present subject; but does not Mr. Wesley know, that Theron often personates an enemy, and speaks the language of unbelief?—Be pleased, Sir, to explain your term, and show in what sense it is compatible with this article of my faith: "I am acquitted and counted righteous before God, only through the imputation of my Saviour's obedience and death;" which is, both in style and sentiment, truly evangelical, but in no degree, that I can discern, metaphysical.

When Mr. Wesley adds, "This leads not to repentance, but to licentiousness," he speaks what we understand, not what we allow. Will any one say, that speculative reasoning upon the goodness of God, or contemplating it barely in our ideas, leadeth to repentance; but when we taste and enjoy, when we apply and appropriate, his profusely rich liberality in Christ, we are thereby prompted to neglect, abuse, and dishonour our great benefactor? Or shall it be said, the divine goodness, manifested

in common providence and inferior instances, tends to awaken love and work godliness; but the same divine goodness, shining forth in the most illustrious manifestation that men or angels ever knew; shining forth with a glory, a richness, a perfection, sufficient to transport heaven and earth with joy unspeakable—this goodness tends to excite contempt of God, and to cherish carnal indulgence? Such an insinuation, so depreciatory to the righteousness of the blessed Jesus, I had much rather have heard in a Jewish synagogue, than have seen in Mr. Wesley's writings.

No, Sir, this and this alone, leadeth a sinner to repentance. Not all the munificence of the Deity, neither the rain from heaven, nor fruitful seasons, neither the fatness of the earth nor the abundance of the seas, can take away the enmity of our nature, and reconcile our affections to God. Nothing, nothing but a sense of pardon and acceptance, through the work finished on Immanuel's cross. If you please to review the text, you will not affirm that the apostle is asserting the efficacious influence of providential goodness on the hearts of men. He is evidently inveighing against the gross and almost general abuse of such bounty. Though it ought, it does not produce gratitude and duty. It would indeed upon upright, but it does not thus operate upon depraved minds. No cause is adequate to this effect, but free justification through Jesus Christ.

"The believer cannot but add to his faith, works of righteousness." "During his first love," says Mr. Wesley, "this is often true; but it is not true afterwards, as we know and feel by melancholy experience." How, Sir! Do you yourself feel this? Where, then, is your sinless perfection? Can they be perfect whose love ceases to glow, and whose zeal loses its activity? Does Mr. Wesley himself make this confession? Let him then say with us, and let us say with invariable steadfastness, and with increasing gratitude, Blessed be God for perfection in Jesus Christ.

Do you learn, Sir, what is here acknowledged, by observations made upon others? Then those others, I apprehend, if they do not exercise themselves in good works, either have no faith, and deceive both you and themselves; or else they intermit and discontinue the exertion of their faith; which neither detracts from the efficacy of the principle, nor disproves Aspasio's opinion. It is not said the believer never trips nor faulters in the course of his obedience; but he always adds to his faith the duties and works of obedience. Whenever the former acts, the latter constantly ensue. So long as we live by the faith of the Son of God, we shall not fail to bring forth those fruits of righteousness which are through Jesus Christ.

This is strongly maintained by Aspasio in another place: "It is as impossible for the sun to be in his meridian height, and not dissipate darkness, or diffuse light, as for faith to exist in the soul, and not exalt the temper and meliorate the conduct." This is very forcibly implied in our Lord's interrogation to his disciples, Where is your faith? It must be dormant and inactive, like the sap of the trees in winter, or like the faculty of reasoning in sleep; otherwise, it would banish your fears, even amidst the raging storm, and produce an undaunted confidence in God your Saviour. The design of all this is, to evince the wisdom of the gospel, which lays such a stress upon faith; so frequently urges the necessity of faith, above and before all things; representing it as the principal work of the divine Spirit, and the great instrument of receiving salvation. Hence it appears that the sacred plan is not formed in vain; much less is it calculated to suppress or discourage real holiness.

"We no longer obey, in order to lay the foundation for our final acceptance:" These words I read with pleasure.—"That foundation is already laid in the merits of Christ:" These I contemplate with still greater satisfaction. But when I come to the following clause, "Yet we obey, in order to our final acceptance through his merits," with disappointment and regret I cry, How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!

A foundation, for what? Aspasio would reply, For pardon, for reconciliation, and for everlasting salvation; for peace of conscience, for access to God, for every spiritual and eternal blessing. A foundation, of what kind? In all respects perfect; incapable of any augmentation; not to be strengthened, enlarged, or improved by all the duties and all the deeds of prophets, apostles, martyrs; because it has omnipotence for its establishment. A foundation, for whom? For sinners; for the vilest and most miserable of sinners; that all guilty and undone wretches may come, and though ever so weary, ever so heavy laden, may cast their burden upon this Rock of ages, in full assurance of finding rest, and obtaining safety.

This is cheering; this is charming. What pity it is that such an illustrious truth should be clouded, such a precious privilege spoiled, by that ungracious sentence, "We obey in order to our final acceptance!" But is this, Sir, your constant profession? I must do you the justice to own, that you have happier moments, and more becoming apprehensions. When you join in public worship, this is your humble and just acknow-

ledgment, "Although we be unworthy through our manifold sins to offer unto thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech thee to accept this our bounden duty and service." When you criticise upon Aspasio, the note is changed, and this is the purport of your strain, "We beseech thee to accept us on account of these our services; for we do them, O Lord, with a professed view to this end." To implore acceptance for our duties, confesses them to be mean and contemptible; whereas, to expect acceptance on their account, strongly intimates their excellency; that they are worthy in a very high degree, so as to obtain favour, not for themselves only, but for a miserable creature also, who confesses himself subject to manifold sins.

I said, "on account of;" for if you obey in order to your final acceptance, surely you must expect final acceptance and eternal life on account of your own obedience. A poor object displays his sores, and relates his distress, in order to obtain your alms: Does he not then expect your alms on account of his sores, his distress, and his piteous tale? What a coalition is here between Mr. Wesley and the subjects of the triple crown! I find the whole council of Trent establishing his sentiments by their anathematizing decree. These are their words: "If any one shall say that the righteous ought not for their own good works to expect the eternal reward through the merits of Jesus Christ, let him be accursed," De Bon. Oper. Can. xxvi. Do you speak of the merit of Christ? So do they. Do you, in some sense, allow Christ to be the foundation? So do they. Are your works to rear the edifice, and perform the most respectable part of the business? So are theirs.

By this time, I believe, the thoughtful reader will guess the reason why you oppose and decry imputed righteousness. You are solicitous, it seems, not barely for works of obedience, but for their value and credit in the affair of salvation; for their significancy and influence in winning the good will of Jehovah. Since this is your notion, you may well be offended at Christ's imputed righteousness. This will admit of no partner or coadjutor. This, Sir, in the case of justification, pours contempt upon all your most laborious exercises, and admired attainments. Yea, this being divine and inconceivably excellent, pours all around a blaze of glory, in which all our puny doings are lost, as the stars in the meridian sunshine.

"We obey in order to our final acceptance." Methinks this discovers no more gratitude than wisdom. Is it not an officious indignity to that noble goodness which has set forth Jesus Christ for a propitiation? Is it not a contemptuous disregard of that heavenly voice which said, with so much solemnity, "in him I am well pleased" with the children of men? Does this exalt, does it not degrade, the Saviour? Does it mortify, does it not cherish, the pride of man? According to this scheme, the merits of our Lord are the foundation, not immediately of our acceptance, but of that situation only in which we are supposed capable of acquiring it ourselves. They are, in short, no more than a mere pedestal, on which human worth, or rather human vanity, may stand exalted, and challenge the favour of Heaven.

Ah, Sir! Acceptance with God is an immensely rich and glorious blessing; a high and transcendently precious privilege: incomparably too high and glorious to be obtained, in any degree, by such mean obedience as yours and mine. The pardon of rebels against the King of kings! The reception of leprous sinners into the bosom of heaven! Shall such effects—than which nothing can be greater; shall such benefits —than which nothing can be richer—be ascribed to human obedience? What but the very distraction of our disease can have occasioned, or can account for, a thought so extreme in absurdity? [Shall we, sordid wretches, with our ulcerous sores, our withered limbs, and a stupor over all our faculties; shall we think ourselves able to do something for him who needeth not the service of angels? Nay, to do something considerable enough to found a claim to that transcendent honour and happiness, the light of his countenance?] Our adoration! Our thanksgivings! Our praises! Our prayers! Our preaching! Our sacramental duties! What are they all but filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6, compared with his inconceivable holiness and glory? What part of his work do we attempt, but we debase it with our deplorable imperfections, or pollute it with our very touch?—Shame then belongs to us, shame and confusion of face, whenever we look to ourselves or our own performances; while all our comfort, all our hope, is to be derived from the only righteous one, Christ Jesus.

If we know not enough of our own meanness and impotency, let us listen to the prophet, Isaiah xl. 15, 16, 17. In order to our acceptance with God, he informs us, Lebanon with all her stately cedars is not sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts that range through her extensive shades, sufficient for a burnt-offering. Nations, whole nations, avail no more than single persons. Should they unite their abilities, and exert all their efforts, to do something which may recommend them to Jehovah; all would be mean, ineffectual, despicable. Mean, as the drop of a bucket, which falls to the ground, and none regards it. Ineffectual as the dust upon the balance, which wants even that

small degree of impetus necessary to turn the most nicely poised scales; despicable as the atom that floats in the air, and has not weight enough to settle itself on any object. Should you reply, In all these things there is some, though very little substance: the prophet farther declares, that all nations in the world, with all their virtues, accomplishments, and works, would before the infinitely majestic God be as nothing, less than nothing, yea, vanity itself; incapable, absolutely incapable of winning his favour, or doing any thing worthy of his notice. Blessed, therefore, for ever blessed be divine grace, that we have a great High-priest, in whom God is pleased, is well pleased, and his very soul delighteth; whose sacrifice and whose work have merited all the good that sinners can want, or the Almighty can bestow.

If we are not yet duly humbled, nor willing to profess ourselves beholden to divine grace alone; if we still resolve to be principals or partners with the one Mediator in the purchase of the inestimable jewel, let us fear, lest the Lord our righteousness resent such a dishonour done to himself, and swear in his wrath, that we shall have neither lot nor portion in this matter. Of this he has expressly warned us by his apostle; "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." What would St Paul teach us by this solemn protestation? that no Jew can be saved? himself was an Hebrew of the Hebrews, circumcised the eighth day. That a Christian would, by receiving circumcision after his conversion to Christ, forfeit all his privileges? No; for he himself circumcised Timothy, to gain him a fair hearing from the judaizing bigots. Or is cirumcision here used by way of synecdoche for the ceremonial law; teaching us, that as the Mosaic rites were now abolished, an attempt to continue the observance of them would be an unpardonable opposition to the designs of providence? The charitable compromise, recorded in the xivth to the Romans, leads to a different conclusion. Or did those seducing teachers, who required this conformity from the Gentile converts, require them to renounce Christ, and relapse into mere Judaism? Neither is this at all supposable. They only required such a conformity, "in order to their acceptance through his merits;" which they never rejected, but only placed as a foundation for their own.

What then can be meant by, "Christ shall profit you nothing, if ye be circumcised?" If ye make circumcision, or any thing whatever besides the righteousness of Christ, necessary to your acceptance with God, ye shall receive no advantage from all that the Redeemer has done or suffered? This is to halt between works and grace, between Christ and self: and such divided regard he will interpret as an affront rather than an acceptable homage. Indeed, this is in Christians the grand apostasy. By this they deny the sufficiency of their Saviour's most consummate righteousness. They cast themselves entirely out of the covenant of grace, and must expect no salvation but by doing the whole law.

This is the awful apostolic caution: To which let me subjoin the plain apostolic instruction. *Ye are accepted*, says St. Paul, not partially, but entirely; not ocasionally but finally, *in the Beloved*. All acceptance, of whatever kind or whatever date, is wholly in him, not in any thing of our own. The author to the Hebrews affirms, That Christ "hath obtained redemption," not left it to be accomplished, either in greater or smaller measure, by our diligence and duties. No; he himself hath obtained, both present and final, yea, complete and eternal "redemption for us." And will you, Sir, ascribe to your own obedience what the apostle so expressly ascribes, and so entirely appropriates, to the blessed Jesus? The same writer assures us that Christ, "by one offering, hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Them that are cleansed with the blood of sprinkling, he hath not only discharged from the guilt of sin, but rendered them unblamable and unreproveable before the Majesty of heaven. He hath done all that is necessary for their full, perfect, and everlasting acceptation. Yes, whether it be in life or death; whether it be at the throne of grace, or the tribunal of judgment; during the span of time, or through the ages of eternity, all that is necessary for our perfect acceptation is done,—done by an infinitely better hand than our own, by an infinitely better expedient than any human obedience.

Do I, by these remonstrances, set at nought true holiness, or suppose a salvation separate from holy obedience? You, Sir, cannot entertain such a supposition; since, in your very last remark, you was dissatisfied with my insisting on the inseparable connexion of a living faith and works of righteousness. I honour and prize works of righteousness. I would incessantly inculcate, both the indispensable necessity and the manifold utility of holy obedience. We are redeemed, that we may be zealous of good works: We are created in Christ Jesus, that we may be able to do good works: And by good works we are to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Only I would have good works know their proper station and their office. I am far from setting at nought the services of the hand or the foot; but I should very much disapprove their design, I should utterly despise their pretensions, if they should offer to intrude themselves on the province of the eye,

or act as the organs of sight. Apply this simile to the obedience of man, and justification before God, or acceptance with God; you will then see in what rank I place, in what esteem I hold, both the one and the other.

As I would have obedience know its proper place, so I would have it take a right form. The obedience which you propose is the obedience of the bondman, not of the free. A slave bought with our money, obeys in order to be accepted. A servant hired to dispatch our business obeys in order to receive his wages. But the child obeys because he is beloved; because he is the heir, and all things which the father hath are his.

"Obey in order to acceptance!" Indeed, Sir, you quite mistake the principle and source of Christian obedience. Nor shall I undertake to rectify your mistaken apprehensions, lest you should scorn to learn from an inferior. I will refer you to a set of teachers, from whom you need not blush to receive instruction. But as this may demand a very particular consideration, I shall postpone it to some future opportunity, and assign to it a distinct epistle.

In the mean time, if you should ask, why I have been so copious upon this point? I answer, Because it is a matter of the utmost importance. An error on this subject, is as detrimental to our spiritual welfare as a fault in the first concoction is to the animal constitution. A mistake concerning acceptance with God, must set in a false light every religious truth, and shed a malignant influence on every religious sentiment.

If you ask, why I have repeated the obnoxious proposition, almost as frequently as the ram's horns sounded the fatal blast on the day when Jericho was overthrown? I answer, For the very same purpose. To overthrow, if possible, so pernicious a notion; to lay it as low as the fortifications of that devoted city. And I hope, neither Mr. Wesley nor any other, will attempt to rebuild it, lest they lay the foundation thereof in the dishonour of the blessed Redeemer; and set up the gates of it in the distress of precious souls. Both which effects, I am persuaded, are very remote from your intention. That they may be equally remote from your preaching, your writing, and all your doctrine, is the sincere wish of, &c.

LETTER IV.

Reverend Sir,—I had, in the warmth of my concern, almost forgot to take notice of a text which you produce from 1 Tim. vi. 17—19; and, which is somewhat strange, produce as a proof that the apostle requires Christians "to obey in order to their final acceptance."

Is Paul then become the apostate? And do the curses which he has denounced against the seducers of the Galatian converts, fall at length on his own head? He placed Timothy at Ephesus, as a bulwark against the encroachments of other doctrines. Was it with a reserve for liberties of this kind, which he himself should take? Can we think his mind so much altered, since he told those very Ephesians, that without seeking acceptance through their obedience, they were already accepted in the Beloved? Does he now retract the blessed truth; advising the rich to raise a cloud of golden dust, that it may cover their sins, and waft them to the skies? at the same time, excluding the poor from the fellowship of this new gospel, and the hope of glory? Is he grown ashamed of that righteousness of God, which he assured the Romans was the power of God unto salvation, only through believing? And are we, Sir, grown weary of that pure doctrine, which was restored to us by our glorious reformers? Are we willing to give up the depositum, and return to the more than Egyptian darkness of friars and monks; with whom,

Cœlum est venale Deus que?

But to the point. I shall transcribe the text, and add a short paraphrase; which may perhaps explain the meaning, and best refute the objection. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life." *Charge them*, those believers among you, *who are rich in this world, that they do good*; that, as members of Christ, they show kindness, and exercise beneficence to others. *That they be rich in good works*, abounding in those works and labours of love which flow from faith, or a comfortable persuasion of their interest in Christ. *Ready to distribute* on all proper occasions, with cheerfulness and delight; as counting it more blessed to give than to receive. *Willing*, even without solicitation, *to communicate*, and not only embracing, but seeking every opportunity of relieving the necessitous. Lightly esteeming all that is called wealth here below; and *laying up in store for themselves* another kind of treasure, [even Christ, who is the pearl of price, and the true riches.] This will be a good foundation of hope, of comfort, and joy *against the time to come*; whether it be the trying season of sickness, the awful hour of death, or the more tremendous day of judgment. That placing their affections on him, and having their treasure in him, they may be found wise merchants; not grasping uncertainties and shadows, but *laying fast hold on** sure

* *Take fast hold on*— thus I would translate that

and substantial possessions, even on *eternal life.*

"We establish the law—we provide for its honour, by the perfect obedience of Christ," says Aspasio. "Can you possibly think, (replies Mr. Wesley) that St. Paul meant this?" Before I answer this question, give me leave to ask another. Have you, Sir, done justice to Aspasio? Is what you quote the whole of his interpretation? Have you not secreted a sentence, which speaks the very thing you blame him for omitting?

A member of the house of commons, haranguing the honourable assembly, took the liberty to assert, "The gentlemen in the ministerial interest never propose any thing for the good of their country—." This was no sooner uttered than a warm partisan of the other side starting up, complained loudly of calumny and scandal. Hold, Sir, for a moment, said the interrupted orator. Let me just finish my sentence, and then give vent to your vehement invectives. My intention was to have added, "—but we in the opposition readily agree to their measures." Upon hearing this explanation the house smiled, and the hasty zealot sat down ashamed.

Let me produce the whole period now under consideration. Then, I believe, the reader will allow that Mr. Wesley has imitated this hasty gentleman in one instance; and whether he has not some reason to imitate him in another, I shall leave to his own determination. Immediately after the display of free justification, or of "righteousness imputed without works," Rom. iv. 6, Aspasio, aware of the possibility of abusing his doctrine, asserts the indispensable necessity of holiness. This done, as quite cleared from the accusation, he triumphs with the apostle, "'Do we then make void the law through faith' in the imputed righteousness of our Lord? 'God forbid! Yea, we establish the law.' Considered as the original covenant of life, we provide for its honour, by the perfect obedience of Christ: Considered as the invariable standard of duty, we enforce its observance, by the most rational, manly, and endearing motives." Here, Sir, was hardly any room for the precipitancy of interruption, because the whole passage lay before you. And it is a little surprising, that you should see and animadvert upon the former clause, yet neither see nor regard the clause immediately following.

"Did such a thought (of establishing the law by the atonement and righteousness of Christ) ever enter into St. Paul's mind?" Let the preceding context determine. Has the apostle been opening the true sense of the precepts, that they might be rightly understood? Has he been inculcating the inviolable obligation of the precepts, that they might be duly practised? Has he not been asserting a justification absolutely free, effected by the righteousness of God, without any coagency from the righteousness of man? Does he not, in the last words, professedly encounter the objection, which, in every age, has been raised against this sacred doctrine, "Hereby you neglect and dishonour the divine law?" No; says the inspired apologist, the law is hereby established, and shown to be more stable than earth or heaven. The grand Legislator himself shall be humbled to its obedience; the God who gave the law shall bleed for its penalties, rather than a tittle fail of its due accomplishment. Magnified thus, the law indeed is, and made for ever honourable. And though Aspasio does not exclude our practical regards, I do verily for my own part believe, that the former sentiment against which you exclaim, was uppermost with the apostle, and is the chief design of the text.

Yes, Sir; it was the apostle's chief design, to shew the perfect consistency of free justification with the most awful glories of the Deity; and thereby lay a firm foundation for the hope of a sinner. Had justice, which is the essential glory of God's nature, or the law, which is the revealed glory of his will—had either of these been violated by the evangelical scheme, benign and desirable as it is, it must have been utterly rejected: It could never have taken place; the whole world must have perished, rather than such an injury be offered to any of the divine perfections. Therefore St. Paul most sweetly teaches, and most satisfactorily proves, that instead of being injured, they are most illustriously displayed, by the obedience and death of Christ. By this means Jehovah is inflexibly just even in justifying the ungodly; and his law is highly exalted, even in absolving the transgressor that believeth in Jesus.

Here is firm footing; here is solid rock.

Solid rock, on which the sinner may rest, who is well nigh sunk in despair, while the waves and billows of divine indignation go over his alarmed soul. *Firm footing*, on which he may proceed who sees the importance of his eternal interests, and does not risk them on the vague notion of mere mercy; does not give into the modish religion, which leaves such venerable things as the justice of the Most High, and the law of the Most Holy, destitute of their due honour; and leaves such impotent creatures as

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emphatical compound word σπιλαζωνται; which agrees with the experience of the Christian, and is not without the authority of the critic.

men to shift for themselves by doing the best they can.

"The plain meaning is, we establish both the true sense and the effectual practice of the law; we provide for its being both understood and practised in its full extent." How can you make this provision, if you set aside the consummate obedience of Christ, "who is the end of the law for righteousness;" for accomplishing that righteousness which its precepts describe, and its constitution demands?

O Sir! did you consider what that meaneth which the apostle styles *το αδυνατον τε νομε*, you would not use this language. Can we, can such miserable sinners as we, ever dream of effectually practising, in its full extent, that law which condemns every failure, which requires truth in the inward parts, which insists upon perfection, absolute perfection, in every instance, and on all occasions; charging us,

> With act intense, and unremitted nerve,
> To hold a course unfaltering,

to the very end of our lives, and from the beginning of them too? Attend, I entreat you, Sir, to this most sublime sanctity of the divine law. Then, instead of saying, "we provide for its performance in the full extent of its demands," you will probably say, with a more becoming modesty, We provide for its performance in a way of willing, cheerful, sincere obedience; still looking unto him for justification, who has, in our name and as our surety, fulfilled it to the very uttermost.

It is, I apprehend, one of your leading errors, that you form low, scanty, inadequate apprehensions of God's law; that law which is a bright representation of his most pure nature, a beautiful draught of his most holy will, and never since the fall has been perfectly exemplified in any living character, but only in the man Christ Jesus. From this error many others must unavoidably follow:—a disesteem of imputed righteousness, and a conceit of personal perfection; a spirit of legal bondage, and, I fear, a tincture of pharisaical pride.

Should Mr. Wesley ask, why I harbour such a suspicion concerning his sentiments in this particular? I answer, Because here he speaks of practising this law, which is so exceeding broad, in its full extent. Because, elsewhere, he represents the violations of this law, whose least tittle is of greater dignity than heaven and earth, as small matters, as petty offences; or, to use his own words, as "things not exactly right." But more of this hereafter.

Aspasio, to vindicate the equity of the future judgment, declares, "I see nothing arbitrary in this procedure, but an admirable mixture of just severity and free goodness. On those who reject the atonement, just severity; to those who rely on their Saviour, free goodness." Mr. Wesley, as though he would exculpate the ungodly, asks, "Was it ever possible for them not to reject?" What says our infallible counsellor, the teacher sent from God? "They will not come to me, that they may have life." They rejected his counsel. They would not cease from their own works, and betake themselves wholly to the righteousness of Christ. This method of salvation they disliked. It was foolishness unto them. Therefore, they were disobedient to the heavenly call. Does this take away their guilt? Must God be reckoned unjust in punishing, because men are obstinate in their unbelief?

God does not require me, as you too injuriously hint, to "touch heaven with my hand," in order to escape damnation; but he invites and requires me to accept of Christ and his salvation. If, intent upon any imaginary accomplishments of my own, I overlook the gift; or if, eager in the pursuit of worldly gratifications, I trample upon it; is not the fault entirely my own? Does it not proceed from the folly of my mind, or the bad disposition of my heart; and leave my conduct without excuse?

"Justification is complete, the first moment we believe; and is incapable of augmentation." Thus Aspasio speaks. Thus Mr. Wesley replies, "Not so."—And has he, for his authority, a single text of Scripture? No; but the whole council of Trent, one of whose canons dogmatizes in this manner: "If any shall affirm, that righteousness received is not preserved, and increased likewise, by good works; but that good works are only the fruits and signs of justification obtained, not the means of increasing it also, let him be accursed;" Sess. vi. Can. 24. I am sorry, Sir, to see you again in such company. And I would hope, if it were not an unhandsome reflection, you did not know your associates. Yet it is strange, that a Protestant divine should have been so inattentive to the main part of his character; or should be able to forget, that complete justification, through the righteousness of our Lord alone, is the very essence, soul, and glory of the Reformation.

But let us examine the point: Justification, I apprehend, is one single act of divine grace. It must, therefore, be either done or undone. If done, in my very idea of the act, it includes completeness. So that to speak of incomplete justification is a contradiction in terms; like speaking of dark sunshine, or a round square.

An incomplete justification seems, in the very nature of things, to be an absolute impossibility. Even an earthly judge cannot justify where there is the least departure from integrity. He may overlook, he may

show clemency, he may forgive; but he cannot, in such a case, pronounce righteous. Much less can we suppose that justification should take place before an infinitely pure and jealous God, unless all guilt be done away, and the person be rendered completely righteous.

Besides, can that justification be other than complete, which is brought to pass by the most majestic Son of God? by his perfectly holy nature, by his infinitely precious sufferings, and by his inconceivably meritorious obedience? This, if any thing in the world, must be absolutely complete; beyond compare, and beyond imagination complete; to speak all in a word, complete in proportion to the dignity, perfection, and glory of the accomplisher.

Is any such notion as an incomplete justification to be found in the Bible? St. Paul says, "whosoever believeth is justified;" to all intents and purposes justified. No, says Mr. Wesley; he may be justified only in part, or by halves. "He that believeth (adds the apostle) is justified from all things." No, replies Mr. Wesley; many that believe, especially in the infancy of their faith, are justified only from some things. There is no necessity that justification should be complete, when or wherever it exists.

Is there no necessity? Why then does the voice of inspiration assert, that the righteousness of God is upon them that believe? Can a man have that incomparably magnificent righteousness, and yet be incompletely justified? Does not the same inspired writer declare, that this perfect and divine righteousness is upon all; not upon *some* only, but upon *all* believers; whether they be weak or strong, whether in the first moments of their conversion, or in the last stage of their warfare? Yes; and he farther assures us, that there is no difference; no difference, with regard to the righteousness itself, for it is the one everlasting righteousness of the incarnate God; no difference as to the reality of its imputation, for it is unto all, and upon all; no difference in the way of receiving it, which is by faith in Jesus Christ; consequently, no difference in the fruits or effects; which are pardon and acceptance, free and full justification.

Is Mr. Wesley, like the popish party, an advocate for a first, for a second, for I know not how many justifications? According to this scheme indeed, justification would be an incomplete thing. But the misfortune attending this scheme is, that it has no foundation in Scripture. The Scripture knows nothing of it; the Scripture declares against it; and acknowledges, as but one faith, but one baptism, so but one justification.

This is the grand scriptural maxim, "He hath, by one oblation, perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The oblation is one, needing no repetition, and no appendage. It does not partially accomplish, but perfects the business of justification; perfects it, not at the last only, but from first to last, yea, for ever and ever. In behalf of all those who are sanctified, or made partakers of this great sacrifice, and this divine atonement.

This is the fine scriptural illustration, "The heir, even while he is a child, is lord of all." You have, perhaps, a son born. Upon this child you multiply your favours and caresses: He grows in wisdom and stature: Yet neither your favours, nor his growth, add any thing to his sonship, nor augment his right to your inheritance. With both these he was invested the first moment he drew breath. So, we are no sooner justified than we are heirs; "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." The perception and enjoyment of this privilege may increase; but the privilege itself, like the birth-right of the first-born, is incapable of augmentation.

Would Mr. Wesley, with the followers of Arminius, exclude the righteousness of Christ, and introduce something of man's, as the efficient, or as a concurrent cause of justification? Then, likewise, his notion of a gradual, a variable, and incomplete justification must ensue. Whether it be faith, which he would introduce for this purpose, or repentance, or sincere obedience, or whatever else he pleases, according to the measure of these works or graces, must be the degree of justification; and not only as to different persons, but as to the same person, at different times.

Farther; since all these endowments are, so long as we continue in the present state, imperfect, our justification must, according to this plan, unavoidably partake of their imperfections. It cannot be entire and lacking nothing, till mortality is swallowed up of life.—But how contrary is this to a cloud of witnesses from the Scriptures! "Ye are (even now) justified. He hath (even in this present time) reconciled you to God." Through the birth and death of Immanuel, there is not only peace on earth, but good-will towards men; εὐδοκια, favour, complacency, and love, from the holy God to the fallen soul. And is not this complete justification?

"There may be as many degrees in the favour, as in the image of God." This objection turns upon a supposition, that the favour of God towards us, is occasioned by the image of God in us; which is the doctrine of the law, the very language of Heathenism, and has not a savour of that gospel, in which Christ is all. And I think myself more concerned to remove such very

prejudicial mistakes, than to sift and adjust any nice speculations relating to degrees of the divine favour. Aspasio has touched this point. Referring you to his observation, I shall confine myself to a more interesting subject.

It is Christ who has redeemed us to God, to the favour and fruition of God, by his blood; by his blood alone, without any aid from our goodness, or any co-operation from any creature. His work pleases God; his work magnifies the law; his work is incomparably the noblest of all things in heaven or earth. This, therefore, is our recommendation to the divine Majesty. Interested in this, we stand perfectly righteous before the King immortal, and shall be eternally acceptable in his sight. It was only on account of Abraham's supplication, that God showed compassion to Abimelech; it was only on account of Job's intercession, that the Lord was pacified towards his three friends; and it is only on account of Christ's righteousness, that the high and holy One beholds any child of Adam with complacency and delight. To Jesus alone belongs the honour of reconciling, justifying, saving the innumerable millions of redeemed sinners. And is not the Lamb that was slain worthy to be thus honoured, and thus exalted?

Is, then, our own internal and external goodness of no avail in this matter?—Let us hear the eloquent Isaiah, the evangelist of the Jewish church: "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord (the Lord Jesus Christ) alone shall be exalted in that day." Does this text, it may be said, relate to the gospel, and the case of acceptance with God? Or is it possible to make what follows consistent with such an interpretation? Let us see whether it be not by the Holy Ghost himself, made perfectly consistent with such a sense.

The day of the Lord of hosts, in the prophetical Scriptures, generally and principally signifies the time of the gospel dispensation; when the Lord puts the finishing hand to his revelation, gives the brightest display of his grace, and gathers together all things in Christ.

This day, and its influence, shall cause a wonderful revolution in what is called the religious, virtuous, moral world: It shall fall like a thunderbolt upon every idol set up in the hearts of men; shall prove their wisdom to be folly, their ability to be impotence, all their works to be worthless.

This prophecy being so repugnant to our notions, and so disgustful to our inclinations, is asserted and enforced with the greatest particularity, both as to persons and to things.

As to *persons*.—"For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon"—whom? Upon the sordid wretch, or the scandalous sinner? Rather upon "every one that is proud and lofty in his own conceit;" pluming himself with the notion of some imaginary pre-eminence over his neighbour. It shall be likewise upon "every one that is lifted up" in the esteem of others; either on account of Roman virtue, or Athenian philosophy, or pharisaical zeal; and, notwithstanding his aspiring pretensions, or glittering accomplishments, "he shall be brought low," shall be degraded to the rank of a lost, undone, helpless sinner.

So that none shall have it in his power to say, "I am better than thou. I stand upon more honourable terms with my Maker, and am a fitter object for his favour." They shall all be like prisoners confined in the same dungeon, and liable in the same condemnation. Every one of them equally destitute of any plea for justification; and all of them, as to acceptance with their Creator, without any difference. No difference, in this respect, between the accomplished gentleman and the infamous scoundrel; no difference between the virtuous lady and the vile prostitute: no difference at all as to the way and manner of their obtaining salvation. So that the whole may appear to be of grace.

As to *things*.—This part of the subject is illustrated by a grand assemblage of images, comprehending all that is most distinguishable in the visible creation, and denoting whatever is most admired or celebrated among the sons of men. Oaks and cedars are the most stately productions of vegetable nature: Therefore "the day shall be upon all the cedars of Lebanon, and upon all the oaks of Bashan." Hills and mountains are the most conspicuous and majestic elevations of the earth: Therefore "the day shall be upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up." Towers and cities are the most magnificent works of human art: Therefore "the day shall be upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall." *The ships of Tarshish* are put for the wealth, the advantages, and the various improvements procured by navigation and commerce. *Pleasant pictures* may represent every elegant and refined embellishment of civil life. The whole collection of metaphors seems to express all those attainments, possessions, and excellencies, which are supposed to add dignity to our nature, or stability to our hopes; to constitute a portion in which we ourselves may rest satisfied, or a recommendation which may entitle us to the favour of heaven.

Yet all these things, before the requirements of God's law, and before the revelation of his righteousness, shall be eclipsed and disgraced; thrown to the bats, and consigned over to obscurity; thrown to the

moles, and trampled into the dust. So that in the pursuit of eternal life none shall regard them, or else regard them only to despise them.

Thus says the prophet a second time. To render the work of humiliation effectual, he redoubles his blow. May our whole souls feel the energy of his vigorous expressions! Thus "shall the loftiness of man be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be laid low." All notion of personal excellency set aside, they shall be base and vile in their own eyes, acknowledge the impossibility of being reconciled by any duties of their own, and place all their confidence on the propitiating death and meritorious obedience of Jesus Christ: They less than nothing, he all in all.

With this important sentiment I close my letter; not without an ardent wish, that it may sink into our thoughts, and dwell upon both our hearts. Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Reverend Sir,—Your last, and several of your other objections, appear more like notes and memorandums, than a just plea to the public, or a satisfactory explanation of your opinion. They have rather the air of a caveat, than a confutation; and we are often at a loss to discern, how far your remonstrance is either forcible or apposite.

Brief negatives, laconic assertions, and quick interrogatories, opened by no pertinent illustrations, supported by no scriptural authority, are more likely to stagger, stun, and puzzle, than to settle our notions in religion. You seem, Sir, to have forgotten, that propositions are not to be established with the same ease as doubts are started; and therefore have contented yourself with a brevity which produces but little conviction, and more than a little obscurity.

This brevity of yours is the cause, and I hope will be the excuse, of my prolixity; which, I perceive, is growing upon my hands, much more than I intended. If you had been pleased to show your arguments at full length, and to accompany with proof your glosses upon Scripture, the reader would then have been able to determine the preponderating evidence between yourself and Aspasio; and my trouble had been considerably lessened, perhaps quite spared.

An instance of the foregoing remark is the objection which follows. "St. Paul often mentions *a* righteousness imputed," says Aspasio. "Not *a* righteousness, (says Mr. Wesley,) never once; but simply righteousness." St. Paul mentions δικαιοσυνη, the righteousness which is imputed, both with and without the Greek article. And do neither of these signify *a* righteousness? This is a piece of criticism, as new to me, as it is nice in itself. Besides, where is the difference between *a* righteousness, and righteousness. Is not every righteousness *a* righteousness? Is not every person *a* person? and every prodigious refinement, *a* prodigious refinement? I thought Mr. Wesley had known how to employ his time better than in splitting, or thus attempting to split, hairs.

To what purpose, Sir, is this excessive refinement? Many of your readers, I apprehend, will find it difficult to conjecture. For my own part, I freely confess, that I could not for a considerable time discern your aim. Nor can I, even now, discover any other design, than a forced endeavour to exclude the righteousness of Christ, and introduce a mistaken something of your own to officiate in its stead. As the thread of your criticism is spun extremely fine, we must examine it with the closest attention. But first let me just take notice—

That Aspasio, in consequence of his observation deduced from the apostle's language, asks, What or whose righteousness can this be? To which Mr. Wesley answers, "he tells you himself; faith is imputed for righteousness." But have you never read Aspasio's interpretation of this text? If not, be so impartial as to cast your eye upon the tenth Dialogue. There he considers this passage at large, and lays before you his exposition of the words; not imposing it without assigning a reason; but, together with his exposition, presenting you with the grounds of his opinion. If you can overthrow them, try your strength and your skill. They stand ready to receive your attack, being at present in full possession of the field.

However, if you will not advert to his thoughts, allow me, if I can, to penetrate yours. "St. Paul never mentions *a* righteousness, but simply righteousness." Thus, I presume, you argue:—Not *a* righteousness; that might seem to denote some real righteousness, some actual conformity to the divine law, imputed to sinners for their justification. Whereas, if faith be substituted instead of this real righteousness; if faith be all that to us, which our own obedience to the law should have been, and which Aspasio supposes the righteousness of Christ is appointed to be; if faith itself be all this to us, then we are made righteous without a righteousness. Something is accounted to us for righteousness, which is really no such thing. Then we shall be under no necessity of submitting to the righteousness of our God and Saviour, but may easily be furnished out of our own stock.

Is not this, or something like this, your way of reasoning? Do you not, in this manner, understand faith imputed for righteousness? Not as deriving all its efficacy,

all its significancy, from its most magnificent object; but as being itself the efficient of justification, the very thing for which we are accepted: in opposition "to the wicked and vain commentaries of the Calvinists, which say, that all this is resident in Christ, and apprehended by faith."

This led me to use that singular expression, "a mistaken something;" since this is an egregious mistake of faith—of its nature, its end, its import. Of its nature: For it is a going out of self, and a flying to Christ, for pardon, for peace, and for every spiritual blessing. Of its end: For it is ordained to preclude all boasting, that itself may be nothing; that its owner may be nothing; that the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, may be all in all. Of its import: For it says, according to the prophet, In the Lord, not in myself, have I righteousness. It would expostulate in the words of the apostle, with its overweening and doating admirers, Ye men of Israel, why look ye so earnestly on me, as though by my own power or dignity I had procured your reconciliation, and rendered you accepted? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has glorified his Son Jesus, and appropriated this honour to his obedience and death. In the matter of justification, it is my business, not to furnish a contingent, not to supply any part, but to receive the whole from his fulness.

"On Christ's death sinners are to rely as the cause of their forgiveness; on Christ's obedience, as the ground of their acceptance."—"How does this agree with other places?" Be pleased to turn back, Sir, to the places to which you allude; and, with a very little attention, you will perceive the agreement. Then let me desire you to turn inward; and you will probably discern more than a little disingenuity in your own procedure; since you resolve to stop your ears against the author's explanation, his very particular explanation and restriction of his own meaning.* If you was examining a mathematical system, you would always carry in your memory the leading problems or introductory axioms. If you did not, your own judgment would blame you. And when you neglect to do the same in canvassing a theological treatise, does not your own conscience reprove you?

"Our Lord commends such kinds of beneficence only, as were exercised to a disciple in the name of a disciple." Here Mr. Wesley asks, "Is not this a slip of the pen?" Read the passage, Sir; and answer yourself. What are our Lord's words? "Inasmuch as ye have done it to these my brethren." Have you not then as much reason to charge our divine Master with a slip of the tongue, as to charge Aspasio with a slip of the pen? It is undeniably plain, that he does in fact commend only such kinds of beneficence as were exercised towards his brethren. And I presume you will readily grant, that his brethren, the nobler relation, cannot be more extensive than his disciples, the inferior.

"Will not our Lord then commend all kinds of beneficence, provided," &c. Excuse my cutting short your speech. You are rambling from the point. What Christ will do, is quite another question. Aspasio neither denies nor affirms any thing on this subject. All that he considers is, what appears to be really done, in that particular description of the last day, and its awful process. Nor will he scruple to affirm, a second time, that our Lord applauds such acts of beneficence only as were exercised to a disciple, to believers, to his brethren.

The righteous Judge specifies this sort of munificence, because it is a sure indication of one begotten by the word of truth. It is a test, which none but the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus will come up to. And a Christian is most properly distinguished, not by what he does in common with others, but by the different principle from which he acts. Of this particularity Aspasio takes notice, on purpose to warn, as well as to exhort his readers: *Exhort them*, that they may abound in works of generosity: *Warn them*, that their works may spring from the right source—faith in the divine Redeemer.

You are not willing to call works of beneficence, though exercised to a Samaritan or a Heathen, "transient bubbles." No more is Aspasio, in the sense and manner which you would insinuate. He calls them such, not absolutely, but relatively: Not in themselves, but with respect to an affair infinitely too great for them to transact, either in whole or in part. In this view (as relative to justification) St. Paul calls them dung, which is despicable and sordid. Surely then Aspasio may call them bubbles, which are showy but insignificant. I do not call the desk on which I write, a mere egg-shell: Yet I should not hesitate to say, it is scanty as an egg-shell, if appointed to transport an army to the Indies; feeble as an egg-shell, if set up as a wall of munition against a battery of cannon.

"How must Christians exceed the Scribes and Pharisees?" To this Aspasio replies: "Not only in being sincere, in having re-

* Aspasio, speaking of the obedience and death of Christ, professedly declares, "However, therefore, I may happen to express myself, I never consider them as acting in the exclusive sense; but would always have them understood, as a grand and glorious aggregate. Looking upon our Saviour's universal obedience, which commenced at his incarnation, was carried on through his life, and terminated in his death; looking upon all this, in its collective form, as the object of my faith, and the foundation of my hope."

spect unto all God's commandments; but also in possessing a complete righteousness. Nor can this be any thing less than the perfect obedience of our great Mediator."—"Did our Lord mean this? Nothing less." Peremptorily affirmed; but not so easily proved. Yes, you add; "He specifies in the following parts of his sermon the very instances wherein the righteousness of a Christian exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees." He does so. But is it not an absolutely complete righteousness? A meekness, without the least emotion of resentment. A purity without the least strain of evil concupiscence A love, a long-suffering, a perfection, such as our Father which is in heaven exercises. Now, if this does not exceed the righteousness of all the Christians in the world, or if this is to be found in any character, save only in the character of our great Mediator, I retract, most freely retract, my opinion.

The discourse relates to that righteousness by which we are saved, or by virtue of which we enter into the kingdom of heaven. And why, Sir, why will you not resign the honour of obtaining salvation, to the most blessed Immanuel's blood and obedience? Why will you hedge up your people's way to the immortal mansions, by teaching them to depend upon duties and attainments of their own? Should any one, hearing this doctrine, that the law of the ten commandments requires perfect, sinless obedience; that none can be delivered from the wrath to come, or enjoy eternal life, without this unsinning, perfect obedience; should such a one, struck with surprise and anxiety, inquire, "Who then can be saved?"—what answer would Mr. Wesley give? The answer we would make is obvious, and full of consolation: "No man, by his own performances. But salvation is to be sought, salvation is to be obtained, by the righteousness of another,—even by the consummate obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"He brings this specious hypocrite to the test."—"How does it appear, (you ask), that this young ruler was a hypocrite?" It appears from his conduct, for he came kneeling to our Saviour, as one sincerely desirous of learning his duty; yet, when instructed in it, he would not perform it. It appears from your own character of him. You say, "He loved the world." Then the love of the Father was not in him. That he pretended to the love of God, is evident from his own words: That he had no real love, is certain from your own acknowledgment. If pretence without reality be not hypocrisy, please to inform us what is. It is farther apparent, from your descant on the case: "Therefore he could not keep any of the commandments in their spiritual sense." And it is a sure, as well as important truth, that whosoever pretends to keep the commandments, yet does not keep them in their spiritual meaning, is a deceiver of himself, a deceiver of others—a hypocrite.

"The keeping of the commandments, (says Mr. Wesley,) is undoubtedly the way to, though not the cause of, eternal life." How then came it to pass that our Lord Jesus Christ should declare, "I am the way?" The way to what? To the favour of God, to the fruition of God, to every spiritual blessing; or, in other words, to eternal life. After such a claim, from such a person, may I not, without the imputation of undue confidence, deny your assertion in your own form of speech? "The keeping of the commandments undoubtedly cannot be the way to eternal life;" since this is an honour, this is a prerogative, which the all-glorious Redeemer has challenged to himself.

Hence your distinction between the way to, and the cause of, appears to have no countenance from Scripture. And will it not, upon a review, appear to have as little support from reason? Cast your eye upon yonder bridge:—It is thrown over a deep and wide river; it is the way, the only way, whereby I cross the water, and arrive at the opposite bank. If so, is it not likewise the cause of my safe arrival on the other side? There may be, in this case, other causes, concomitant or subordinate: but the bridge is the grand one; that which every body chiefly regards, and to which my passage is always ascribed.

Christ therefore is the way, the only way, to life and immortality. By his precious blood, and by his divine righteousness, we pass the gulf of wrath and destruction. By the things which he has done, by the pains which he has endured, we enter the realms of peace and joy. Accordingly, we are exhorted "to walk in him;" and are assured, that as many as walk in this way "shall renew their strength." This is what the apostle calls "the new and living way." This is what the Psalmist styles "the way everlasting;" and though other ways may "seem right unto a man, yet the end thereof are the ways of death."

A doubt, perhaps, may arise in the reader's mind, suggested by the words of the prophet, "an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness." True. The way is Christ the incarnate God, with all his gifts, privileges, and blessings. "It shall be called the way of holiness." Isa. xxxv. 8.* None can enter and advance therein, yet continue carnal and unclean. All that travel this road renounce the hidden things of darkness, and

* See a treatise by Dr. Owen, entitled *Communion with God.*

do the works of righteousness. It does not indeed find, but it assuredly makes the passengers righteous; and though holiness is not their way, yet it is a principal part of their business while they walk in Christ.

Aspasio, having occasion to speak of Abraham's faith, quotes the word of the apostle, "By works his faith was made perfect." Which he thus explains, "His faith hereby answered its proper end, and appeared to be of the true, of the triumphant, the scriptural kind; since it overcame the world, overcame self, and regarded God as all in all." To this Mr. Wesley replies, with the solemnity of a censor, and the authority of a dictator, "No. The natural sense of the words is, by the grace superadded, while he wrought those works, his faith was literally made perfect." Your proof, Sir. What have you to make good this interpretation? There is not a word in the text about grace superadded, this is not assigned as the cause of a perfected faith. Nay, the sacred writer expressly assigns another: "By *works*," says St. James, "his faith was made perfect." No, says Mr. Wesley; but by grace superadded. St. James affirms one thing, Mr. Wesley affirms the contrary; and who am I that I should decide between two such disputants? But I believe the reader will, without my interposal, easily choose his side.

Perhaps you will reply, If this is not the true sense, produce a better. One less opposite to the natural import of the words, and the apparent meaning of the apostle, is already produced. Do you insist upon another? I will then refer you to abler judges. Shall I send to an expositor whom you yourself admire? Dr. Doddridge thus comments upon the text, "His faith was *perfected* by works; the integrity of it was made fully apparent to himself, to angels, to God." Shall I remit you to an expositor who can neither deceive nor be deceived? The God of glory says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." Made perfect! How? Is there any such thing as a supperaddition to God Almighty's power, while he exerts it in behalf of his people? This none can imagine. But it is hereby manifested, to their comfort and his glory. The same word is used concerning Abraham's faith, and concerning the God of Abraham's strength. Why then should it not be understood in the same sense? Here it is τελειωται; there it is ετελειωθη. And in both places it signifies, not literally "made perfect," but illustriously displayed.

Shall I send you to a familiar illustration? I view from my window a young tree. The gardener when he planted it, told me it was a fruit-tree, a pear-tree, a right *beauté de roi*. It may be such a tree, and have its respective seed in itself; but this did not then appear. If, when autumn arrives, its branches are laden with fruit, with pears, with that delicious kind of pears, this will be a demonstration of all those properties. This will not make it such a particular tree, no, nor make it a good and fruitful tree; but only shew it to be of that fine sort, or make its nature and perfections evident.

"St James speaks of the justification of our faith;" thus proceeds Aspasio: and thus replies Mr. Wesley; "Not unless you mean by that odd expression, our faith being made perfect." I mean, such a perfection of faith as is mentioned above. Other perfection I find not, either in books or men. Were faith perfect, in your sense of the word, love, joy, and all holiness would be perfect likewise. Correspondent to the principle would be the state of the production. There would be no longer any cause for that petition which the disciples put up, "Lord, increase our faith:" Nor for that supplication which you and I, so long as we continue members of the Church of England, must use, "Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity."

You call the justification of our faith an "odd expression." Is it not founded on the tenor of the apostle's discourse? Is it not the native result of the apostle's inquiry, "Shew me thy faith?" Prove it to be real and unfeigned: prove it by such acts as demonstrate you trust in Jesus alone for everlasting life. If it stands this test, we shall acknowledge it to be that precious faith whose author is God, and whose end is salvation. Is not that a justification of faith, which displays its sincerity, and renders it without rebuke? Somewhat like this would be reckoned a justification of any person, or of any other thing; and why not of faith?

Something you see, Sir, may be said in vindication of this expression. However, if it be thought improper; if it tend to create any confusion in our sentiments, or to draw off our attention from that grand idea which is peculiar to the word justification, (the idea, I mean, of being made righteous before God), I freely give it up; I will alter it in my book, and use it no more.

"He that doeth righteousness, is righteous." He manifests the truth of his conversion, and justifies his profession from all suspicion of insincerity. "Nay," says Mr. Wesley, "the plain meaning is, he alone is truly righteous, whose faith worketh by love." Your exposition may be true, and Aspasio's no less true. I leave the reader to determine which is most exactly suitable to the apostle's arguing. He is speaking of the Christian righteousness; that which renders us righteous before God; that which flesh and blood could never have discovered; which therefore was graciously revealed in the gospel, and is the principal subject of

gospel preaching. As then there were, and always would be, many pretenders to the noble privilege, St John lays down a maxim or a touch-stone, to distinguish the sincere from the hypocrite. He that uniformly doeth righteousness in a way of sanctification, he, and he only, is to be acknowledged by us as truly righteous by way of justification.

Far be it from me, Sir, to be fond of wrangling. Where you hit upon the truth, or come pretty near it, I shall never be eager to oppose. On the contrary, I shall be very desirous to agree, and preserve as much as possible, both the unity of opinion and the harmony of affection. Your own interpretation shall take place; only let your working be the sign and fruit of a righteous state, not that which makes or constitutes us righteous. The righteousness of fallen creatures is not of themselves, but of me, saith the Lord. It is brought in and accomplished by him whom God hath set forth to be their mediator and surety; so that we are made righteous, not by doing any thing whatsoever, but solely by believing in Jesus. Our character as the redeemed of the Lord, is οι εκ πιστεως; men having their existence, their subsistence, their all, by faith. Hence it comes to pass, that we really are what the apostle affirms in the following words, "righteous, even as he is righteous;" not barely righteous, as the moral Heathens, by dint of human resolution; not barely righteous, as the reputable Jews, by the influence of their legal sanctions; but righteous with that very righteousness which adorns, and exalts, and will eternally distinguish the only begotten Son of God.

It remains to be inquired, what faith is most likely to operate in this excellent and happy manner? I mean, to work by love. Let me illustrate the point by a short apologue; then release the reader from his attention, and the writer from his task.

A certain king had two favourites, whom he honoured with his peculiar regard, and enriched with a ceaseless liberality. They both, insensible of their vast obligations, became traitors and rebels. Being convicted of treason against their sovereign, he was determined to overcome their evil with good. Accordingly, when they had nothing to plead in their own behalf, he generously forgave them both: The one he dismissed from prison, and suffered to live unmolested on his private inheritance; the other he restored to all his high preferments, and public employs—he adorned him again with the robe of honour, and admitted him again into the bosom of favour.—Which of them now will feel the warmest affection for their sovereign? which of them will be most ready to serve him on all occasions, and, if need be, to hazard even life in his defence? He, doubtless, on whom most was bestowed.

And is not that person most likely to work and obey from a principle of love, who believes that his divine Lord has not only borne the curse, but fulfilled the divine law for him? has given him not barely an exemption from punishment, but a title to eternal life? Yea, has clothed him with his own most perfect and glorious righteousness; by virtue of which he will, ere long, be presented faultless before the throne of judgment, and have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. Will not the faith of such unspeakably rich grace pacify the conscience, and purify the heart? Awaken gratitude to our heavenly benefactor, and enkindle zeal for his glory? Cause us to discharge all the duties of our station cheerfully, and withstand every allurement to evil resolutely?

Surely we may say of this faith, what David said of Goliath's sword, There is none, there is nothing like it. For all these blessed purposes it is beyond compare, and, I should think, beyond dispute efficacious. That you, Sir, may know more of this faith, and dispute less against it, is the sincere and fervent wish of, &c.

LETTER VI.

Reverend Sir,—As this Letter may probably be pretty long, I shall not increase the prolixity by a preface, but enter upon it, without any farther introduction.

"Whoso doeth these things (saith David) shall never fall." Which Aspasio thus interprets, "Shall never fall into final apostasy." You are pleased to reply, "David says no such thing; his meaning is, whoso doeth these things to the end, shall never fall into hell." It would be a great wonder, I must own, if he should; but if he happens to fail at some times, and in some instances, what becomes of him then? However, let you and I, Sir, be at as little variance as possible. Where is the extraordinary difference between yourself and Aspasio? If a professor of religion falls into hell, must he not previously fall into final apostasy? And if he falls into final apostasy, must he not inevitably fall into hell?

When you insert the clause, "to the end," do you interpret? do you not rather interpolate the sacred text? The words of the Psalmist relate to the present time, *doeth*, not *shall do*. They contain an encouragement to those who, at this present instant, bring forth the fruits of evangelical righteousness. The encouragement is deduced from the comfortable doctrine of final perseverance. It carries this cheering import, "Whosoever believes in Jehovah, as

laying all his sins upon Christ, and giving him eternal life freely; whosoever, from this principle of faith, sincerely loves, and willingly obeys God, he shall never fall." The words are, "he shall never be moved." A phrase common among the Hebrews to denote the stability of a man's happiness. An immoveable thing never falls, either one way or other; so this righteous person shall never fall, either into final apostasy, which is the greatest misery here, or into hell, which is the consummation of misery hereafter.

But I begin to apprehend what you mean, and of what you are jealous. Your exclamation unravels all, "How pleasing is this to flesh and blood!" Under favour, Sir, I cannot conceive how this doctrine should be pleasing to flesh and blood. Flesh and blood, or corrupt nature, is proud. Any scheme of perseverance to be accomplished by our own strength, would indeed be agreeable to the vanity of our mind; but a perseverance founded on the fidelity and the power of God—a perseverance which acknowledges itself owing, not to any human sufficiency, but to an union with Christ, and the intercession of Christ—this is a disgusting method—that is what the natural man cannot away with. You will find the generality of people utterly averse to it. Flesh and blood will not submit either to be made righteous before God by the imputed righteousness of Christ, or to be made faithful unto death by the never-failing faithfulness of Christ. Try your friends, try your followers, try your own heart on this point.

To the humble believer, I acknowledge, this is a most pleasing and consolatory doctrine. He who feels his own impotence, who knows the power of his inbred corruptions, and is no stranger to the wiles of his spiritual enemy: he will rejoice in the thought that nothing shall pluck him out of his almighty Redeeemer's hand; that his advocate with the Father will suffer neither principalities, nor powers, nor life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature, to separate him from the love of God. Without such a persuasion, we might too truly say of the Christian's joy, what Solomon said of worldly merriment, "I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what does it?" If he who is to-day basking in the divine favour, may before the morrow be weltering in a lake of fire, then joy, even joy in the Holy Ghost, is unreasonable; and peace, even that peace which passeth all understanding, is chimerical,—a building without a basis; at least, a bowing wall, and a tottering fence.

Let us examine the doctrine which Mr. Wesley says is so pleasing to flesh and blood; or, in other words, to carnal people. What is the thing which the Psalmist teaches, and Aspasio professes? That the persons who are described in the Psalm,* shall never apostatize from the true faith, or from true obedience. Is this so agreeable to carnal people? Is it not rather unwarrantable in Mr. Wesley to suppose that carnal people either possess true faith, or perform true obedience, or can be pleased with either? Especially since the apostle assures us that the "carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Besides, are not the duties mentioned by the Psalmist offensive to flesh and blood? Do they not require, or imply, the mortification of our carnal appetites, and the discipline of our unruly affections? Can it be a welcome piece of news to flesh and blood, that this mortification shall take place? instead of being remitted, shall increase? and never, never be discontinued, till mortality is swallowed up of life? If so, the old man which is corrupt must be pleased with the curb, and the dagger must delight in its own restraint, and its own destruction. Such a paradox we must believe before we can espouse Mr. Wesley's notion, That flesh and blood are pleased with the doctrine of a final perseverance in self-denial, in righteousness, and true holiness.

"Should your repentance be without a failure, and without a flaw, I must still say to my friend, as our Lord replied to the young ruler, 'One thing thou lackest.' In all these acts of humiliation, you have only taken shame to yourself; whereas, a righteousness is wanting, which may magnify the law, and make it honourable." These are Aspasio's words; upon which Mr. Wesley animadverts: "One thing thou lackest, the imputed righteousness of Christ! You cannot think this is the meaning of the text." Neither does Aspasio affirm this to be the meaning; he only uses the words by way of accommodation. Could you demonstrate that our Lord intended no such thing, yet the sentence may not improperly express Aspasio's opinion; and if so, be not unfit for his use.

However, let us inquire into the exact meaning of the text. A very little search will yield the desired satisfaction.—"Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." *Treasure in heaven* was what the young gentleman lacked. Could this be any other than Christ himself? Is not Christ the treasure hid in the field of the gospel? Is not Christ the inheritance reserved in heaven for us? Is not a communion with Christ, and an en-

* The xvth Psalm, I apprehend, describes the perfect character: That perfection which Christ really fulfilled; and is the righteousness in which God is well pleased.

joyment of Christ, the supreme felicity of our nature? David was of this mind when he publicly declared, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" St. John was of this mind when he solemnly averred, "He that hath the Son, hath life." Whoever is of another mind, has very inadequate, very unworthy notions of heaven and its happiness. Now, if Christ himself was the one thing needed, surely his righteousness could not be secluded. His blood and obedience inseparably accompany his person. He that hath the bridegroom, hath his riches also.

In opposition to this sense it is affirmed, "Certainly the one thing our Lord meant was the love of God." The love of God is certainly an eminent blessing; possessed, I should imagine, only by those who have first obtained eternal life, by knowing the true God, and Jesus Christ. But does our love of God magnify the law, satisfy justice, or obtain heaven? Are we pardoned, are we reconciled, are we justified, on account of our love of God? The young ruler wants that which may open to him the kingdom of heaven, and that whereby he may inherit eternal life. Mr. Wesley, setting aside pardon, reconciliation, justification, together with the one perfect righteousness which procures them, ascribes all to our love of God; and, by this means, not to the true love arising from the knowledge of him as manifested in the gospel, as having first loved us, in granting us remission of sins freely through Jesus Christ. This notion may pass current at Rome, not among the Protestant churches. Our own church has most expressly disclaimed it. Speaking of Christ and his precious blood-shedding, she adds, "Whereby alone we are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven."

"Is the obedience of Christ insufficient to accomplish our justification?" Here you would correct both the language and the doctrine. *The language;* for you say, "rather I would ask, is the death of Christ insufficient to purchase it." To *purchase* justification, you suppose, is more proper and expressive than to *accomplish*. As this may seem a strife of words, I shall dismiss it without much solicitude; only I would transiently observe, that to accomplish denotes more than to purchase. It denotes the constituent cause; what the schoolmen call the matter of justification, or the very thing which effects it. If your favourite phrase implies all this, let it have the pre-eminence.

Next you correct the doctrine by saying, "I would rather ask, is the death of Christ insufficient to *purchase* justification?" I answer, if you consider the death of Christ as exclusive of his obedience, it is insufficient. If you do not, there is no great reason for your starting a doubt where we both are agreed; and indeed, it is scarce worth my while to take notice of it. I will, therefore, return to the distinction which you think proper to make between accomplishing and purchasing justification. Why, Sir, would you set aside the former phrase? Does it not imply, that which justifies; that very thing which commends us to God; that very righteousness in which we stand accepted before him? Does not this way of expressing guard most effectually against the errors of Popery, and exclude all co-efficiency of faith, of works, or any thing else whatever? I said, the *errors of Popery:* For a Popish synod will allow that we are not justified without the righteousness of Christ, by which he hath merited justification for us; but declares at the same time, If any man shall say we are formally righteous by that very righteousness, let him be accursed. According to this, which is no very good confession, the righteousness of Christ purchases, but does not accomplish; it merits our justification, but does not constitute our justifying righteousness. See, Sir, whither your refinements are leading you.

"The saints in glory," says Aspasio, "ascribe the whole of their salvation to the blood of the Lamb." "So do I," replies Mr Wesley; "and yet I believe he obtained for all a possibility of salvation." Is this objection pertinent? Does Aspasio's assertion contradict your belief? Does it not comprise all that you avouch, and much more? Is it possible that Mr Wesley, who is such a master of logic, should argue in this manner, "The saints in glory ascribe all their salvation to Christ's blood; therefore he did not obtain a possibility of salvation for all men?" What a forced conclusion is this! What wild reasoning is here! Such premises, and such an inference, will probably incline the reader to think of a sunbeam and a clod connected with bands of smoke.

If you was determined to make this passage faulty, you should have opposed it with the following declaration of your faith: "Yet I believe that Christ obtained no more than a possibility of salvation for any." Then you would have something suited to your purpose; but not agreeable either to sound sense or sound doctrine. Not to *sound sense:* Your possibility of salvation is, if people perform the conditions. How then can they ascribe the whole glory to Christ? At this rate, they do a piece of injustice to their own resolution and diligence; as these, by fulfilling the conditions, had a hand in obtaining the reward, these ought to have a share in receiving the honour. Not to *sound doctrine:* Aspasio believes much more than a possibility of salvation by Jesus Christ. He believes a full and complete salvation, according to that noble text, "It is finished."

A salvation not to be acquired, but absolutely given, according to that precious Scripture, "God hath given to us eternal life;" not upon some terms or prerequisites, but without any condition at all, according to that most gracious invitation, "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." This I look upon as sound doctrine. But will your notion of a conditional salvation, proposed by way of bargain, and granted upon terms, comport with this gift of grace?

No more than a possibility of salvation! Yes, Sir, Christ obtained a great and a free salvation. *Great:* for it comprises the pardon of all sin, original and actual; a restoration to entire and unalterable favour, together with a title to everlasting life and glory. This is such a provision for our happiness as becomes the immense goodness and inconceivable majesty of an incarnate God; such as not only supplies our wants, and satisfies our desires, but surpasses our very wishes—transporting us with wonder, and filling us with joy. To accomplish all this, we may reasonably suppose, nothing less could be sufficient than the active and passive righteousness of him who is gone into heaven; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him. Since this matchless ransom has been paid, since these grand conditions are performed, there is no obstruction from the divine justice, or the divine truth. All that ineffable and eternal blessedness is now become free; is granted to sinners, to rebels, to the most unworthy; they are allowed, yea, invited to receive it, to possess it, to rejoice in it as their own portion; and without the proviso of any good thing in themselves, purely on account of their Saviour's all-sufficient work.

I read in sacred history of Eleazar, the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David; how he arose and smote the Philistines, until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto his sword: and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him, only to spoil. And were not these mighty men typical, faintly typical, of our almighty Redeemer? Did not Jesus also arise and work a great victory? Has he not triumphed gloriously over sin, and all our enemies? And what have we to do but only to return and divide the spoil, and share the benefits of his conquest? May we not boldly say, "My sin is done away, because Christ has borne it on the cursed tree. I stand accepted before God, because Christ has finished the righteousness which renders me unblamable and unreproveable. I shall receive the Holy Ghost, because Christ is my advocate, and prays the Father that he will give me another Comforter. This sacred Comforter, by shewing me the riches of Christ, will more and more sanctify my nature. To think and live in this manner, is to take the spoil after our victorious Leader."

Let me close and confirm this sentiment with a passage from that inimitable penman, the prophet Isaiah; who, for his remarkably clear views of Christ, may almost be admitted into the number of evangelists; and for his exquisitely fine descriptions of Christ, greatly exceeds all orators and all poets: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?—I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.—Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?—I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me."

The prophet, like one thrown into a sudden surprise, with a beautiful abruptness cries out, *Who is this?* What extraordinary appearance discovers itself to my sight? Is it a human or a divine form that I behold? He *cometh from Edom*, the country—from *Bozrah*, the capital—of our professed national enemies. Is he for us, or for our adversaries? The first question seems to proceed from a distant and indistinct view. He then takes a nearer survey, and describes the wonderful personage with greater particularity. This that cometh *with dyed garments*, like some terrible and victorious warrior that has scarcely sheathed the sword of slaughter; who is all encrimsoned, and still reeking with the blood of the slain.

The vision becomes clearer and clearer. I see him, adds the rapturous prophet, *glorious in his apparel;* highly graceful, as well as extremely awful: Bearing in his aspect, in his whole person, in his very dress, the marks of transcendent dignity. *Travelling in the greatness of his strength;* not faint with toil, nor wearied with the fatigue of the dreadful action, but like one that is indefatigable in his zeal, and irresistible in his power; and therefore still pressing forwards to new victories, still going on from conquering to conquer.

The majestic object is all this while advancing. At length he approaches near enough to hold a conference with this devout inquirer. One would naturally expect that his speech should be, like his aspect, alarming and tremendous. But grace is on his tongue, and his lips drop balm. *I that speak in righteousness;* all whose words are faithfulness and truth—an immoveable foundation for the faith of my people. *That speak of righteousness;* of that mysterious righteousness which is the delight of my Father, and the life of the world: To bring in which, is the design of my appearance on earth, and to reveal it, is the office of my Spirit. By means of this righteousness I am *mighty to save;* to save thee,

to save any lost sinner; to save them, as with the arm of Omnipotence, beyond all that they can think, even to the very uttermost.

Here the prophet seems to be somewhat at a loss, and takes leave to renew his inquiry. If thou art come not to destroy men's lives, but to save, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?" These indicate, not deliverance, but destruction; these are tokens, not of forbearing mercy, but of inexorable vengeance. It is true, replies the illustrious Hero, *I have trodden the wine-press;** I have crushed my foes, I have trampled them under my feet, and repentance was hid from mine eyes. But thy enemies were the objects of mine indignation: Sin, and death, and hell, are the vanquished adversaries. It is their blood that is sprinkled upon my garments, and that stains all my raiment. This victory I have gained by myself alone; being infinitely too great in my power to want an associate, and infinitely too jealous of my honour to accept of any assistance. *Of the people,* whether in heaven or on earth, *there was none with me,* to afford the least succour or to take the least share in the glorious work. The salvation of sinners, their deliverance from wrath, and their redemption to God, is, in all its parts, my act, even mine, and mine only. Yours be all the benefit, mine all the glory.

"The terms of acceptance for fallen man were, a full satisfaction to the divine justice, and a complete conformity to the divine law."—"This," says Mr. Wesley to Aspasio, "you take for granted, but I cannot allow." That Aspasio does not take these points for granted, I thought even his enemies would confess: That he has attempted, at least, to make good his opinion, all the world, besides yourself, Sir, will acknowledge. What else is the design of Dialogue third and fourth? What else is aimed at in Dialogue the seventh, eighth, and ninth? The former treat largely of the full satisfaction given to divine justice; the latter treat still more largely of the conformity demanded by the divine law, and yielded by the divine Jesus.

These things, however, "you cannot allow." Not allow a full satisfaction of divine justice to be necessary! Are you not then acceding to the Socinian? Not allow a complete conformity to the divine law to be necessary! Are you not then warping to the Antinomian? See, Sir, how you approach the rocks, both on the right hand and on the left. May the keeper of Israel preserve yourself and your followers from suffering shipwreck! Every one, I think, must allow what you deny, who believes the divine justice to be infinite, and the divine law to be unalterable. A justice that will admit of any satisfaction less than complete, can never be deemed infinite. And if the divine law can rest satisfied with an obedience that is defective, it is not so venerable as the law of the Medes and Persians.

"The terms of acceptance for fallen man," you say, "are repentance and faith." I must own I do not much like the expression *terms,* unless it be referred to the mediation of Christ. And you yourself, if you would act consistently, should not be overfond of it, because it is not scriptural; though, for my own part, I have no quarrel against the word because it is not the exact phraseology of Scripture, but because I dislike the idea it conveys. Shall we treat with the Deity, as free states or sovereign princes treat with each other? The one obtaining from the other peace, or some advantageous concession, by complying with his terms?

To confirm your opinion, that "the terms of acceptance for fallen man are repentance and faith," you produce the following text, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Here you write like a man of sense, who knows what just disputation means. You lay aside you certainlies, your undoubtedlies, your unquestionablies, and urge a proof from Scripture. Whether you rightly understand and duly apply this proof, must now be inquired.

"Repent ye, and believe the gospel." This may be the meaning of the exhortation:—*Repent;* relinquish all your wrong notions relating to the way and manner of finding acceptance with the Deity. *Believe the gospel;* which opens a most unexpected avenue for the communication of this blessing; which brings you tidings of a salvation, fully procured by the incarnate God, and freely offered to the unworthy sinner. The word, you know, is μετανοειτε, which, in its primary signification, denot s not so much a reformation of conduct as a change of sentiment.

Suppose it to signify a reformation of conduct. The meaning then may be as follows:—*Repent;* forsake all your vices, and all your follies; mortify every evil temper, and renounce every evil way. In order to render this practicable, *believe the gospel;* wherein a Saviour is preached and displayed, who makes peace for such offenders, reconciles them to God, and obtains eternal redemption for them. This will sweetly withdraw your affections from iniquity, and sweetly attach them to the blessed God: Whereas, without this powerful expedient, you will never be delivered from the pleasing witchcraft of your lusts; sin will al-

* This phrase evidently denotes conquest and triumph; enemies vanquished and totally destroyed. It should never, therefore, be applied to the agonizing, but to the triumphant Saviour; not to Jesus prostrate on the ground, but to Jesus making his foes his footstool

ways have dominion over you, so long as you are under the law and not under grace. Repentance, thus understood, is not the condition of obtaining salvation, but the fruit of salvation obtained.

Besides, if repentance be a gift, it cannot be a term or condition. He must be a stranger to the import of language, and the common ideas of mankind, who will take upon him to affirm the latter; and he must be yet a greater stranger to the holy word of God, who will offer to deny the former. "Christ is exalted," saith the apostle, "to give repentance." Not to require it as a condition of blessedness, but to give it as a most eminent blessing. Not require repentance of fallen man, who is not able to think a good thought; but give it from his unsearchable riches, and work it by his almighty power.

You say, "The terms of acceptance for fallen man are," &c. Methinks I should be glad to know what you mean by fallen man. Do you mean (as you tell us in your collection of sermons) "one dead to God, and all the things of God; having no more power to perform the actions of a living Christian, than a dead body to perform the functions of a living man?" What terms, I beseech you, can such a one fulfil? Be they ever so difficult, or ever so easy, it maketh no difference. The hand, stiff in death, is no more able to move a feather than to remove a mountain. Whatever, therefore, others may affirm, you, Sir, cannot talk of repentance to be exercised by fallen man, until he is quickened and enabled by fellowship with Christ, the living and life-giving head; unless you choose either to contradict your own assertion, that fallen man is absolutely dead to all good; or else think proper to maintain, that the dead may not only act, but perform some of the most excellent acts and important offices.

You should likewise, Sir, if you would write correctly and argue forcibly, have told us what you mean by faith; otherwise, you may intend one thing and I another, even while we both use the same word. In this case, our dispute might be as endless as it must be fruitless.

By faith I mean, what St John calls, a receiving of Christ; a receiving of him and his benefits, as they are freely given in the word of grace and truth. If this, which is the apostolical, be a proper definition, then it seems not to come under the denomination of a condition. They must be excessive refiners indeed, who would call my receiving a rich present, the terms or conditions of possessing it; or would esteem my eating at a plenteous feast, the terms and conditions of enjoying it. Is not this to subtilize till sound sense is lost?

Faith, according to St Paul, is a persuasion that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. Where is any trace, or any hint of conditionality in this description? I do not hear the apostle saying—he loved me, provided I repent; he gave himself for me, in case I think this or do that;—but, he gave himself for me when I was ungodly, and had performed no conditions; when I was without strength, and could perform no conditions. Thus he gave himself for me, that I might have remission of sins through his blood, and eternal life through his righteousness. Believing these delightful truths, and receiving these heavenly privileges, I love my most adorable Benefactor; and abhor those iniquites for which he wept, and groaned, and died. That love of Christ is vital holiness; and this abhorrence of sin is practical repentance; and both are the fruits, therefore cannot be the conditions, of salvation by Jesus.

Some holy men and excellent writers, I confess, have not scrupled to call faith and repentance the conditions of our salvation. Yet I cannot prevail on myself to admire or approve the language. I fear it tends to embarrass the sincere soul; to darken the lustre of grace; and to afford too much occasion for boasting.

To embarrass the sincere soul.—For, if I am saved on conditions, this will naturally divert my attention from the grand and all-sufficient cause of justification,—the righteousness of Christ, which alone gives solid comfort. Instead of delighting myself in the Lord Redeemer, I shall be engaged in an anxious concern about the supposed conditions: Whether I have performed them? Whether I have performed them aright? Whether there may not be some latent defect, that spoils all, and renders my labour fruitless? The more serious our minds are, and the more tender our consciences, the more shall we be liable to perplexity and disquietude on this head.

It eclipses the lustre of grace.—"Ye are saved by grace," says the oracle of Heaven. But if salvation be upon conditions, it cannot be of grace. It must, in some measure at least, be of works. Since it depends upon working the conditions, it is obtained by working the conditions; and the candidate has reason to look principally unto his performance of the conditions. They are to him, by incomparable degrees, the most important point; because, without their all-significant interposition, every thing else is as nothing. Even God's everlasting love, and Christ's everlasting righteousness, are, till the conditions are fulfilled, but cyphers without the initial figure.

It affords too much occasion for boasting.—May I not, in this case, thank my own application and industry? They, they exerted themselves successfully; and behold! the

promised reward is mine. What then should hinder me from sacrificing unto my own net, and burning incense unto my own drag? At this door the notion of merit will unavoidably creep in; because my performance of the condition is meritorious of the covenanted reward,—so far meritorious that the reward is my due; I may demand it as a debt; and it will be an act of apparent injustice to withhold it. But shall these things be said unto the Almighty? Will these things redound to "the praise of the glory of his grace?" Do these things hide vanity from man, or consist with a salvation that is "without money or without price?" Not quite so well, I believe yourself will acknowledge, as the following lines:

Let the world their virtue boast,
Their works of righteousness;
I, a wretch undone and lost,
Am freely saved by grace;
Other title I disclaim,
This, only this is all my plea;
I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.

"Fallen man (you say) is justified, not by perfect obedience, but by faith." Not by perfect obedience! Ah, Sir, if you had remembered the immutability of God, and the spirituality of his law, you would not have challenged this expression.—"But by faith." Here, it is true, you use the language of Scripture. Nevertheless it behoves a watchman in Israel to shew how the language of Scripture may be abused. Faith, you allow, is imputed to us for righteousness: therefore (you infer) not the righteousness or perfect obedience of Christ. This, if you mean any thing, or would speak any thing to the purpose, must be your way of arguing. So you would set faith and Christ's righteousness at variance. The former shall exclude the latter from its office: Whereas, the former is only the pitcher at the fountain, while the latter is the very water of life—is that blessed, glorious, heavenly expedient, which, received by faith, justifies, sanctifies, saves.

According to your gospel, faith will say to the righteousness of the Redeemer, "Depart hence, I have no need of thee. I myself act as the justifying righteousness. I stand in the stead of perfect obedience, in order to acceptance with God."* To this may we not reply, Was faith then crucified for you? Has faith magnified the divine law? Or is it by means of faith, that not one jot or tittle of its precepts pass unfulfilled?

If faith, in this sense, is imputed for righteousness, how can you subscribe that emphatical article which declares, "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" Surely, Sir, you are accounted righteous for the sake of that, whatever it be, which stands in the stead of perfect obedience. That, whatever it be, may claim the honour, and to that justice itself cannot but award the prize.

If your notion be true, the believer ought to have his own faith principally in view. Whatever presents me perfectly obedient before God, is my greatest good—is my choicest portion—the best foundation for my hope, my peace, my joy. To this, therefore, so long as I know my own interest, I must chiefly look. Whereas, *look unto Jesus* is the direction of the Holy Ghost. Look unto his perfect atonement and complete righteousness, and be saved, is the grand unchangeable edict issued from the throne of grace.

Perhaps you will say, Are not the words of Scripture expressly on my side? "Faith is imputed for righteousness." True. But is the sense of Scripture on your side? Suppose I should undertake to prove, that David was purged from guilt by the hyssop which groweth on the wall; this you would think a wild and impracticable attempt. But should I not have the words of Scripture expressly on my side? "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." Yet should I not have the least countenance imaginable from the spirit and sense of those sacred writings. Has the hyssop, a mean worthless shrub, any kind of fitness to stand in the stead of the sacrificial blood, and make the atonement for sin? No more fitness has faith to stand in the stead of perfect obedience, to act as our justifying righteousness, or procure our acceptance with God.

"What Christ has done." Here Mr. Wesley himself speaks of what Christ has done. He represents it by a very magnificent image. He lays it as the foundation of that first and most comprehensive blessing, justification. In this I most cordially agree with him; hoping that we shall unanimously join to defend this important sentiment against all opposition, and endeavour to display the Redeemer's work, as well as his passion, in all its glorious excellency.

"What Christ has done, is the foundation of our justification, not the term or condition." The prophet Isaiah had other notions of this matter; "If thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed." *If* is the hypothetic language; denotes a term, expresses a condition, on the performance of which the Messiah *should see his seed*; should have a numberless multitude of sinners pardoned and renewed, born again of the Spirit, and made heirs of salvation. The grand term on which all these blessings depend, and by which they are made sure to believers, is, the pouring

* These are Mr. Wesley's own words, in his explication of this very doctrine. See his Sermon on the Righteousness of Faith, vol. i. p. 111.

out of the Messiah's soul, as a sacrifice for their sins and a ransom for their persons.

"The foundation, not the condition." Methinks you should offer some reason for this distinction; especially since St. Paul assures us, that Christ is, in the work of salvation, not this or that only, but he is *All*; especially since Christ himself declares, *I am*, in that grandest of all affairs, the redemption of sinners, *the beginning and the ending*. And well he may be so, since he is, as it follows in the text, *the Almighty*.

Your meaning, I presume, is, What Christ has done is a foundation for the influence and significancy of our own doings; that they, under the notion of terms and conditions, may come in for a share, and be his coadjutors in the great work. This was the doctrine established by the council of Trent; this is the doctrine still maintained in the conclave of Rome; and is, perhaps, of all their abominations, the most refined, yet not the least dishonourable to our Saviour. It bears the greatest opposition to the truth of his gospel, and the freeness of his redemption.

I have heard it insinuated, that Mr. Wesley is a Jesuit in disguise. This insinuation I rejected, as the grossest calumny—I abhorred, as falsehood itself. I acquit you, Sir, from the charge of being a Jesuit or a Papist; but no body, I apprehend, can acquit your principles from halting between protestantism and popery. They have stolen the unhallowed fire, and are infected with the leaven of antichrist. You have unhappily adopted some specious papistical tenets, and listened to the mother of abominations more than you are aware.

Amidst all your mistakes (and from mistakes who is exempt) I verily believe your principal aim is, the honour of Christ and the edification of souls; therefore I speak the more freely. Was you a bigot to selfishness, or a devotee to vain-glory, such liberty might be displeasing. But I am persuaded better things of Mr. Wesley. He has publicly declared, that "whereinsoever he is mistaken, his mind is open to conviction; and he sincerely desires to be better informed." This is written in the true spirit of a Christian. To this spirit I address myself; begging of you, Sir, with the sincerity and tenderness of a brother, to consider these hints impartially; lest, being misled yourself, you mislead your thousands and ten thousands.

In the mean time, I hope, you will not take it amiss, if to my affectionate entreaties I add my earnest prayers, that you, Sir, and your people, may be in the number of those "blessed men, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Which I take to be the first and great evangelical privilege; as I am very sure it is the richest benefit I know how to crave, either for you, or for your most, &c.

LETTER VII.

Reverend Sir,—Persons skilled in the dissection of animal bodies frequently mention Comparative Anatomy. May I borrow the term, and apply it to theology? I do then freely declare, that in case you censured Aspasio for points of divinity comparatively small, you should have no opposition nor any check from this pen.

Some people, for instance, are of opinion, that the belief of a parent is considerably beneficial to his children. That when St. Paul says to the anxious jailor, "believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved and thy house," he promises some special good that should redound to the man's household from his own receival of Christ. It seems, indeed, that the apostle must intend something of this nature, more than barely to say, Thy family also, provided they follow thy example, shall obtain salvation with eternal glory. If this were the whole of his meaning, he need not have confined it to the jailor's domestics, but might have extended it to all the inhabitants of Philippi.

Such tenets, whether admitted or rejected, affect not the main point. Men may embrace which side of the question they think proper, and yet be sound in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. But errors relating to that righteousness which is the one efficient cause of justification, in which alone God is well pleased, and all his perfections glorified, which is the only spring of solid peace and true godliness—such errors are extremely pernicious. These we must withstand with resolution and zeal. We may not give place to their encroachment, no, not for an hour. The former may be compared to a fly settled on the dish, the latter are more like poison mixed with our food. To dislodge that, may not be amiss; but to prevent, or expel, or antidote this, is absolutely necessary. In the former number, perhaps the reader will rank your observation which follows. But as I have undertaken to follow you step by step, I must not disregard it.

Aspasio, speaking of David, expresses a high esteem for that hero, king, and saint. Allowing that his esteem were carried a little too far, where would have been the great hurt or the grievous offence? How, Sir, could this have led to "unsettled notions in religion?"* I was inclined to an-

* The reader will please to remember, that the pamphlet which contains the remarks under consider-

swer your reflections, as the hero himself answered his censorious brother, "Is there not a cause?" then passing on to another subject, as he, perfectly master of himself, and nobly superior to the affront, turned to another person. But as you seem to have injured David, and not done justice to the truth, I shall hardly be excused if I dismiss the matter without some more particular notice.

"God himself dignifies David with the most exalted of all characters," says Aspasio. "Far, very far from it, (says Mr. Wesley); we have more exalted characters than David's." Where, Sir? Shew me, in any of the saints, or in any of the sacred writers, a more devout, or a more divine spirit, than that which breathes in the penman of the Psalms. For my own part, I know nothing superior to it, in any author, or in any language: Neither can I conceive a more exalted character than the character given of David, "a man after God's own heart." If God be an unerring judge, if his approbation be the infallible standard, this description must express the most consummate human worth. Say whatever you will of a person, it does not, it cannot, exceed this most illustrious testimony.

"But this is said of David in a particular respect." Ay! notwithstanding the Holy Spirit has declared concerning him, "a man after mine own heart, who shall perform *all* my will?" If you was expounding this text, would you think it right to say, He shall perform *all my will*, that is, he shall serve me in *some particular respect!* "It was not said with regard to his whole character." No! not when the Spirit of inspiration has borne this witness to David, "His heart was perfect with the Lord his God!" Could his heart be perfect, yet not influence his whole conduct? But it was said in the second or third year of Saul's reign; therefore it was not applicable to him during the future years of his life. This is the inference you would draw. But can you really think it a just one? Or would you call that person a man after God's own heart, who is singularly pious in the days of his youth, but swerves and declines in his advanced age?

Notwithstanding all these remonstrances, you push matters to the utmost; as though it was a point of the last importance to prove David an errant backslider. With this view you add, "But was he a man after God's own heart all his life, or in all particulars? So far from it, that"—Stop, Sir, I beseech you; and, before you speak unadvisedly with your lips, hear what the Lord himself replies to both your interrogatories: "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." Surely you was not aware that such things are written in the book of God; otherwise, you would not have contradicted them with so much boldness. I will therefore put the most charitable construction upon your procedure, and say with the apostle, "I wot, that through inadvertence you did it."

"There is not a just man upon earth, that sinneth not," is a text quoted by Aspasio. Upon which Mr. Wesley observes, "Solomon might truly say so, before Christ came." According to this insinuation, what Solomon said in his Proverbs and other books, was said only by a short-sighted mortal, who might adapt his instructions to the present economy, but was not able to plan a system of morals for futurity; whereas I always supposed, that his writings were dictated by that infinitely wise Spirit, before whom all times are present, and to whom all events are known. Agreeably to this supposition, St. Paul informs us, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, (whether by Solomon or any other prophet), were written for our learning." No, suggests Mr. Wesley: Here is something written, which appertains not to us Christians: We are above it. Are you so? Your reason for these lofty apprehensions? Why, St. John affirms, "Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not."

True, he sinneth not habitually; it is not his customary practice. Thus the passage is explained by another apostle; "Sin (though it may make insurrection) does not reign in his mortal body:" Though it may assault him, yet it "has no dominion over him."

Again, "he sinneth not," is the same way of speaking, and to be understood with the same limitation, as that text in Job, "he giveth not account of any of his matters." How, Sir, would you interpret these words? It is undeniably certain, that sometimes God giveth account of his matters; he gave it to Abraham, when Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, were to be destroyed with brimstone and fire from heaven. You would therefore, I presume, in some such qualified sense, expound the passage: "*He giveth not account;* it is not his usual way, not a customary procedure with the supreme Disposer of things: He generally requireth his creatures to transact with him upon trust; to give themselves up, with an implicit resignation, to the veracity of his word, and the good pleasure of his will." The harmony of Scripture, and the necessity of the case, call upon you to give the same exposition of the text before us.

I said, *the necessity of the case;* for you will please to observe, the thing affirmed is affirmed in such a manner, that it must be applied

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ation, is entitled, A Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion.

to every individual Christian, and at the very instant of his commencing a true Christian. The apostle says not, a saint of the first rank, but *whosoever*. He says not, after such a one has been for a considerable time born of God; but whosoever *is born*, is but just entered upon the desirable state, *sinneth not*. The character belongs to the very weakest believer: The description is suited even to babes in Christ. To suppose, therefore, that it implies an entire freedom from sin, infirmity, and defect, is to suppose that all the children of the regeneration are born in a state of manhood; or rather, are more than men, even while they are infants of a day.

Our sense of the passage is free from this impropriety, yet gives no countenance to immorality. "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not." He does not, he cannot sin, like the devil, or one actuated by the diabolical nature. This interpretation is rendered probable, by the apostle's antithesis, "he that committeth sin is of the devil." It is rendered necessary, by the preceding remark, and by the experience of Christians. The text, thus interpreted, is applicable to the babe in Christ as well as to the adult. Though either of them may fall through the violence or surprise of temptation, yet neither of them can live and die in allowed iniquity, whether of omission or commission. They cannot have a settled love to any known sin, nor can they commit it with the full consent of their will.

Solomon, when he uttered those humbling words, Eccl. vii. 20, had his eye upon what you somewhere call, "the inconceivable purity and spirituality of the sacred precepts;" upon that universal obedience which they require, in every the minutest instance: That we do nothing, great or small, which they forbid: Leave nothing undone, in heart or life, which they enjoin: That we do all this in the most perfect degree; not only serving the Lord, but serving him with all our strength; not only loving our neighbour, but loving him as our own soul; ever exercising the utmost regularity of affection and desire; ever maintaining the utmost rectitude of temper and thought. If you also, Sir, had your eye fixed upon the same law, as it delineates and demands this "inconceivable purity and spirituality," you would not scruple to acquiesce in the wise man's confession, nor think much to adopt it as your own. You would acknowledge it calculated, not only for the Mosaic era, and the meridian of Judah, but for all times and all places; till those new heavens, and that new earth appear, wherein dwelleth consummate righteousness.

"In many things we offend all." "That St. James does not speak this of himself, or real Christians, will clearly appear to all who impartially consider the context." I wish, Sir, you had made this appear to one, even to him whom you honour with this address; then I should not have been obliged to ask, Of whom speaketh the apostle? He says, "My brethren:" Does not this imply true believers, and real Christians? He says, "We teachers:"* Does not this comprehend himself, and describe his office? He adds, "We all:" If he himself, and real Christians, are not included in this most comprehensive clause, I would desire to know in what terms they could possibly be comprised.

According to this interpretation, the arguing is just, and the conclusion forcible. As though he had said, "My dear brethren, though you are truly converted to Christianity, yet do not unadvisedly engage in the arduous and awful work of the ministry: remembering, that we ministers of the gospel shall be subject to a stricter judgment† than Christians in ordinary life; and if, upon trial, we are found faithless, shall receive a heavier condemnation.† The danger, let me add, is very considerable; because, such is the frailty of our mortal state, that the very best among us, and those conversant in sacred things, cannot always walk uprightly; but in many instances we trip, we stumble, we offend."

Whereas, if neither the apostle himself, nor real Christians be meant, I can see no propriety nor force in the reasoning. Nay, I can see no reasoning at all, (though the illative particle *for* evidently requires it,) nothing but a most insipid and frivolous assertion. "For, in many things, we that are not real Christians offend!" Is this a discovery worthy of apostolical wisdom? Is this all that the inspired St. James meant to declare? You and I could have told him and his people a great deal more. Whosoever is not a real Christian offends, not in many things only, but in every thing. To such a one, nothing is pure; his mind and conscience are defiled; his whole life is sin.

We have examined this objection as it stands in itself. Let us now take a view of it as it may appear in its consequences. "In many things we offend all."—"The apostle speaks not of himself, nor of real Christians." What fine work would our adversaries make with the Scriptures, if we should allow them Mr. Wesley's liberty of interpretation! Tell a Pelagian, that all mankind is depraved; prove the universal depravity by that abasing text, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray:" How easily

* The original is, not κυριοι, masters, but διδασκαλοι, teachers.

† *Judgment, condemnation.* The word κριμα may be taken in both these significations.

may he reply, *All we*, does not mean all mankind; the prophet speaks not of himself, nor of virtuous persons; but only of profane people, and men of the baser sort. Tell an Arian, that our Lord Jesus Christ is very God: confirm the glorious truth by that most cogent text, "In him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead:" The heretic has nothing more to do than, in Mr. Wesley's manner, to answer, *All fulness* does not mean all the divine perfections, but only some pittance or portion of them. Dear Sir, whenever you are disposed to criticise again, let me beseech you to consider a little the import of language, and the consequences of things.

Had the words been, "In many things we offend," you might, by disregarding the context, have borrowed some slight seeming countenance for your criticism from the ninth verse, where the apostle is supposed to personate the wicked, "Therewith curse we man." But in the place under consideration, he enlarges the sentiment, and strengthens the language: though free from that particular crime, he was not free from this general charge. Here therefore he spares not himself; he takes shame to himself; and teaches the most upright of the human race, to plead guilty before their Judge. We the servants of God; we the ambassadors of Christ; we *all*, not one excepted, in many things offend. Where then could *they*, and oh! where can *you* and *I*, look for our perfection, but only in our divinely gracious Surety, Bridegroom, Head? There let us seek, where some excellent lines (whose author you may probably know) have taught us to find it:

> Now let me climb perfection's height,
> And into nothing fall;
> Be less than nothing in thy sight,
> While Christ is all in all.

In the paragraph which begins, "O children of Adam," you do not distinguish what the law is made to speak, according to a new scheme of divinity; and what it really does speak to true believers, on the principles of the gospel. Give me leave to rectify your mistakes, and to point out the manner in which you should have expressed yourself.

To rectify your mistakes.—You suppose the law, upon Aspasio's plan, speaking to this effect: "O children of Adam, you are no longer obliged to love the Lord your God with all your heart." Indeed you are. The obligation remains, and is unalterable; but it has been fully satisfied, as the condition of life and immortality, by the believer's glorious Surety. "Once I insisted on absolute purity of heart; now I can dispense with some degrees of evil desire." No such thing. Every degree of evil desire I condemn with inexorable rigour; but every such offence has been thus condemned, and thus punished, in the flesh of your crucified Lord. "Since Christ has fulfilled the law for you, you need not fulfil it:" Rather, you need not fulfil it in order to the justification of your persons, or to obtain eternal life and glory. This, to you the greatest of impossibilities, has been performed in your behalf by a Mediator and Redeemer, to whom nothing is impossible. "I will connive at, yea, accommodate my demands to your weakness." Not this, but what is much better: I see no sinful weaknesses in you; because they are all covered with the resplendent robe of your Saviour's righteousness; therefore, I no longer curse, but bless you, and sign your title to everlasting happiness. Thus the enmity of our nature is slain; thus the precepts, even the strictest precepts, become amiable and desirable. We love the law, which, through our dear Redeemer, is no longer against us, but on our side; is a messenger of peace, and bears witness to our completeness in Christ.

The manner in which you should have expressed yourself.—This is what the law speaks, according to Aspasio's doctrine: "O believers in Christ, I am, like my divine Author, consummate and unchangeable. I did require, I do require, and ever shall require perfect love to God, perfect charity to your neighbour, and perfect holiness both in heart and life. Never abating one tittle of these my requirements, I shall denounce the curse upon every disobedience, upon the least departure from absolute perfection. But this is your comfort, believers, that the curse is executed upon your most holy Surety: This is your comfort, believers, that my precepts have been fully obeyed by Jesus your Saviour. As this was done in your nature, and in your stead, I am satisfied, and you are justified. Now, though I can never dispense with any fault, nor connive at any infirmity, yet I behold all your faults laid upon Immanuel; I behold all his righteousness put upon you; and on his account I acquit you, I accept you, and pronounce you righteous."*

This is the language of the law to the faithful, as they are in Christ Jesus: This is the Spirit of Aspasio's conversation with his friend Theron. The native tendency of this doctrine, and its powerful agency in producing true holiness, are professedly displayed in the tenth letter, and not obscurely hinted in various other places. If you can prove that it has a contrary tendency, you will prove that the grace of God does no longer teach us to deny, but prompts us to

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* I think it is no misrepresentation to suppose the law speaking in this manner to the believers; because to them "all things are become new:" Consequently, the voice of the law is now: because "all things are their's."

commit ungodliness: An attempt in which, with all my esteem to your person, and deference for your abilities, I cannot wish you God speed.

"Does the righteousness of God ever mean (as you affirm) the merits of Christ?" Where do I affirm this, Sir? Be pleased to produce the passage; at least refer us to the page. Aspasio, in the place which offends you, speaks of what Christ has done and suffered—of his active and passive obedience. These expressions you change into "the merits of Christ;" which being an ambiguous phrase, may serve to perplex the cause, rather than clear up the difficulty. Give me leave, therefore, to restore Aspasio's words, and to state the question fairly.

"Does the righteousness of God ever signify the active and passive obedience of Christ?" To this Mr. Wesley replies, "I believe not once in all the Scripture." Why then, Sir, do you not disprove what Aspasio has advanced in support of this interpretation? You believe one thing, he believes another. And there is this little difference in the ground you respectively go upon: He appeals to argument and Scripture; you rest the whole matter upon this single bottom, "I believe so."

You proceed: "It (that is, the righteousness of God) often means, and particularly in the Epistle to the Romans, God's method of justifying sinners." Suppose I should say in my turn, This phrase never means, no, not in the Epistle to the Romans, God's method of justifying sinners; I should then argue in your own way—bring a shield suited to your sword: Just as good an argument to defend, as you have brought to destroy my opinion. What would the judicious reader say on such an occasion? Would he not smile and cry, "A goodly pair of disputants truly!"

But let me ask, Does the holiness of God signify his method of sanctifying sinners? Does the wisdom of God signify his method of making sinners wise? This no mortal has suspected: This you yourself will hardly venture to assert. Why then should we take your word, when, without assigning the least reason, you dictate and declare, "The righteousness of God means his method of justifying sinners?" You must pardon us, Sir, if we prefer St. Peter's judgment: His judgment in that memorable passage, "Who have obtained like precious faith in the righteousness of our God, even of our Saviour Jesus Christ." This sentence is a key to all those texts in the New Testament, and many of those in the Old, which mention the righteousness of God. Here it necessarily signifies the righteousness of Christ; because none else is our God and Saviour: Here it confessedly signifies the object of justifying faith; which cannot be the essential righteousness of an absolute God, but must be the vicarious righteousness of an incarnate God. And why should you scruple to call the righteousness of Christ the righteousness of God, since his blood is called the blood of God: his life, which he laid down for us, is called the life of God; and he himself, as the Author of our salvation, is called Jehovah (or God self-existent and everlasting) our righteousness?

It is possible you may produce some commentators of eminence, who coincide, or have led the way, in this interpretation; but may we not ask them, as well as yourself, On what authority they proceed? Is this the plain and natural signification of the words? No; but an apparent force upon their natural import. Does this tend to fix and ascertain the sense of the passage? No; but it gives the passage such a rambling turn as will accommodate itself to the sentiments of Arians or Socinians, Arminians or Papists. Is this reconcilable with the tenor of Scripture? "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Make a trial of your interpretation upon this distinguished text: See how it will accord with common sense, or the analogy of faith. *That we might be made the righteousness of God;* that is, That we might be made God's method of justifying sinners. Can you yourself, Sir, upon an impartial review, be pleased with such interpretations of sacred writ?

How much more noble, and how much more comfortable, is the easy and obvious sense which the words, in a most beautiful climax, afford! He made Christ—who was perfectly free from sin, both in heart and life, God made him—to be sin, justly chargeable with it, and justly punishable for it; that we, who are full of sin, both original and actual, might be made *righteous*; and not barely righteous, but, which is a much stronger expression, *righteousness itself*, yea, that we might be made, what exceeds all parallel, and passes all understanding, *the righteousness of God!* Might have that very righteousness for our justification, which the God of all perfection, uniting himself to our nature, wrought, finished, and infinitely ennobled.

Mr. Samuel Clark, in his annotations on this verse, on Rom. i. 17, on Rom. x. 3, writes in the same vague and unsatisfactory manner as yourself. I could mention another celebrated commentator, who leans to this timid and trimming scheme. I speak thus freely, because I look upon the article of justification through the righteousness of our God and Saviour, to be the supreme distinguishing glory of Christianity; because I consider it as the richest, incomparably the richest, privilege of the Christian. To have a righteousness, a consummate righteous-

ness, the very righteousness of the incarnate God, dignified with all the perfections of the divine nature—to have this righteousness imputed for our justification! Matchless, inconceivable blessing! This fills the believer's heart with inexpressible comfort and joy; this displays the grace of God in the most charming and transporting light; this constitutes the most engaging motive to love, to holiness, and to all willing obedience.

Let us not then treat of it in such diluting terms, or in such a compromising strain, as shall defeat the efficacy of the heavenly cordial, or deliver up the precious depositum to the enemies of the gospel. Let us rather, by a clear and full manifestation of the truth, of this capital and leading truth especially, commend ourselves to every man's conscience. Their humour may dislike it, their prejudice may reject it, but their conscience, whenever it awakes, and gains the ascendant, will embrace it, will cleave to it, and rejoice in it.

But stay. Let me proceed cautiously; not triumph immaturely. You rally your forces, and prepare for a fresh attack. Aspasio tells his friend, That the righteousness of God signifies a righteousness of the most super-eminent dignity; such as is worthy to be called by his name, and may justly challenge his acceptance. To this you reply, "I cannot allow it at all." Aspasio supports his opinon by Scripture, by reason, and by a very respectable authority. All which Mr. Wesley would confront and overthrow, by that one irrefragable proof, "I cannot allow it at all." Surely, said I, upon reading such controversial triflings, delivered with the air of oracular responses, surely this letter must have stolen its way into the world; it was designed as a preservative for Mr. Wesley's private societies only; it could never be intended for public view, and general examination; since every reader is treated, not as his judge, no, nor as his equal, but as his pupil: Not as one that is to be addressed with argument, and convinced by reasoning, but as a tame disciple, that is to acquiesce in the great preceptor's solemn *say so*.

To your next paragraph I have no material objection. I might indeed complain of an unfair quotation; but I shall only observe, that you would discard the expression, *imputation of righteousness*, and insert in its stead, *interest in Christ*. You had not always, Sir, such an aversion to the phrase *imputed*. Witness that stanza in one of your hymns.

> Let faith and love combine
> To guard your valiant breast,
> The plate be righteousness divine,
> *Imputed* and imprest.

However, in this place I am willing to gratify you; because it will be difficult to shew how a sinner can have a real interest in Christ, in what he has done and what he has suffered, any other way than by imputation. I am willing to gratify you, provided you do not entertain that strange conceit, of an incomplete interest, or an interest in half the Redeemer; but look upon the holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, and the atonement of his death, as the one undivided ineffable treasure, in which every believing sinner is interested; as that which is the all-sufficient cause of his justification; rendering acceptable, first his person, then his performances, and, at the last, introducing him, with dignity and triumph, into everlasting habitations.

Here I lay down my pen; unless you will permit me to relate a little piece of history, not foreign to your last sentiment.—A certain general happened to observe a common soldier distinguishing himself, on the day of battle, with uncommon activity and courage. Determined to reward merit wherever it was found, he advanced the brave plebeian to a captain's post; who had not long enjoyed the honour, before he came to his benefactor, and, with a dejected countenance, begged leave to resign his commission. The general, surprised at such an unexpected request, asked him the reason. Your officers, said the petitioner, being gentlemen of family and education, think it beneath them to associate or converse with a rustic. So that now I am abandoned on every side; and am less happy, since my preferment, than I was before this instance of your highness's favour. Is this the cause of your uneasiness? replied the general; then it shall be redressed, and very speedily. To-morrow I review the army, and to-morrow your business shall be done. Accordingly, when the troops were drawn up, and expected every moment to begin their exercise, the general calls the young hero from the ranks, leans his hand upon his shoulder, and in this familiar endearing posture, walks with him through all the lines. The stratagem had its desired effect. After such a signal and public token of his prince's regard, the officers were desirous of his acquaintance, and courted, rather than shunned his company.

And will not the favour of the blessed Jesus give us as great a distinction, and as high a recommendation in the heavenly world? Will not the angelic hosts respect and honour those persons who appear washed in his blood, clothed with his righteousness, and wearing the most illustrious tokens of his love that he himself could possibly give? In these tokens of his love may we and our readers be found! Then shall we meet one another with courage and comfort at the great tribunal; with honour and joy amidst the angels of light; with everlasting exultation and rapture around the throne of the Lamb.

Under such pleasing hopes, I take my leave at present, and remain yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Reverend Sir,—You introduce the paragraph that comes next under our consideration by a very just distinction. Aspasio had observed, that a rebel may be forgiven, without being restored to the dignity of a son. To which you reply, "A rebel against an earthly king may, but not a rebel against God. In the very same moment that God forgives, we are the sons of God." This is perfectly right. But hence to infer, that the conversation of our two friends is no better than "an idle dispute," is not very polite, and not at all conclusive; because, remission of the offence, and restoration to favour, may come in the same moment, and yet be different blessings. That afflicted patient, mentioned in the gospel, had, at the same instant, his ears opened and the string of his tongue loosed. Were these effects, therefore, one and the same kind of healing? Besides, why are forgiveness and sonship united in the divine donation? Because the sufferings of a sinner, and the obedience of a son, were united in the divine Redeemer. So that we must still have our eye, our believing and adoring eye, upon the meritorious righteousness of our Lord.

"Pardon and acceptance through," &c. Here I see nothing but the *crambe repetita*. —"The words of Job," &c. Here I see nothing but the usual argument, our master's *ipse dixit*. Therefore we will pass on to the next period.

Two texts of Scripture are produced. You set aside Aspasio's interpretation, to make way for one of your own; which might have passed without suspicion, if it had appeared in your sermons, or been delivered from your pulpit; where a person may be content with the general sense, without entering upon a critical nicety. But, by rejecting Aspasio's exposition, you seem to intend a peculiar degree of accuracy. Let us then examine the passages with such a view. "Grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life; that is, the free love of God brings us through justification and sanctification to glory."

In this, I question, Sir, whether you are exactly orthodox. You lead the reader to suppose, that sanctification is as much the cause of glory as justification; that Christ's work, and our graces, have just the same weight, act in the very same capacity, have at least a joint influence in procuring eternal life. You should rather have expressed yourself in some such manner: "The free grace of God brings us, through the joyful privilege of justification, first to sanctification, or the love of his blessed self, then to glory, or the enjoyment of his blessed self."

Besides, you neglect the significancy of that beautiful and emphatical word, *reigneth*. On this much stress ought to be laid in reading the sentence; therefore it ought not to be totally overlooked in explaining the sentence. Grace is discovered in other instances; grace is exercised in other blessings; but by giving us eternal life, by giving it freely, even when we are undeserving guilty creatures, this ever-amiable attribute *reigneth*. It is manifested with every grand and charming recommendation. It appears like the illustrious Solomon, when seated on his inimitably splendid throne of ivory and gold, or like the magnificent Ahasuerus, when he "showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honour of his excellent majesty."

Another particular I cannot persuade myself to admire. You change the word *righteousness* into *justification*. Instead of saying, "Brings us through righteousness," you say, "Brings us through justification." By this language you scarcely distinguish yourself from any heretic. You may rank with the Arian, or with the sectarist of any denomination. They will, every one, allow the necessity of justification in order to final felicity; but not the necessity of a righteousness adequate to the demands of the law, as a foundation for this blessed hope. You do just the same injury to Christ and his righteousness, which obtain this inconceivable recompense of reward, as you would receive from a messenger who carries a rich present to your friend, but will not acknowledge from whom it comes: It comes, he confesses, from some man, but obstinately refuses to say from Mr. John Wesley. Whereas, Aspasio scruples not to own, nay rejoices to declare, from whence the invaluable benefit of justification proceeds. Not from works of the law, no, nor from works of the spirit; from nothing done by us, from nothing wrought in us; but wholly from the blood and obedience of Jesus Christ.

The next passage on which you descant is, "That they may receive forgiveness, and a lot among the sanctified." Thus you translate the original. Aspasio, not affecting needless novelty, is content with the common version: "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them that are sanctified, by faith that is in me." Why do you omit the word *sins*? Forgiveness, I own, implies it; but the apostle chooses to express it; by which means, the sentence becomes more full and emphatical; grace is more highly honoured, and man more deeply abased. I wonder

also, why you should prefer *lot* to *inheritance*, which is the usual translation. The latter word conveys a much more noble and pleasing idea to the English reader, than the former.—*Receive* forgiveness of sins: not earn it (let us mark this) by performing conditions, but receive it as an absolute gift; just as Joseph's brethren received the portions sent them from the viceroy of Egypt's table.—Receive an *inheritance:* consisting of all spiritual blessings here, and a title to everlasting blessedness hereafter. All which are bestowed as freely, as the several portions of land in Canaan were, by Moses and Joshua, consigned over to the tribes of Israel for a possession.—Among those that are *sanctified.* If you should inquire, how sinners are sanctified? the answer is added, by *faith* which is in me; not *for* faith, as your conditional scheme supposes, but *by* faith. By accepting the blessings mentioned, by looking upon them as your own through the divine gift, and by living in the delightful enjoyment of them; thus our hearts are won to God, and filled with his love; thus they are weaned from vanity, and renewed in true holiness.

Is the satisfaction made by Christ's death sufficient to obtain both our full pardon and our final happiness? Aspasio has answered this question in the negative. He has confirmed his opinion by the authority of Scripture and the testimony of reason. Mr. Wesley thinks it enough to reply, "Unquestionably it is sufficient, and neither of the texts you cite prove the contrary." How easy, by this way of arguing, to overthrow any system, and silence demonstration itself! But pray, Sir, be pleased to recollect yourself: Did you not, a little while ago, extol Aspasio as "unquestionably right," because he made the universal obedience of Christ, from his birth to his death, the one foundation of his hope? Yet here you condemn him as "unquestionably wrong," because he does not attribute all to Christ's death exclusively. Will Mr. Wesley never have done with self-contradiction? Why will he give me such repeated cause to complain, *Quo teneam vultus,* &c.?

If it was requisite for Christ to be baptized, argues Aspasio, much more to fulfil the moral law. "I cannot prove (replies Mr. Wesley,) that either the one or the other was requisite, in order to his purchasing redemption for us." Why then do you admit his obedience to the moral law as an essential part of the foundation of your hope? A tottering foundation methinks, which is laid in a doctrine you cannot prove.

But if you cannot prove it, may not others prove it for you? You are not called to prove this point, Sir, but only to disprove what Aspasio has advanced in confirmation of it. That it was requisite for our Lord to be baptized, he himself acknowledges. Speaking of that sacred rite, he says, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." It *becometh:* was it not requisite for Christ always to act the becoming part? in every circumstance to demean himself according to the utmost decorum and highest dignity of character? "This was not requisite to purchase redemption for us." For what then was it requisite? Not to wash away any stain from the holy Jesus; not to obtain any blessedness for the Son of the highest: since, as the Son of the eternal God, he had an undoubted right to all the blessings of heaven and earth, of time and eternity.

"But it was not requisite that he should fulfil the moral law." No! Do you then establish the law? Are not you the Antinomian, who would have sinful man saved, yet the divine law not fulfilled either by them or their Surety? This is a strange way of magnifying the great standard of all righteousness! Rather, it is the sure way of dishonouring and debasing it. What says our Lord? "I came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil," Matth. v. 17. Did this signify, as some expository refiners suggest, only to vindicate and illustrate the law, to explain its highest meaning, and rescue it from the false glosses of the Scribes, the business might have been done by the prophets and apostles: No occasion for the King of heaven to appear in person: His ambassadors might have transacted the whole affair of vindication and explanation. But to fulfil every jot and tittle prescribed in its commands, to suffer all the vengeance and the whole curse denounced in its penalty—this was a work worthy of the Son of God—practicable by none but the Son of God—and, being executed by him, is truly meritorious of pardon and life for poor sinners; of their restoration to the divine favour, and of their admission into the heavenly kingdom.

The moral law is inviolable in its nature, and of eternal obligation. This is a truth of great importance: With this is connected, and on this depends, the absolute necessity of a vicarious righteousness. I am no longer surprised that you dispute against the latter, since you question or deny the former. But consider what our Lord says farther upon this subject, in the fifth of St. Matthew and the eighteenth verse. Perhaps you will reply, "I have both considered it, and expounded it in my Sermons." You have; but in such a manner as I hope you will live to retract. Thus you expound the awful text, and turn it into a piece of unmeaning tautology. "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till heaven and earth pass; or as it is expressed immediate-

ly after, *till all* (or rather, *all things*) be fulfilled, (till the consummation of all things)." You would make εως αν παρελθη ο ουρανος και η γη and εως αν παντα γενηται, synonymous phrases, expressive of the same thing. Thus stands the passage, interpreted according to your criticism; "Till the consummation of all things, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till the consummation of all things." See to what miserable subterfuges a man of learning is driven, in order to evade the force of a text which militates strongly for the meritorious obedience of Christ.

How much more just, more noble, more useful, is the common exposition, and the obvious meaning? Which we may thus introduce, "These are the terms of life and happiness to man; whosoever falls short, God himself pronounces accursed." And will the Unchangeable go back from his purpose, make abatement in his demands, or come to a composition with his creatures? No, verily. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him, Job xxiii. 13. It were easier for heaven and earth to pass," for all nature to be unhinged, and the universe to drop into dissolution, "than for one jot or tittle of this unalterable law to pass without a perfect accomplishment"† in every the minutest instance.

"By Christ's sufferings alone the law was not satisfied," says Aspasio. "Yes, it was," replies Mr. Wesley. Then all the indefatigable and important labours of his life, all his exemplary and shining graces, must be mere superfluities. At least they could have no merit, but were necessary only by way of setting us an example.

The prophet was of another mind; "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake." By this righteousness, not barely by his sufferings, "he will magnify the law, and make it honourable," Isa. xlii. 21. The apostle was of another mind: "God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law." What? Only to bear its curse? Only to undergo its penalty? Not to fulfil its preceptive part? which is confessedly the principal part in every law; and to enforce which all penalties are added. You yourself ought to be of another mind; for you have already, and truly observed, that pardon and acceptance always go together. "In the same moment that God forgives, we are the sons of God." And wherefore? The reason is, because the sufferings of a sinner, and the obedience of a Son, went together in the Redeemer; and without this union the redemption of man had not been complete.

"The law required only the alternative —obey or die." Some of your errors are less considerable; this I take to be a first-rate mistake. According to this supposition, Cain, and Judas, and all the damned, are righteous. Because they die, they bear the curse, they suffer everlastingly; and thereby conform to one of the law's alternatives. One of the law's alternatives! No. Here I am wrong: It is one of your alternatives. The divine law knows no such thing. No law on earth knows any such thing. Sanctions and penalties annexed to a law, are never looked upon as equivalents to obedience; but only as preservatives from disobedience. In all the compass of your reading, have you ever met with a law that makes such proposals to its subjects: "Conform to the regulations established, and you shall enjoy my privileges, you shall share my honours? Or, if you choose to violate all my wholesome institutions, only submit to the penalty, and you shall have an equal right to the immunities and preferments?"

"The law required no man to obey and die too." But did it not require a transgressor to obey and die? If not, then transgression robs the law of its right, and vacates all obligation to obedience. Did it not require the Surety for sinful man to obey and die? If the Surety dies only, he only delivers from punishment; but this affords no claim to life, no title to a reward, unless you can produce some such edict from the court of heaven, "Suffer this, and thou shalt live." I find it written, "In keeping thy commandments there is great reward." Nowhere do I read, "In undergoing thy curse, there is the same reward." Whereas, when we join the active and passive obedience of our Lord, the peace-speaking blood with the life-giving righteousness —both made infinitely meritorious and infinitely efficacious by the divine glory of his person,—how full does our justification appear! How firm does it stand! It has all that the law can demand, both for our exemption from the curse, and for our title to bliss.

Before I take my leave of this topic, let me make one supposition, for which your way of thinking affords the juster ground. Suppose our Lord Jesus Christ had yielded a perfect conformity to the precept, without ever submitting to the penalty; would this have been sufficient for the justification of a sinner? Here is one of your alternatives performed. Upon the foot of your principles, therefore, it would, it must have been sufficient. But this is so wild an opinion, so contrary to the whole current of Scripture, that to produce it, is to refute it.

Where Scripture ascribes the whole of

* Sermons by John Wesley, vol. ii. p. 173.

† "The word *all* (says Mr. Wesley) does not mean all the law, but all things in the universe." How forced a construction! How contrary to grammar! since the law, and the things which it comprehends, are the immediate antecedent. How much more properly and consistently has Dr. Doddridge explained the passage! "Till all things which the law requires, or foretells, shall *be effected*."

our salvation to the death of Christ, a part of his humiliation is put for the whole. To this Mr. Wesley objects, "I cannot allow it without proof." I wish you would remember the golden rule, of doing as you would be done by; and since you insist upon proof from others, not be so sparing of it in your own cause. I wish likewise you would impartially consider what Aspasio has advanced upon the subject. Has he not given you the proof you demand? No; "He was obedient unto death" is no proof at all. But is that the only thing urged? If one argument is inadequate, must all be inconclusive? Because you have routed one detatchment, have you therefore conquered the whole army? However, let us see whether this detachment, weak as you suppose it, may not be able to sustain your attack.

Does not the Scripture ascribe the whole of your salvation to the *death* of Christ? To this question Aspasio replies, "This part of our Lord's meritorious humiliation is, by a very usual figure, put for the whole. The death of Christ includes not only his sufferings, but his obedience. The shedding of his blood was at once the grand instance of his sufferings, and the finishing act of his obedience: in this view it is considered, and thus it is represented by his own ambassador, who, speaking of his divine Master, says, 'He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'" "This (you reply) is no proof at all, as it does not necessarily imply any more, than that he died in obedience to the Father."

How do some people love to cramp the enlarged, and debase the magnificent sense of Scripture! Surely this text implies, and not implies only, but forcibly expresses, both the active and passive obedience of Christ. It is not *απεθανεν, he died*; but *γενομενος υπηκοος, he became obedient*. Can you see nothing of his active righteousness in these words? For my part, I can see very little besides. This is what the following clause confirms (let common sense be judge): Obedient, not barely *in* death, but *unto* death; like that expression of Jehovah by the prophet, "Unto hoary hairs will I carry you." Does not this give us a retrospect view of youth and manhood, as well as lead our attention forward to old age? In like manner, *obedient unto death:* Does not this refer us to all the previous duties and virtues of a righteous walk; while it leads us to the closing scene of all, a resigned exit? Does it not most naturally mean, *obedient* through the whole course of life, even to the last all-completing instance, a voluntary submission to *death?* How easy and obvious is this interpretation! How grand and graceful is this meaning!

I can no more admire your taste, considered as a critic, than I can admire your doctrine, considered as a divine. Give me the expositions of Scripture which act, not like the nocturnal damp, but like the morning sun; not shrivelling and contracting, but opening and expanding those flowers of paradise, the truths of the gospel, that they may display all their charming beauties, and breathe out all their reviving odours. I think, upon the whole, we have very sufficient cause to assert, and to abide by our assertion, that when the Scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of Christ, a part of his humiliation is put for the whole; and, in thus speaking, the Holy Spirit copies after himself: For if the death inflicted on the first Adam included every evil consequent upon the fall—the depravity as well as the misery of the creature—it was meet that the death to which the second Adam submitted should include every good needful for our recovery; the obedience as well as the sufferings of the Redeemer. It was meet that the price, expressed by the same word, should be as extensive as the punishment.

"But how does it appear that he undertook this before the foundation of the world?" At what time does Mr. Wesley suppose that Christ undertook the work? Not till sin entered and man apostatized? Was it then an incidental upstart expedient, fetched in to remedy some unforeseen disaster? Was it a device which owed its birth to some unexpected contingency, occasioned by the perverseness of the creature? Far, far from it: It was the grand, original, all-comprehending plan; the way in which God, long before time commenced, decreed to manifest the glory of his grace, and the lustre of all his perfections. The world was made as a proper theatre on which to display and execute this most magnificent scheme; and all the revolutions of human affairs, like so many under-plots in the drama, are subservient to the accomplishment of this capital design. "Known unto God are all his works;" determined by God are all his counsels, "from the beginning of the world;" more especially this grandest of all the divine dispensations, this masterpiece of his unsearchable wisdom.

"But was this by a positive covenant between Christ and the Father?" Aspasio proceeds to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of an everlasting covenant between the almighty Father and his co-equal Son. He produces several texts of Scripture, to each of which you object as insufficient for his purpose. Each of your objections I shall answer only by adding a short comment, explanatory of their spirit and force. "This proves no previous contract:" That is, I deny it; and therefore you cannot

prove your point. "Neither does this prove any such thing:" That is, I cannot or will not see the proof; and therefore there is none. "That expression does not necessarily imply any more"—than I please to allow. "In the way or method he had chosen;" of which I am the sole complete judge, and my judgment ought to be decisive in the case. Thus would Mr. Wesley have, not Aspasio only, but the public also, receive his dictates *(tanquam a tripode)* as absolute oracles; for here is only bare assertion, or bare denial, without any vouchers but his own word, without any authority but his own declaration.

In Psalm the xlth, the conditions of the covenant are circumstantially recorded, which were the incarnation and obedience of the eternal Son: "A body hast thou prepared me: Lo! I come to do thy will." "Nay, here is no mention of any covenant, nor any thing from which it can be inferred." How many times shall I adjure thee, said Ahab to Micaiah, that thou tell me nothing but that which is true? And how many times shall I entreat Mr. Wesley to object nothing, without assigning some reason for his objection? At least not to think of convincing my judgment, and converting me to his opinion by a bare *say so.* But I have done. Perhaps I have trespassed upon the patience of the reader in expressing my disappointment so frequently; perhaps I may also bear too hard upon Mr. Wesley in asking for proofs, when it may be no small difficulty to produce them. To return: "Nay, here is no mention of any covenant, nor any thing from which it can be inferred." That the word *covenant* is not mentioned is very true; that there is no reference to any such thing, is not so certain. Let us consider the whole passage: "Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou didst not require." If sacrifices and slain beasts are not the object of the divine complacency, in what will the Lord delight? The next words declare, "A body hast thou prepared me:" Since the law cannot be fulfilled without *doing*, nor justice satisfied without *dying*, "Lo! I come," (says the second person in the Trinity,) "to undertake both: Since this undertaking must be accomplished by one who is finite, that he may die, and infinite, that he may conquer death, I will accomplish it in the divine and human nature. For this purpose, a body hast thou prepared me: in this body, lo! I come, willingly and cheerfully I come, to perform, to sustain, to fulfil all; and so to do thy great, thy gracious will." May we not rationally suppose this spoken by way of re-stipulation, or compliance with the Father's demands? that the matter is thereby brought to a solemn contract?

Dr. Hammond thought this no irrational supposition; therefore gives us upon the following words a perfectly corresponding comment. *In the volume of the book it is written of me:*—"Which is no other than a bill or roll of contract between the Father and Christ, wherein is supposed to be written the agreement preparatory to that great work of Christ's incarnation; wherein he, undertaking to fulfil the will of God, to perform all active, and also all passive obedience, even unto death, had the promise from God that he should become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him."

Thus says our learned countryman. And what says the blessed apostle; whose exposition and application of the passage you seem to have forgotten, at least not to have thoroughly weighed? Having quoted the passage, argued from it, and displayed the benefits obtained by this all-sufficient propitiation, he adduces a text from Jeremiah relating to this very subject, and explaining its nature: "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is witness." Of what? Of the justification and sanctification of sinners, both founded on, both effected by, the sacrifice of the dying Jesus: Transactions which both the prophet and the apostle consider under the notion of a covenant, as is plain from the following quotation: "For after that he had said before, This is the covenant which I will make with them in those days." Hence it appears that the author to the Hebrews saw something in the words of the Psalmist from which the doctrine of a covenant might be inferred.

Another copy of this grand treaty is recorded, Isaiah xlix. from the first to the sixth verse. "I have read them, but cannot find a word about it in all those verses; they contain neither more nor less than a prediction of the salvation of the Gentiles." They contain a prediction, and somewhat more; they describe the way whereby this most desirable event shall be brought to pass. This the Lord himself declares shall be by way of covenant: "I will give thee for a covenant to the people." This verse we may look upon as a key to the preceding. It teaches us to consider them as descriptive of the august covenant; of its establishment, its parties, and its terms. Indeed the verses themselves lead us to the same view: For what is a covenant? A contract wherein a condition is prescribed, a promise is made, and both are ratified by a mutual agreement. The condition is prescribed in those words: "Thou art my servant, O Israel,* in whom I will be glori-

* Israel is the name of the church, often given to her in this prophecy. Christ and his church, by virtue of the union between them, have the same names. As she is sometimes called by his name, "The Lord our righteousness," so he is here called by her name, Israel. See Jer. xxxiii. 16.

fied." The promise is made in those words: "Thou shalt raise up the tribes of Jacob, restore the preserved of Israel, and be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." The agreement is specified or implied in those words: "I have spent my strength for nought; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

The great Vitringa, after having expounded the whole clause, concludes in this manner: "Antequam ab his verbis, sensu fœcundissimis, summam doctrinæ evangelicæ complexis, discedam, monere vellim, eadem clarissime deformare totum mysterium conventionis pacis, inter Deum patrem et Messiam filiam ejus, in humana carne apparitum, initæ, perinde ac in locis quæ ex aliis excerpo; Psalm xl. 7; Zech. vi. 13. Pater ut Dominus, filio ut Messiæ, offert gloriam longe amplissimam, meditationis et salvationis Judæorum et gentium, quæ gloria, omnium quæ mente concipi possunt, est maxima, sub lege sive sub conditione profundissimi obsequii servilis; eaque stipulatio utrinque ratihabetur."*

If, upon a stricter review, this prophecy be found to express no such thing as a covenant, I am very willing to give up the proof: So much the rather as it makes no part of Aspasio's discourse; is only just mentioned in a note; and stands not in the main body, but only as a *corps de reserve.*

"By the covenant of works, man was bound to obey in his own person." Here you take Aspasio up very short, and reply, "So he is under the covenant of grace, though not in order to justification." This is the very thing he means: Nor could you easily have mistaken his meaning, if you had only done him so small a piece of justice as to read the whole paragraph; of which, since you seem either willingly, or through inadvertence, to be ignorant, I will beg leave to transcribe it:—"Between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, this, I apprehend, is the difference: by the former, man was indispensably bound to obey in his own person; by the latter, the obedience of his surety is accepted instead of his own. The righteousness required by both is not sincere, but complete; not proportioned to the abilities of fallen man, but to the purity of the law, and the majesty of the lawgiver." You see the whole argument turns upon a *complete* righteousness, such as satisfies the law, and is an adequate ground for justification. This, I imagine, fallen man is not obliged by the covenant of grace to perform; if so, we shall be at a loss to find any such a thing as grace; if so, we can have no hope of obtaining salvation with eternal glory. There will be too much reason for applying to all mankind those awful words of the prophet, "In the day thou mayest make thy plant to grow, and in the morning thou mayest make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be a heap, in the day of grief and desperate sorrow."

Blessed be God, the melancholy strain is superseded. Though the terms in the first covenant were a perfect obedience, though the terms once fixed continue unalterable, yet in the new covenant there is a change and substitution as to the performer, without any relaxation as to the performance. Instead of personal obedience, we are justified through the obedience of our Mediator, "we are *made* the righteousness of God *in* him:" That is, we are furnished with a plea as prevalent for our justification and admission into the divine favour, as if we had retained our innocence untainted, and in every respect conformed ourselves to the righteousness which the law of God requires.* Thus, the salvation of sinners neither clashes with the truth, nor interferes with the justice of the supreme Legislator: On the contrary, it becomes a faithful and just procedure of the most high God, to justify him that believeth on Jesus.

"The obedience of our Surety is accepted instead of our own." "This is neither a safe nor a scriptural way of speaking." That the obedience of Christ is accepted for our justification, is a doctrine warranted by Scripture; it may, therefore, very justly be reckoned a scriptural way of speaking. And if his obedience is accepted for this purpose, our own, were it ever so considerable, could come in for no share of the work; our own, though ever so gorgeously arrayed, must stand aside, or be cast into shades, just as the stars hide their diminished, or rather extinguished heads, when the sun appears in his meridian splendour: Because the obedience of Christ is of infinite dignity and value; and infinite value is such as not only transcends all other services, but renders them mere nothings in the comparison. For this reason the apostle counted all endowments but loss for Christ; and the prophet represents all nations as nothing before God.

"I would simply say, we are accepted through the Beloved." If you rightly understood what is meant when the apostle speaks of being accepted in the Beloved, you would have no fault to find with Aspasio's comment. St. Paul means we are accepted, not by any obedience performed in our own persons, but solely by the obedience of that infinitely excellent, and infinitely beloved one, Christ Jesus; whose righteousness being imputed to us, and put upon

* VITRING. *in loc.*

* 2 Cor. v. 21. This is Dr. Doddridge's interpretation of the passage; and it speaks a noble, a joyful truth.

us, causes us not only to be pardoned, but to be highly esteemed, dearly beloved, and blessed with all spiritual blessings.

Here I cannot but observe that you have changed the apostle's expression. He says, "Accepted *in* the beloved;" you say, "Accepted *through* the beloved." I am willing to believe this was an oversight; you had no sinister design; but still I think you should take more heed to your pen, and not alter the inspired word, lest you blemish the language, or injure the sense. Perhaps you will ask, what difference is there between accepted *through*, and accepted *in*, the Beloved? I will illustrate the difference by a similitude. A creditable housekeeper gives a good character to a servant that leaves him, by virtue of which he is accepted, and admitted into some other valuable employ. This character is his introduction, yet this makes no addition to his real value. Acceptance *through* the Beloved, may import no more than such an admission through such a recommendation; whereas, accepted *in* the Beloved implies not only a recommendatory passport from Christ, but a real union with Christ; whereby we are incorporated into his sacred body, and partake as truly of his righteousness as the members partake of the life which animates the head. By this our persons are really ennobled; this imparts the highest dignity to our nature: We are not only recommended to, but rendered meet for the favour, the complacency, the beatific presence of God, being one with Jesus, and therefore loved even as Jesus himself is loved.*

"The second covenant was not made with Adam or any of his posterity, but with Christ in those words." "For any authority you have from these words, you might as well have said it was made with the Holy Ghost." No: Christ, not the Holy Ghost, was the seed of the woman. This is an answer much in your own strain. But let us consider farther.

You allow, I presume, that the first covenant was made with Adam, as our public federal head; that all his posterity were included in it, being to stand or fall together with him: Herein, says the apostle, "Adam was a figure of him that was to come." If so, the second covenant must be made with Christ, as our public federal head: He and all his seed are included in it; and as it was impossible for him to miscarry, they must be joint partakers of the benefits. Accordingly, he is styled the Mediator of the new covenant, by whose most acceptable and prevailing interposition all its blessings are obtained: He is styled the Surety of the covenant, engaging to pay the whole debt for poor insolvent creatures—the debt of penal suffering, and the debt of perfect obedience: The Testator of the covenant, whose are its riches, and whose are its privileges; who has also of his unbounded goodness bequeathed them as so many inestimable legacies to indigent men. Methinks those are such charming truths, such divinely comfortable doctrines, that you should consider them thoroughly before you oppose them, lest you do a greater act of unkindness to your readers, than that which is charged, though very injuriously, upon Job: "Thou hast stripped the naked of their clothing, and sent widows away empty." And when you are disposed to consider these points thoroughly, ask yourself this question: Is it possible to conceive that Christ should be the Mediator, the Surety, the Testator of the covenant, if it was not made with him, and the execution of it undertaken by him? Or is it possible to suppose that the all-glorious Son of God should be the Mediator, the Surety, the Testator of the covenant, yet leave others to perform the conditions; which are incomparably the most important, interesting, and difficult parts of the transaction?

"These words were not spoken to Christ, but of him." True, *of* him as given for a covenant of the people. "There is not the least intimation of any such covenant." You will not deny that Christ is signified by "the seed of the woman." It is said, *He shall*; a language expressing authority, and requiring conformity. As Christ is the supreme uncontrollable God, this could not be required, and would never have been said without his actual consent: here then is implied his approbation of the office. It is farther said, "The serpent shall bruise his heel;" he shall become incarnate, and after a life of much sorrow, and many tribulations, shall be put to a most tormenting death: here is the condition of the covenant. It is added, "He shall bruise the serpent's head; shall destroy the works of the devil, and repair the ruins of the fall; shall deliver from the wrath deserved, and recover the inheritance forfeited:" here is the recompense or reward of the covenant.

Should you ask, Is it supposable that Adam understood the words in this compass of meaning? Perhaps not. But if we do not understand them in a more exalted and extensive sense than our first father, what advantage do we reap from the full revelation of the gospel? The full revelation of the gospel pours as much light upon this, and other of the ancient oracles, as the experiments of our modern anatomists have poured upon the structure and economy of the human body. This grand original text, read with the comment of the New Testament, speaks all that Aspasio has suggested·

* John xvii. 23. "They *in* me," says our Lord. Therefore, on this account, or viewed in this relation, "Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

all that our fallen state could want, or our very hearts can wish.

You have mustered up several objections, yet there is room for more; I will therefore for once act as your auxiliary, and turn against Aspasio. He supposes the covenant to be made with Christ; whereas the Scripture represents the covenant as made with various men, particularly and personally, in various ages. True, it is recorded that God made a covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, with Jacob, and with David the father of Solomon: But were they in a capacity to enter into covenant with their Maker? to stand for themselves, or be surety for others? I think not: the passages mean no more than the Lord's manifesting, in an especial manner, the grand covenant to them; ratifying and confirming their personal interest in it; and farther assuring them that Christ, the great covenant head, should be of themselves, and spring from their seed.

This accounts for that remarkable and singular mode of expression, which often occurs in Scripture, "I will make a covenant with them;" or, "This is my covenant with them." Yet there follows no mention of any conditions, only a promise of unconditional blessings; because the former have already been performed, and nothing remains but to confer the latter; so that the meaning of the divine speaker is—I will admit them to an interest in this covenant, and make them partakers of its privileges.

I should now conclude, but Mr. Wesley will not suffer me to quit the subject. He farther insists, "The words manifestly contain, if not a covenant made with, a promise made to Adam and all his posterity." *If not:* He begins to hesitate in his assertion, to fluctuate in his opinion, and, I could hope, to see his mistake. "The words contain a promise." And have you never read, that the covenant of God, or the various renewals and ratifications of the covenant of grace, are styled *covenants of promise?* which consist of pure promises, and dispense free gifts.

Observe the tenor of the new covenant, as it stands engrossed by the pen of inspiration: "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and on their hearts will I write them; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least of them even unto the greatest of them. For I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Where are your conditions in this draught? Where are any terms required of impotent man? Is it not all promise from the beginning to the end? That repentance, and that faith, for whose conditionality you plead, are they not both comprehended in this heavenly deed? and comprehended under the form of blessings vouchsafed, not of tasks enjoined? Does the contract run in this manner, *I require and command?* or in this strain, *I grant and bestow?* The Lord says, "I will put my laws, I will write them." The work shall not be laid on my creatures, but done by myself. "They shall be my people, and I will remember their sins no more." What! Provided they perform such and such duties? I read no such clause: I see no such proviso. All is absolutely free; dependent on no performances of ours; but flowing from sovereign, supreme, self-influenced goodness.

Just such is that delightful declaration, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me." What you call conditions, must be comprised in *my fear.* This is represented as a singular benefit which God imparts, as a gracious temper which God implants; and both as dependent, not on the fidelity of man, but on the power and veracity of God. Another of your conditions, I presume, is perseverance unto the end. This, in the covenant of grace, is not enjoined, but secured; secured, not by a strict prohibition of apostasy, but by the omnipotent interposition of Jehovah: "I will put my fear (so put my fear) into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;" shall never draw back into perdition. Thus the covenant becomes not transient, but everlasting; thus the promise is not precarious, but sure to all the seed. There seems to be as great a difference between this evangelical, and your legal method of stating the covenant; between suspending the benefits on human endeavours, and grounding them on divine agency; as between hanging the anchor on the top of the mast, and fixing it at the bottom of the sea.

Let me add one more text, which now occurs to my thoughts: "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," Acts iii. 25. Here the covenant is first mentioned in general; then particularly specified. "In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth"—be laid under conditions? be obliged to execute terms? No; but "shall be blessed," blessed with all blessings, temporal, spiritual, eternal. *In thy seed:* that is, in Christ; without any regard to qualifications or deeds of their own; entirely by

virtue of an interest in his consummately excellent actions, and consummately precious sufferings. Then the apostle singles out one special and distinguished blessing of the covenant—a conversion from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the service of God;" or, as it is expressed in the following verse, "a turning from all iniquity." This is still exhibited to our contemplation as the fruit of the covenant of grace; as the thing for which it makes provision, not introductory to, but consequent upon, our participation of it.

If, therefore, in speaking of holiness and obedience, we represent them as the promises, rather than the demands of the covenant, we evidently follow the apostle's example. Were we to take the contrary course, we should act as prudently as the sportsman, who, entering his horse for a plate, chooses to have him walk backwards, rather than run forwards. Would this increase his speed? Would this help him to outstrip his rivals, or enable him to win the prize? Shall we, in order to avoid the charge of Antinomianism, rush into this absurdity? I am persuaded you could not wish to see so egregious a piece of folly even in your enemy, much less in yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

Reverend Sir,—I wish you would consider with some attention that emphatical memento of the apostle, "Since ye knew the grace of God in truth." Here he intimates, that we may have a knowledge of grace which is not genuine; not free from corrupt mixture; not true. It may be so discoloured with error, or blended with so much of the law, as no longer to appear like itself. The language of such persons is somewhat like the language of the Israelites after their return from captivity, who spoke neither the Hebrew nor the Heathenish dialect; but expressed themselves half in the speech of Ashdod, and half in the speech of Sion.

"It is true," says Aspasio, "I cannot perform the conditions." "It is not true," says Mr. Wesley. This is pretty blunt, and pretty bold too; for it is in effect affirming, that a man dead in trespasses and sins is able to perform conditions. Mr. Wesley is not aware, that "Christ strengthening us," is one of the benefits of the covenant, comprehended in these words, "I will put my laws into their minds."

"The conditions of the new covenant are, Repent and believe." It has been already shewn, that they are represented by the Holy Ghost, not as conditions, but as blessings; not as conditions required, but as blessings bestowed; not as conditions on which depends the accomplishment of the covenant, but as happy fruits, or precious effects of the covenant, made, and making good to sinners, who are wholly without strength.

"It is equally true," says Aspasio, "this is not required at my hands." "It is equally true," says Mr. Wesley, "that is, absolutely false." This is, doubtless, a *home* thrust. It behoves us to provide some armour of proof for our defence; and this the Scripture furnishes abundantly. It furnishes us with more than *robur et æs triplex*. The Scripture sets forth justification, salvation, and all blessedness, as things perfectly free; detached from all works, dependent on no conditions, but the gifts of sovereign goodness and infinitely rich grace.

Though you, Sir, treat Aspasio in so unceremonious a manner, we will be more complaisant; you shall receive such entertainment from us, as the King of Babylon's ambassadors received from Hezekiah. We will, on this occasion, shew you "the house of our precious things, the silver and the gold, the spices and the precious ointment, and if not *all*, yet some of the house of our armour." 2 Kings xx. 13.

We are saved, that is, we have all the benefits of the new covenant by *grace*. "By grace ye are saved. It is of grace, and no more of works. Who hath saved us, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace." Eph. ii. 5. Rom. x. 6. 2 Tim. i. 9.

Freely: "Being justified freely. The things that are freely given to us of God. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rom. iii. 34. 1 Cor. ii. 12. Rev. xxii. 19.

By way of gift: "If thou knowest the gift of God. The gift of God is eternal life. The free gift came upon all men, to justification of life." John iv. 10. Rom. vi. 23; v. 18.

Without the law: "The righteousness of God without the law. That we might be justified, not by the works of the law. If the inheritance were of the law." Rom. iii. 21. Gal. ii. 16; iii. 18.

Not by works: "Not of works, but of him that calleth us. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law." Rom. ix. 11. Tit. iii. 5. Phil. iii. 9.

By *righteousness*, not performed, but imputed: "Faith (in Christ, as our all) is imputed for righteousness. God imputeth righteousness without works. To whom it (that is, the merit of a dying and rising Saviour) shall be imputed." Rom. iv. 5, 6, 23, 24, 25.

Not by guiltless behaviour, but by *re-*

mission of sins: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. To give knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins." Psalm xxxii. 1. 2 Cor. v. 19. Luke i. 77.

Not each by himself, but *all by one*: "They shall reign in life, by one Christ Jesus. By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous. By one offering, he hath perfected for ever those that are sanctified." Rom. v. 17, 18, 19. Heb. x. 14.

By *faith* alone: "Being justified by faith. A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. Through him, all that believe are justified from all things." Rom. v. 1; iii. 28. Acts xiii. 39.

Not on account of faith, as *a condition performed*, but on account of Christ, the pearl of inestimable price; which faith receives, applies, and uses: "Who has by himself purged away our sins, by himself finished our transgressions, made reconciliation for our iniquities, and brought in an everlasting righteousness." Heb. i. 3. Dan. ix. 24.

This is the doctrine of Scripture. Because it is of the greatest importance, you see with what care it is stated, and with what copiousness displayed; with what zeal it is urged, and with what vigilance guarded. How solicitously the sacred writers use every form of speech that may exclude all human works, may set aside all conditions and pre-requisites, in order to supersede all glorying, and ascribe the whole of our justification to the free grace of God, and the sole merits of Christ.

After all these testimonies of Scripture, shall we still maintain, that the covenant of grace consists of conditions, depends upon conditions; is such as we cannot expect to have made good till certain conditions are, by us, duly and truly fulfilled? Dagon may as well stand in the presence of the ark, as such a notion in the face of these evangelical texts.

All, all is free to us sinners, though it was not free to Christ our Saviour: He paid the price; he performed the conditions. If you would know what price was paid, what conditions were performed, and on what terms we inherit the blessings, you, Sir, may receive information from Mr. John Wesley, who says in his comment, "All the blessings of the new covenant are secured to us by the one offering of Christ." According to this commentator, they are not only procured for us, but *secured* to us. How could either of these be true—much more, how could the latter be fact—if the blessings were suspended on any performance or any acquisition of ours? If I am not to enjoy them until I discharge this or that duty, they are not procured for me; if I am not to enjoy them unless I become possessed of this or that quality, they are not secured to me;—not secured to me as the estate is to an heir, even whilst he is a minor, but only as a prize is to a racer, in case, by exerting his speed and his strength, he arrives first at the goal; which was never yet called security, but allowed to be mere uncertainty.

As to this point, others may receive information from the prophet Zechariah: "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein was no water," Zech. ix. 11. *Thy prisoners*: Those wretched creatures who were in a state of guilt, and under the sentence of death; subject to the tyranny of the devil, and liable to the damnation of hell. In this dismal state they were as in a *pit* unfathomably deep; from which there seemed no possibility of escape, nor any method of deliverance: A pit in which there is *no water*; nothing but absolute misery, without a gleam of hope, or a drop of comfort. *I have sent them forth* into a place of liberty, where they obtain pardon, and enjoy peace; are satisfied with the plenteousness of my house, and drink of my pleasures as out of a river. All this by the *blood of thy covenant*. Blood was the righteous term, blood was the dreadful requirement; even that infinitely precious blood of Christ, on which the covenant of our freedom was established, and by which its rich blessings are procured. Which is called "thy covenant,* O daughter of Sion," thou church of the first-born; because it was made in thy name, made with thy divine Surety, and for thy unspeakable good.

This is not only false, but "most dangerously false. If we allow this, Antinomianism comes in with a full tide." Pray, Sir, what do you mean by Antinomianism? Such a contrariety to the law as debases its dignity, deprives it of its proper honour and proper end?†

Surely then, not Aspasio's, but Mr. Wesley's tenets, are chargeable with this kind of heterodoxy; since they would cause the law to be put off with a mite, when millions of talents are its due; oblige it to be content with errant deficiency, when the most sinless obedience, and the most exalted perfection, are what it demands.

Do you mean by Antinomianism, such a

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* *Thy covenant.* The words are not addressed to Christ, but to his church; as the Hebrew word, being in the feminine gender, intimates.

† The end of the commanding law is righteousness, Rom. x. 4. The end of the violated law is punishment, Gal. iii. 10. Both these ends are answered by the interposition of an obedient and crucified Redeemer, but on no other scheme, and in no other manner whatever.

contrariety to the law as disregards its duties, and violates its precepts? Then the apostle Paul shall reply, "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly." *The grace of God*, his infinitely free favour, of which we have a specimen in the preceding text, which scorns to be shackled with conditions, or meanly dependent on human endeavours. This grace, requiring nothing of the creature, but *bringing* salvation, spiritual and eternal salvation, finished by the incarnate Creator, and free for the chiefest of sinners: This grace, being revealed in the gospel, being discerned by faith, and thus appearing in lustre, and with power, to all men; to men of every rank, every age, every character; making no difference between the servant and the master, between the ruddy strippling and the hoary sire, between the vile prostitute and the chaste vestal, but opening its inexhaustible treasures to be received by one as well as the other: This grace does what? "Cause Antinomianism," or practical ungodliness, "to come in with a full tide?" Quite the reverse: It represses it like an immoveable barrier: It *teaches us to deny*, to renounce ungodliness, *all ungodliness*; not only external gross abominations, but *worldly lusts*, also every vicious inclination, and every irregular desire. Farther, it teaches us to live *soberly*, with regard to ourselves, *righteously* towards our neighbours, and *godly* to our great Creator.

The original word is particularly beautiful and significant; it is not τασσει—prescribeth, by way of rule, nor επιταασσει—enjoineth, by way of authority; but παιδευουσα—teacheth, by way of instruction, pointeth out the effectual method of obeying the precepts, and conforming to the rule. A tyrant may command his slave to write, or make a proficiency in writing; a kind tutor forms him to it, shows him how to do it, and renders what otherwise would be an irksome, perhaps an impracticable task, both easy and pleasant: So this grace, clearly manifested in the understanding, and cordially apprehended by the will, renders every duty of holiness both practicable and pleasant; it gives us a heart, and a hand, and ability to exercise ourselves unto universal godliness.

Christ has performed all that was conditionary for me, says Aspasio. "Has he repented and believed for you?" says Mr. Wesley; a question already answered in the Dialogues. "No," replies Mr. Wesley, "not answered, but evaded. 'He performed all that was conditionary in the covenant of works,' is nothing to the purpose; for we are not talking of that, but of the covenant of grace." Give me leave to tell you, Sir, that you are greatly mistaken here; we are talking, at least we ought to be talking, of the covenant of works, when we talk of the covenant which Christ came under. It was a covenant of works to him, which by his execution of it, became a covenant of grace for us: He became answerable for our debt; the debt was exacted without the least abatement. In this respect "God spared not his own Son." And is not this the tenor, are not such the effects, of a covenant of works?

Christ is called the "Surety of a better covenant;" that is, a surety provided and admitted by a better covenant. In this peculiarity, infinitely momentous and comfortable, the new covenant is better, because it brings in a substitute to discharge what was contracted under the old, which neither provided, nor allowed, nor knew any such thing. It is written, "Christ was made under the law," therefore, not under a covenant of grace. If you can show me, in the construction of the law, any hint of faith in the merits of another, or any mention of repentance unto life, I will retract my opinion, that Christ performed whatever was conditionary; I will do honour to those genteel expressions, and submit to those cogent arguments, "It is not true—it is nothing to the purpose—it is absolutely false."

"If Christ's perfect obedience be ours, we have no more need of pardon than Christ himself. The consequence is good; you have started an objection which you cannot answer." It is answered in the Dialogues, whether in a satisfactory or insufficient manner, the reader must determine. But suppose we admit the consequence, it implies no more than the apostle affirms, "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Let me transcribe your own* explication of this passage: "He hath done" (observe, you yourself speak of Christ's doing; in this place only of Christ's doing; yet I would not be so injurious to your good sense, as to imagine that you exclude his suffering) "all that was needful, in order to their full reconciliation with God." This exposition I approve, as far as it goes; only you have omitted one very weighty circumstance, comprehended in the word *ever*: By this doing and suffering, believers are fully and perfectly reconciled; not for a day only, or for any particular time, but for ever. The pardon is irrevocable; the blessing inalienable. Not like the moon, which now waxes, and anon wanes; but like the sun, which is always the same, ever shines with the same plenitude of rays, and needs only to appear, in order to appear unchangeably bright.

This reminds me of a more direct answer

* Explanatory Notes *in loc.*

to your difficulty. The repeated pardon which believers implore, is only a witness-bearing to the truth, or a repeated manifestation of it to our consciences. Will you find fault with this doctrine? Might you not, for the very same reason, say, if the atonement of Christ's death was absolutely perfect, there could be no need of his intercession at God's right hand? Yes, for the actual application of the great atonement, and the continual communication of its happy fruits, their intercession is necessary. So, though our justification is complete, though our sins have all been laid upon our Lord, and are not to be done away by some duties of our own, but already done away by the sacrifice of himself; yet the application of this blessing, the revelation of it to our hearts, is daily, hourly, incessantly needful: Therefore he saith, speaking of his vineyard the church, "I will water it every moment." Whereby? In what manner? What spiritual blessings correspond with watering the thirsty soil? The discovery of complete pardon, of complete acceptance, of complete salvation in Christ. This will make the soul like a watered garden; this will cause joy and holiness to blossom as a rose.

Both the branches of the law, the preceptive and the penal, in the case of guilt contracted, must be satisfied. "Not so." If not, one of them must pass unsatisfied, and unfulfilled; whereas our Lord declares, that "heaven and earth shall pass away, sooner than one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail" of its accomplishment. Will you undertake to prove, either that the preceptive, or else that the penal part of the law, does not constitute so much as one jot or one tittle of its contents? Then, and then only, your assertion may consist with our Lord's declaration. This will be an undertaking as adventurous as your next is disingenuous.

"Not so; Christ by his death alone (so our church teaches) fully satisfied for the sins of the whole world." *By his death alone,* that is, in contradistinction to all human works as efficient or adjutant causes. *Fully satisfied,* that is, without having, and without needing the concurrence of any human satisfaction. It is spoken in opposition to our endeavours, not to his own most glorious obedience. But do you really want to be informed, that our church means no such thing as you would insinuate? Have you never heard her profess, and require to believe, what Aspasio maintains? If not, be pleased to read the quotations from her Homilies, which he has produced, (pp. 328, 329.)* Read these, and I cannot but think you have modesty enough to blush at an attempt to palm upon the public such an apparent misrepresentation of our venerable mother.

"The same great truth is manifestly taught in the 31st Article." What? That Christ, by his *death alone,* or by *shedding his blood alone,* without fulfilling the law perfectly, satisfied for the sins of the world! Then the Articles and the Homilies most flatly contradict one another. Upon this you ask, "Is it therefore fair, is it honest, for any one to plead the Articles of our church in defence of absolute predestination?" Indeed, Sir, I know not what you mean by this interrogatory, or at what you aim. Does Aspasio plead the Articles for any such purpose? Not that he should be afraid, in case there was an evident occasion to advance such a plea, and perhaps might put Mr. Wesley to greater difficulty than he is aware of, in order to elude the force of it. But he does not in this place come within view of the point, nor so much as remotely hint at it: No, nor in any part of the two volumes does he once touch upon absolute predestination, much less does he plead the Articles of our church in its defence: So that your inferential word *therefore,* is a conclusion without premises.

Absolute predestination is a phrase not to be found in all the Dialogues, or in any of the Letters; but it is a phrase which Mr. Wesley thinks to be alarming and disgusting; on which Mr. Wesley has learned to say many horrible and shocking things; therefore, be it right or wrong, be it true or false, Aspasio shall be charged with the obnoxious expression. When he mentions predestination, it is in the very words of Scripture; without dwelling upon the subject; without resting his cause upon it; without attempting either to explain or to establish it. This he leaves, and ever will leave, to clearer heads and abler pens. As to your *absolute,* this is not what Aspasio speaks, but what Mr. Wesley would make him speak; a word, which in this connexion he never used, nor so much as dreamt of using; for which reason, I call it not *his* but *yours.* May I not then retort your own question; and ask, Is it fair, is it honest, to

* As this pamphlet may possibly fall into the hands of some persons who have not the book entitled Theron and Aspasio; I will, for their sakes, transcribe one of the testimonies to which we are referred.

In the Homily concerning the salvation of mankind, we read the following words: "The apostle toucheth three things, which must go together in justification. On God's part, his great mercy and grace: On Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption, by the offering of his body and shedding of his precious blood, with fulfilling of the law perfectly: On our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours, but by God's working in us." You see, according to the judgment of our reformers, not only the offering of Christ's body, and the shedding of Christ's blood, but also his perfect fulfilling of the law, are the adequate price of our redemption. Yet Mr. Wesley is pleased to exclude the latter; and ventures to affirm that he has the authority of our church for such an opinion, and for such a practice.

put into your friend's mouth words which he never used, and then exclaim against them?

What follows in this paragraph is prodigious indeed. "Seeing the 17th Article barely defines the term;" that is, the church does not believe the doctrine, nor require any such belief from her members! Why then does she select it for one of the Articles? Why pronounce it agreeable to God's word? Why forbid disputation against it? Pity but we had been acquainted with this fine distinction when we were students at Oxford: We then declared our approbation of the academical statutes; we engaged to observe them all, and confirmed our engagement with an oath. But how easily might we have eluded the obligation, if, when called upon for conformity and obedience, this salvo had come into our heads:—The university does not, in these statutes, set forth our duty, but barely defines the terms; she does not insist upon a conformity, but only flourishes a little upon terms, and leaves us to obey or disobey as we shall find ourselves inclined.

"Barely defines the term, without either affirming or denying the thing." How! Does she not affirm the thing, when she styles it an "excellent benefit of God?" Declares it to be "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort" to the godly? That it "greatly establishes and confirms their faith of eternal salvation, and fervently kindles their love towards God?" "Not affirm the thing!" when she expressly ascribes such fruits and consequents to it! This is not only affirming, but affirming with the highest approbation, like proclaiming the king, and placing the crown upon his head.

In one part of your Preservative you enumerate, and very properly display, what you call "The five benefits of baptism." Suppose a Quaker, upon reading this passage, should say, "Friend Wesley, thou barely definest the term, thou neither affirmest nor deniest the thing. This is no proof that thou thyself believest a tittle of water-baptism, or wouldest have thy readers believe the reality of any such ordinance." Should the Quaker argue thus, he would argue just like yourself. But I apprehend he would not be so boldly disingenuous; he would rather confess, "Friend John doth certainly maintain and believe these things; but his opinion is mistaken, and his arguments are inconclusive." "The 31st Article totally overthrows predestination, and razes it from the foundation." If so, it makes one Article contradict another; consequently, weakens the authority, and undermines the credibility of them all. In this Article are two points more particularly proper for our inquiry: "The great salvation, and the number of the saved. I cannot but query, whether you believe the former, or rightly understand the latter.

The *great salvation*, expressed in the following words: "The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." If I take these words as I am enjoined, in the literal and grammatical sense, I must believe, that Christ engaged to satisfy offended justice for every sin which I have committed, or shall commit, throughout my whole life: My past sins, at that time, had no more existence than my future sins have at this hour, but both were equally laid upon my Lord.

Having undertaken this greatest of all works, I must believe that he fully accomplished it; and actually satisfied for all my transgressions, of every kind and every date. A possibility, or mere chance of being redeemed, can never be reckoned a perfect redemption: Neither would our Saviour have paid down a positive price for a precarious conditional good; much less would he have paid an immense, an infinite price, upon a bare uncertainty whether it should take any effect, or ever obtain its desired end. I believe, therefore, that the satisfaction is made for me; that God has received the all-sufficient atonement in behalf of all my provocations; and that there is no more ground of condemnation for me, a vile sinner, than there is room for the prosecution of an insolvent, all whose debts are defrayed, even to the very last mite.

The number of the saved, expressed in those words, "The sins of the whole world." This I acknowledge to be the language of Scripture; and I promise myself you will bear with me, while I offer my thoughts concerning the occasion and the import of such language.

In the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, the Lord Jehovah confined his favour to a few particular families. When he formed his Israel into a commonwealth, he chose them to himself, and separated them from all other nations. To them he gave his oracles, his ordinances, and his covenants, yea, he honoured and indulged them with his divine presence. In this the Israelites gloried; they appropriated this privilege to themselves, and held other people at a distance, looking upon them as strangers, and without God in the world: hence that chosen seed spares not to say, "We are thine; thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name."—At the commencement of the Messiah's kingdom, the Lord purposed to change the scene, and vary the dispensation, by admitting both Jews and Gentiles to an interest in the great salvation: as they were equally

chargeable with sin, and equally liable to the curse, they should now stand upon a level; be equally sharers in that divine Saviour, who submits to be made sin, and to be made a curse for both alike. This the Holy Ghost expressly and repeatedly promised, "He (that is, the Redeemer which is to come) shall speak peace unto the Heathen; his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

Notwithstanding such prophecies and such promises, our Lord himself, when he entered upon his ministry, acted a discriminating part, and kept up the partition wall, in pursuance of that declaration, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." When he sent forth his disciples to preach and to teach, he gave them also a command to show the same partial regard, "Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles." This conduct of our Lord, both under the Old Testament and the New, confirmed the Jews in their self-flattering notion, that they were, and ever should be, a favourite nation and a peculiar people. The Gentiles, on the other hand, were no less discouraged; apprehending that as they were, so they ever should be, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." But in order to convince the Jews of their mistake in claiming the blessing of Abraham to themselves; and in order to assure the poor discarded Gentiles that they should be "fellow-heirs and of the same body;" our Lord in his last charge to his apostles, alters the style of his commission, and enlarges the sphere of their several departments. It is now no longer, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles," but quite the reverse: "Go teach all nations of the world," yea, and "every creature: whosoever believeth (whether Jew or Gentile) shall be saved."

Still the Jews were hardly induced to give the right hand of fellowship to their brethren the Gentiles: For St. Peter cries, with some indignation, "Not so, Lord." Still the Gentiles, hardly persuaded that they should be partakers of the grace, reasoned against themselves, "The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people." Therefore the Lord, to intercept all the desponding objections of the latter, and to bring down the high disdainful imaginations of the former, declares in a variety of places, that the difference no longer subsists; that Christ has thrown down the partition wall, and laid all plain, and common, and free. Though the giving of the law pertained to Israel only, the Lord Jesus gave himself a ransom for all people. Though the paschal Lamb extended its influence only to the circumcision, the Lamb of God is a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world," even though it be not circumcised. And now God would have all men, whether bond or free, Jews or Gentiles, Greeks or Barbarians, to be saved, by coming unto the knowledge of the faith.

This account gives us the true cause, and points out the intended use, of such universal phrases. They are calculated to abate the pride of the Jews, to encourage the despised Gentiles, and, by excluding none, they give encouragement for all to come; because, though every individual person will not be saved, yet "whosoever cometh shall in no wise be cast out." By this interpretation, the phrase is neither inconsistent with other texts, neither does our own church contradict herself.

Upon the whole, you will please to observe, that I should never have touched upon this subject, had not your objections, farfetched and forced as they are, given me a kind of challenge. And now I have touched upon the subject, it is not as a champion for the cause, but only to show the weakness and the inconsistency of your arguing; how little you avail yourself, even on a point where you think opposition vain and your arm irresistible.

"Believers, who are notorious transgressors in themselves, have a sinless obedience in Christ." This passage you select as faulty, I presume because it is opposite to your favourite tenet, "*Perfection* in personal holiness." By *notorious*, I mean acknowledged, confessed, indisputably such. If you are not such a transgressor, why do you daily confess yourself a miserable sinner? Why do you acknowledge that you are "tied and bound with the chain of your sins," and declare before all men "that there is no health in you?" All this Mr. Wesley speaks with his lips, and I would hope believes in his heart. Yet all this does not amount "to a notorious transgressor!" Pray then, good Sir, inform us what sort of transgressor is described by all these expressions.

You cry out, "O syren song!" The Psalmist would have taught you a better exclamation. If this is the case, "let us rejoice with trembling." Are we notorious transgressors in ourselves? The consciousness of this is the strongest motive to humility. Have we a sinless obedience in Christ? The belief of this is an abundant source of joy. When you add, "pleasing sound to James Wheatly! Thomas Williams! James Reily!" I am quite ashamed of your meanness, and grieved at your uncharitable rashness. How unworthy is such a procedure, either of the gentleman, the Christian, or the man of sense? Unworthy the gentleman, to stigmatize by name, and expose to the most public infamy. Unworthy the Christian, whose charity concealeth, rather than divulgeth and

proclaimeth upon the house-tops. Unworthy the man of sense, who knows that the miscarriages of a professor are no argument against the soundness of a doctrine: if they were, would not your own principles totter, nay, how could Christianity itself stand?

"Elijah failed in his resignation, and even Moses himself spake unadvisedly with his lips." "It is true, (says Mr. Wesley). But if you could likewise fix some blot upon venerable Samuel, and beloved Daniel, it would prove nothing." I have no desire to fix a blot; but if I find it in the most accomplished character, this proves the proposition which Aspasio maintains, "That the very best of men fall short; that the very best of men will be found guilty, if tried by the righteous law; that the very best of men have nothing more to plead for acceptance with the High and Holy One, than the criminal who yesterday murdered his benefactor, to-morrow is to be executed for his crime, and is now flying to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus for the chief of sinners."

"No Scripture teaches that the holiness of Christians is to be measured by that of any Jew." I should be afraid to advance such a position, after having read that general exhortation, "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises;" and those more particular references to the ancient saints, comprised in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. Were not they Jews? Does not the apostle propose them as patterns for our imitation? Is not this his language, *Let us* act in conformity to their practice? "The Spirit of Christ was in them," and "they obtained (even from the supreme Judge) a good report." Agreeably to this divine testimonial, we are directed to learn from Abel a fiduciary dependence on the great atonement; and from Enoch, a life of communion with a reconciled God. The prophets are recommended to our contemplation, as "examples of suffering affliction, and of patience." Elijah is set before us as an instance of persevering and successful prayer; and we are directed to walk in the steps of our father Abraham's faith. This was the counsel of an apostle to others; this was the aim of an apostle with regard to himself; therefore I think, it can never be unworthy of you, or unfit for the most advanced among your disciples. For my part, I shall reckon myself truly happy, I shall bless the day whereon I was born, if I may but be enabled to follow the footsteps of these illustrious leaders, though—*Non passibus æquis*. That Christians ought to rise above the level of the common Jews, I freely own. Mr. Wesley's mistake seems to lie in confounding the *common* with the *uncommon*; in not discerning the difference between *any* and *every*, between *some* and *all*. Some Jews were blessed with extraordinary endowments; they had distinguished communications of the Spirit of wisdom and holiness. They were as the "stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land." Their great achievements and eminent attainments are described in the aforementioned chapter, which may truly be styled the golden legend; great things, impossible to flesh and blood, they both performed and suffered; such as characterise a saint of the highest rank. To imitate these is the duty of all Christians; to equal them is the privilege of few.

Let me illustrate this sentiment: the reader, I apprehend, will hardly think it needs confirmation. Every graduate in the university, much more every minister of the gospel, ought to exceed the schoolboy in learning and knowledge. Yet there have been schoolboys with whom few ministers, and fewer graduates, will venture to compare themselves. A recent instance of this kind we have in the famous Baratier. This wonderful youth, when he was but four years old, spoke French to his mother, Latin to his father, High-Dutch to his maid. At the age of six, he explained the Hebrew text as readily as if it had been his native German. When other lads are scarce able to read with fluency and propriety their mother tongue, he was not only acquainted with, but master of five several languages. In his eleventh year, he published a learned Latin dissertation, and translated a book of travels out of Hebrew into French. While a mere boy, he was qualified to dispute with professors of the sciences, was honoured with a seat at an ecclesiastical synod, and admitted to the degree of doctor in philosophy. Upon this narrative I shall only observe, that many of the Jews, whose names are immortalized in Scripture, were, in faith, in godliness, and all that is exemplary, so many Baratiers.

"Do not the best of men frequently feel disorder in their affections? Do they not often complain, When I would do good, evil is present with me?" "I believe not." What a proof is here! How well suited to its office; which is to control the current, and overrule the evidence of ancient and modern consent. But why do not you believe what Aspasio supposes? Is your disbelief grounded on fact? Are you acquainted with any people who feel no disorder in their affections? who always do good in the completest manner? and never have evil present with them? If so, what are their names? where do they live? We would go many miles to see them. You have no aversion to the mention of names, when censure is the motive, and public disgrace the effect; why should you be so reluctant,

when honour and distinguished respect would be the consequence?

Do they not say, "We groan, being burdened with the workings of inbred corruption?"—"This is not the meaning of the text. The whole context shows the cause of that groaning was their longing to be with Christ." You need not on this occasion rummage the context, or take a journey to find what is at your door. The sentence itself shows, as plainly as words can show, the cause of their groaning. We groan—it is not said because we long to be with Christ. This might be a truth; but this is not the cause assigned: "We groan because we are burdened." Burdened with what? Aspasio answers, with a body of sin and death, or with what the apostle himself styles *το θνητον*. This, whatever it means, was the load that encumbered them, oppressed them, and made them sigh ardently for deliverance. Does not this signify all the infirmities and disorders of the present mortal state? Among which, the sad effects of inbred corruption are none of the least. These gave those magnanimous but pious souls more uneasiness than all other kinds of affliction whatever.*

"The cure of sin will be perfected in heaven." "Nay, surely in paradise." Aspasio knows no difference between paradise and heaven. Paradise is the kingdom where Christ reigns; and is not this heaven? Paradise is the region where the tree of life grows; and is not this heaven? Heaven denotes the place; paradise describes its nature—a place of consummate bliss and absolute perfection, where is the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore. However, if it can be proved that they are different abodes, and imply different states,† then Aspasio would be understood to say, the cure of sin is completed in paradise; or as soon as the believer drops his flesh, and enters the invisible world.

"This (a perfect conformity to God) is a noble prerogative of the beatific vision." "No;" says Mr. Wesley. Though St. John, one would think, had settled and ascertained this point beyond all contradiction: "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." *We shall;* which intimates, that at present we are not perfectly like him. *For;* which denotes the efficient cause of this advancement and felicity, this complete transformation into the divine image. *We shall see him,* no longer through a glass, but face to face: We shall receive the clearest manifestation of his ineffable holiness and glory, which will have just the same effect upon our souls as the imprinted seal has upon the melting wax.

"It would then come too late. If sin remains in us till the day of judgment, it will remain in us for ever." You suppose, that the beatific vision is not enjoyed till the day of judgment. But in this you seem to err, not knowing the Scripture. I have a *desire,* says the apostle, *to be dissolved.* And what is the consequence, the immediate consequence of dissolution? "To be with Christ," in his presence, before his throne. And is not this the beatific vision? "Willing (says the inspired writer) to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." Here is no hint of any intermediate state; but the very moment in which the saints depart from their bodies, they are present with the Lord; and if with the Lord, then in the highest heavens, then at the fountain-head of felicity, then amidst the beatific vision. To heaven Elijah was conveyed in his fiery chariot; and into heaven the first martyr was received by his compassionate Saviour. Neither of them waited in some intervening mansion, as a kind of lobby to the heavens. This is the Popish notion, and very closely connected with the chimera of purgatory; so closely connected, that if you take away the former, the latter drops into nothing. I am sorry your opinions, Sir, are so much like the errors of the man of sin.

"Our present blessedness does not consist in being free from sin." "I really think it does." Spoken like Mr. Wesley. *I think,* is still the *argumentum palmarium. I think,* is the heavy artillery which is to demolish brigades at a blow; only here it is strengthened and enforced by that emphatical word *really.* But if our present blessedness does really consist in being free from sin, where are your blessed persons? We may truly say,

Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto. VIRG.

No; this can hardly be said. Virgil's description is too full: instead of seeing a very few, here and there one, popping up their heads, in the great and wide ocean of the world, we are not able to find so much as an individual: shew us *one,* only *one* of these angels in flesh and blood, and it sufficeth us. Whereas, if you persist in maintaining your sinless perfection, yet cannot

* "We groan, being burdened with a sense of our spiritual infirmities, and with the workings of inbred corruption;" This is Aspasio's interpretation. "We groan, being burdened with numberless infirmities, temptations, and sins;" This is Mr. Wesley's interpretation in his Expository Notes on the New Testament. Yet here he denies what there he affirms. It is said, I think of Ishmael, "His hand will be against every man." Mr. Wesley goes a step farther, his hand is against *himself,* as well as against every body else.

† St. Paul, I am aware, speaks of heaven, and speaks of paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. So does David speak of "rising up into the hill of the Lord," and of "standing in his holy place." But as the same thing, though variously expressed, is meant by the Psalmist, I think we may not unreasonably understand the apostle in the same manner. If they had been different habitations, methinks he would have mentioned paradise first, and then the third heavens. Otherwise he tells the story but awkwardly; for he first mentions his arrival at the third heavens, and then at paradise; that is, according to Mr. Wesley, first he was led into the presence, and then introduced to the antechamber.

produce a single instance to exemplify your notion, will you not give too just a handle for that sarcastic reflection used on another occasion?

With witnesses many this cause did abound;
With some that were hang'd, and some that were drown'd;
And some that were lost, and some never found.

These are Aspasio's words: "It (our present imperfection) perpetually reminds us of a most important truth, that our present blessedness consists, not in being free from all sin, but in having no sin imputed to us." He took particular care to guard his meaning from misconstruction, by adding the word *all*. Lest this word, because it is little of stature, should be overlooked, he printed it in italics. But all this precaution is thrown away upon Mr. Wesley. He takes no notice of this same little word; nay, he shuts it entirely out of his quotation, as though he should say, Where is the harm of clapping under the hatches such a puny insignificant monosyllable? I would have it to know, I shall ere long turn adrift more plump and portly words than that.

Aspasio also took care to confirm his sentiments by a reference to Scripture: he supported himself by the authority of King David. Mr. Wesley, having a little while ago laboured to depreciate, now ventures to contradict the royal Psalmist. "Blessed," says the Psalmist, "is the man"—who is free from sin? who is perfectly sanctified? This is not the doctrine which the sweet singer of Israel teaches, but "blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Deeply impressed, and quite charmed, with the contemplation of this most substantial happiness, the sacred writer proclaims it, repeats it; yes, a third time he celebrates it, crying out with ardour of joy, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth no iniquity,"* Psalm xxxii. 1, 2; neither that iniquity which was formerly committed, nor that which still defiles, Psalm xv. 3. Blessed indeed! May I live under a firm persuasion of my own particular interest in this unspeakable privilege! May I find it made good to my soul at the universal judgment! Then let others take the kingdoms of this world, and all the glory of them. And as for Aspasio, he may reckon his credit safe, and his opinion fully authorized, while he espouses the doctrine, and uses the very words of the unerring Spirit.

"If we are not free from sin, we are not Christian believers." What an assertion is here! *Assertion*, for I dare not call it a truth. If it was, who then could be saved? Not one of a thousand, not two of a million; no, nor Mr. John Wesley himself, since out of his own mouth he stands condemned. He makes this acknowledgment concerning himself and his followers, "We know by melancholy experience what it is to neglect works of righteousness." To corroborate his confession, he adds, "We know and feel by melancholy experience, what it is to swerve from our first love." *We feel by experience:* He is willing to run the hazard of tautology, rather than any should suspect the sincerity and truth of his protestation. And can you, after such a confession, after such a protestation, pretend to be free from sin? Is all this which you know of yourself, and *feel by experience*, consistent with a sinless state? Just as much as a lethargy is consistent with the vigour of health, or a shameful flight with a glorious victory. See, Sir, how you are entangled in your own net; how, without being chased by an enemy, you run yourself aground. Nor will all your dexterity, so long as you avow such palpable inconsistencies, be able to set you clear.

You attempt to confirm your opinion by the apostle's declaration, "Being made free from sin." But he and you mean different things by the same words." He means being freed from the dominion of sin. This is agreeable to his own explanation, "Sin (*ου κυριευσει*) shall not lord it over you." It may assault you, it may harass you, it may gain some advantage over you; but it shall not obtain a final victory, nor play the tyrant over you. To the expedience and necessity of this freedom, if ever we would approve ourselves disciples of Christ, or Christians indeed, I readily subscribe. Whereas, you mean being freed from the very remainders of sin. "Having a purity (it is your own explanation) free from all mixture of its contrary, and a resignation excluding every degree of self-will." Against the existence, or the possibility of this freedom, so long as we sojourn in a body of flesh, I enter my protest.

"If we were perfect in piety, Christ's priestly office would be superseded." "No; we should still need his Spirit, and consequently his intercession." But were we perfect, we should receive the Spirit without an intercessor. An intercessor implies an alienation between the two parties; or something which, without the intervention of a third person, would create alienation. The priestly office, whether of atoning, or of interceding, is founded on a state of guilt; to this it bears an essential and invariable relation. Does Christ exercise his priestly office in behalf of angels? No; because they excel in strength, and are perfect in holiness. Will Christ exercise his priestly office, when all his saints are received into glory? No; because then there will be an

* Should any objection arise from the next sentence, the reader may see it anticipated, and superseded, in Theron and Aspasio.

absolute consummation both in body and soul, both in righteousness and happiness, and the mediatorial kingdom be delivered up to the Father. Did Christ exercise his priesty office before Adam fell? No; because sin had no existence then; and then the language was, "let man be blessed," not "deliver him from going down into the pit."

The objections laid to my charge in this paragraph, and the whole side of the leaf, proceed upon your favourite notion, perfection of holiness, even while we continue in houses of clay. As I look upon your foundation to be a mere delusion, I must of course conclude all that you build upon it to be chimerical and delusory; therefore, till you prove your supposition, I have no reason to concern myself with any of your consequences deduced from it, or with any of your allegations relating to it. On one clause, however, let me bestow a slight animadversion.

Aspasio says, A sense of remaining inbred corruption will reconcile us to death. Mr. Wesley replies, "Indeed it will not; nor will any thing do this like perfect love." Here I think you have missed the mark. Nothing can reconcile us to death but that which takes away its sting; and this is done only by the atonement of Christ. Nothing can reconcile us to death but that which delivers us from its terror; and this is effected only by the sacrifice of our great High-priest, which has converted the king of terrors into a messenger of peace. Nothing can reconcile us to death, but that which makes it desirable to depart, and gain to die; and this is owing, wholly owing to him who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Old Simeon found, that nothing could reconcile him to death, so much as a believing view of the Lord's Christ. Seeing God made flesh, seeing him as his own Saviour, he was enabled not only to acquiesce in the summons, but to welcome it as a deliverance. He was enabled to say with composure and complacency, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:" Not because I am weary of this imperfect state; not because I am perfect in divine love; but because "mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Though you may not like to imitate a Jew, I most heartily wish for myself, let me die the death of this most venerable Hebrew, and let my latter end be like his!

If you still persist in your opinion, that nothing can reconcile you to dissolution like the imagined perfection of your love—not the blood by which the saints overcame, not the righteousness by which they reign in life, not the grace and power which have swallowed up death in victory; I must then caution you to take heed lest you cross, or attempt to cross the river, in the boat of *vain confidence*. You have abridged, if I mistake not, the Pilgrim's Progress, therefore can be at no loss to understand my meaning.

One clause, I said; but I correct myself: There is another, so very extraordinary, that you might justly charge me with inattention, little short of stupidity, if I should pass it over without notice. These are the words: "If we were perfect in piety, (St. John's word is, perfect in love,) we should still be encompassed with infirmities, and liable to mistakes, from which words or actions might follow, even though the heart was all love, which were not exactly right."

This is strange! Wondrous strange indeed! *Perfect*, yet encompassed with infirmities! *Perfect*, yet doing actions, and speaking words not exactly right! You are as singular in your idea, as you are strenuous for the doctrine of perfection. I know not any Protestant writer that pretends to maintain the latter, yourself only excepted; and as to the former, I think it could never enter into the head of any thing living, but Mr. Wesley's only. Perfect, yet encompassed with infirmities—is just as sound divinity, as true, yet addicted to lying—is sound morality.

This is not the worst property of your notion of perfection, that it is absurd and self-contradictory. A sentiment may be absurd, yet not very pernicious. But this is an error of the most malignant kind; this was at the bottom of the Pharisees' pride, and spirited them on to seek justification by the works of the law. They knew full well, that their obedience was not complete, it did not come up to their sacred and exalted standard; but they had learnt to soften and extenuate their disobedience into matters not exactly right. This is the cause why people professing Christianity see no form or comeliness in Christ, so as to desire him with desires that cannot be uttered. It is true they are not perfect, they often offend; but then the offences are only human infirmities—words and actions not exactly right. With this, which is indeed the *syren song*, they lull their souls into an insensibility of their ruined state, and a disregard of the all-sufficient Redeemer.

"Cursed (says the law) is every one that continueth not in all things," whether they be great or small: And will you regard that as a mere infirmity, and consistent with perfection, on which the divine law denounces a curse? which the divine law threatens with all misery here, and with everlasting vengeance hereafter? The apostle would probably chastise the author

or abettor of such a conceit, in the following manner: "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that what thou callest a matter 'not exactly right,' is most horribly odious in the eye of God's infinite purity; deserves eternal death in the estimate of his infinite justice; and could never have been pardoned but by the atoning death of his infinitely majestic Son!"

"Encompassed with infirmities, yet the heart all love! Words and actions not exactly right, yet the man all perfection!" These are all paradoxes which I never saw equalled, only in the writings of some high-flown papists. Mr. Wesley's words are not far from a translation, they are to a nicety the sense, of those very offensive passages which I meet with in a couple of Popish zealots. Andradius, interpreter of the council of Trent, writes thus: "Venialia peccata tam sunt minuta et levia ut non adversentur perfectioni charitatis, nec impedire possunt perfectam aut absolutam obedientiam."* Lindenus, another champion for the same bad cause, expresses himself in a more elegant, but in no less shocking a manner: "Levicula vitiola lapsuum quotidianorum, aspergines et nævulæ sunt; quæ per se non maculant et contaminant, sed quasi pulvisculo leviter aspergunt vitam Christianam; ut nihilominus tamen per se sint perfecta, et undique immaculata renatorum opera in hac vita."† If Mr. Wesley pleases to consider these passages, I hope he will be induced to alter his phrase, and rectify his notions. If he pleases to translate these passages, his followers may have an opportunity of seeing how nearly he approaches to some of the worst errors of Popery; and may hence be admonished not to imbibe, without due examination, his doctrines; nor submit with an implicit credulity to his dictates.

"The charges of the law are all answered." At this sentence Mr. Wesley is highly offended. As the lion is said to lash himself into rage, so my objector stirs himself up into a graceful indignation; for there is nothing in the passage, or in the context, to awaken such a flame of zeal. If Mr. Wesley had understood Aspasio according to the whole tenor of his discourse, there would have been no room for bringing Count Zinzendorf upon the carpet, nor for making that injurious conclusion, "Then neither God nor man can claim any obedience to the law." This is what Aspasio means: The claims of the law, as a covenant of works; the claims of the law, as being the condition of life and glory; the claims of the law, as requiring perfect obedience on pain of eternal death—these claims are all satisfied by our most blessed and gracious Surety: If not, they are still incumbent upon us, and upon every child of man. A burden this, which neither "we nor our fathers were able to bear;" which, heavier than the sands of the sea, would have sunk us into the nethermost hell. This doctrine, therefore, is not "Antinomianism without a mask," but it is the doctrine of "righteousness without works," Rom. iv. 6, and of justification "without the deeds of the law," Rom. iii. 28.

"Then neither God nor man can claim any obedience to the law." Yes, God Almighty may, and God Almighty does claim our obedience to the law, as a rule of life: he requires a conformity to its precepts, as to the image of himself; he demands a performance of its duties, as the means of bringing glory to his name, and paying submission to his authority. And none will be so readily disposed, none will be so effectually enabled to obey the whole law, as those who see themselves made righteous by the obedience of Christ; who are thereby delivered from that tremendous curse, denounced on all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Aspasio thus exhorts his friend: "Let me desire you to imagine, rather may the blessed Spirit enable you to believe, that your sins are expiated through the death of Jesus Christ; that a righteousness is given you, by virtue of which you may have free and welcome access to God."—"This is not scriptural language," says Mr. Wesley: therefore it cannot be sound doctrine, is his way of arguing. Harmless enough, I must own. But what follows is not quite so modest. "I would simply say;" and surely what I would say must be unexceptionably right. This is the conclusion we are to make; otherwise what you allege is of no weight at all. "I would simply say, by him we have access to the Father." This is beyond all objection proper; it is taken from the apostle, and it includes what Aspasio expresses. The apostle's language is the ingot of gold; Aspasio's sentiment is a thread drawn, or a leaf beaten from it. Methinks, before I dismiss this topic, I would desire you to turn back a moment, and reconsider what you have affirmed. Your sins are expiated;—is not this scriptural language? What else meaneth that expression of the apostle, "To make expiation for the sins of the people." A righteousness is given you;—is not this the scriptural way of speaking? "They who

* Venial sins are so minute and trivial, that they do not oppose the perfection of our love, nor can they hinder our obedience from being absolutely perfect.

† The little trifling faults which are owing to our daily slips or mistakes, are like specks, or almost imperceptible moles upon the body, which of themselves do not stain or defile, but as it were with small particles of fine dust, lightly sprinkle the Christian's life; so that nevertheless the works of the regenerate may be of themselves perfect, and in all respects immaculate, even in this life.

receive the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life." "By which you have free access to God;"—is not this both the dialect and the doctrine of the Holy Ghost? "We have access with confidence (not through our punctual performance of any conditions, but) through the faith of him;" by a fiducial reliance on our Lord's most precious obedience, blood, and merit.

"I have seen such terrible effects of this unscriptural way of speaking." Here I fancy you slip into a little mistake: you forget the distinction between the use and the abuse of a doctrine, a distinction which you can easily make on other occasions. You have doubtless seen people, who use the most scriptural way of speaking, yet act unsuitably to their language; what reflections arose in your mind, and what inference did you draw upon observing such an inconsistency? You said perhaps, "Their voice is Jacob's voice, but their hands are the hands of Esau. Hence it appears, that they are hypocrites; they pretend one thing, and are really another." Make the same reflection, and draw the same inference, when you hear people talking of "imputed righteousness," yet see them loosing the reins to ungodliness; then you will be consistent with yourself, and with truth; ascribing the terrible effects, not to the wholesome doctrine but to the vitiated mind.

"Where sin abounded," &c. Mr. Wesley rejects Aspasio's interpretation of this text, and offers one of his own; one which he had given us a little while ago, and now serves a second time without any considerable variation at our table. I shall only refer the reader to page 521, where he will find this text considered, and Mr. Wesley's exposition canvassed.

In this and the two following paragraphs you find fault with the phrase *imputed*; yet you say, "Concerning the thing there is no question." You would discard that particular form of expression; yet you add, "as to the doctrine we are agreed." Then, according to your own confession, all these your objections are a mere strife of words. Surely such a man as Mr. Wesley should know how to make a better use of pen, ink, and paper, than to litigate about letters and syllables. If I thought myself contending only about the more precisely proper form of expressing the same thing, I should be ashamed of my employ, and would this instant lay down my pen; whereas I apprehend, that we are not agreed as to doctrine, that there is a material and very wide difference between us. My opinion, or rather my faith is, that our Lord's obedience to the moral law, in professed submission to its authority, and in exact conformity to its precepts—his performance of all holy duties, and his exercise of all heavenly graces—that all this is a most essential and distinguished part of his merit; that this is of higher dignity and greater value than the whole world, and all the righteousness in it: That the divine law is hereby more signally honoured, than it could have been honoured by the uninterrupted obedience of Adam and all his posterity: That God's justice, holiness, truth, receive greater glory from these unparalleled acts of duty, than from all the services of angels and men in their several wonderful orders: That this active righteousness, together with his most meritorious sufferings, are the ground and cause of my acceptance with God; are the very thing which procures and effects my justification; making me not barely acquitted from guilt, but truly righteous, yea perfectly righteous, and that before the God of infinite penetration and purity. This is a view of the doctrine incomparably magnificent and inexpressibly comfortable. If you agree with your friend in all these particulars, speak and write comformably to such agreement; then you will never again hear from him in this manner, neither will he receive any more such favours from you as the letter now under consideration; then we shall be perfectly joined together "in the same mind, and in the same judgment."

Alas! this union, I fear, is not so easily to be effected. Mr. Wesley still insists and still urges, "The authority of our church (which Aspasio pleads) and of those eminent divines (whose testimony Aspasio alleges) does not touch those particular forms of expression." Justification through imputed righteousness, or being made righteous through the obedience of Christ, I suppose are the forms of expression intended. These, it seems, none of the quotations confirm, establish, no, nor touch, in Mr. Wesley's opinion at least; but I am inclined to hope, that the generality of readers will be of a different persuasion, and allow that the quotations and the expressions touch and resemble one another, as much as the wings of the cherubim in the ancient sanctuary.*

"Does not touch." No! not yet? Then we must have recourse to some other authority, and such a one I have at hand as you would hardly venture, or even wish to gainsay, I mean the authority of John Wesley, M. A. who declares, in his Exposition of the New Testament, "This is fully consistent with our being justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ." Now I shall only remonstrate in imitation

* "Both the cherubims were of one measure, and one size; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house." 1 Kings vi. 25. 27.

of the apostle: "If thou thyself usest this phrase, why wouldest thou compel others to lay it aside? Or, why art thou displeased with others for a practice which thou allowest in thyself?"

Surely you will not say, *imputation* of righteousness is quite a different thing from *imputed* righteousness. Does not the former evidently include the latter? Can there be a proclamation of pardon, without a pardon proclaimed? Can there be the purchase of an estate, without an estate purchased? Or the imputation of righteousness, without a righteousness imputed? If others should affect such subtle and self-deluding evasions, Mr. Wesley cannot, Mr. Wesley must not: he has precluded himself; nay, he has, with his own mouth, given a verdict against himself. Is it not recorded in those lines subjoined to your character of a Methodist?

> Let faith and love combine
> To guard your valiant breast;
> The plate be righteousness divine,
> Imputed and imprest.

This *imputed righteousness* was once a delightful theme; your song in the house of your pilgrimage. Why is it now a burdensome stone which you would fain shake off from yourself and others? Are you become rich in yourself, and increased with goods of your own acquiring? We know full well for what reason the phrase and the doctrine are rejected, exploded, and reproached by the Romish superstition, because they display in the brightest light the beauty of free grace. They hold the door against all kind of human merit; they cut off every the most distant pretension for glorying in man; and refer all the honour of salvation to Jesus Christ alone. Admit justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the grand bulwark, or the main pillar of Popery, falls to the ground; while a solid foundation is laid for that triumph and gratitude, expressed in the inspired hymn, "Let us be glad and rejoice (exceedingly, but) give the honour (all the honour) to him," Rev. xix. 7.

"The righteousness of God, signifies the righteousness which God-man wrought out." "No;" says Mr. Wesley. Your reason, Sir, for this negative? A child may deny; a man of judgment will disprove. Does not Mr. Wesley disprove, when he adds, "It signifies God's method of justifying sinners?" Just as forcibly as the Jews disproved the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, when they cried, Thou the Messiah! No; thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil. What they alleged, wanted a proof altogether as much as what they denied. What Mr. Wesley here alleges, is a threadbare objection, already considered, and already confuted. Yet, since it relates to a point of the utmost moment, and that which is the main hinge of our controversy, I shall not be deemed officious, if, as the shot has been once again discharged, I once again lift up my shield against it.

"The righteousness of God, signifies God's method of justifying sinners." We have already shown how low an interpretation this is; how insipid in itself, and incompatible with the current language of Scripture. On the other hand, how sublime and consolatory is the sense which Aspasio gives! A righteousness which God himself has provided without any co-operation from his creatures. The righteousness of that most exalted, yet most condescending Saviour, who is God and man in one, Christ; a righteousness dignified with all the perfections of the Godhead, therefore worthy to be the comfort, the joy, the never-ceasing boast of his people; and sufficient, infinitely sufficient, to save even the most vile, the most base, the most desperately ruined sinners.

This is a righteousness, as much superior to all human attainments, to all angelic accomplishments, as the heaven of heavens is higher than a clod of the valleys. This is a righteousness which could never have entered into the heart of man or angel to conceive, but will be the cause of their admiration, and the subject of their wonder, to endless ages. This sense fully accounts for those rapturous expressions of the prophet, when, speaking of the all-surpassing gift, he thus addresses his fellow-sinners: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is righteous, and having salvation." He is completely righteous in his nature, has fulfilled all righteousness in his life and death, and has thereby obtained for thee a full pardon, a finished salvation, a sure title to eternal glory. This accounts for those more rapturous expressions of the sacred writers, when in the fervour of their gratitude they call upon the whole creation to celebrate the goodness of the incarnate Jehovah: "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest, and every tree therein, for the Lord hath (in his own person, by his own obedience and sufferings) redeemed Jacob, and glorified (not human abilities, not human works, but) *himself*, (and his own righteousness), in the restoration of Israel."*

* Isa. xliv. 23. Should any one say, is this the sense of the Prophet? I ask, is not this the fullest, grandest, divinest sense? Is it not a sense perfectly true? Is it not warranted by the gospel revelation? Is it not demanded by that declaration of our Saviour, "They (the ancient Scriptures) testify of me?"

In short, this is a righteousness which exalts God's justice; which magnifies the law; displays all his awful and amiable attributes in their fullest lustre. To contrive it, was unsearchable wisdom; to bestow it, is invaluable treasure. It answers in the completest manner all the grand and gracious purposes, both of God's glory and of man's salvation. True gospel this! Glad tidings indeed! An expedient for our recovery greater than our hearts could wish. We may truly say, while meditating on this gift of consummate righteousness, "Where sin hath abounded, grace has much more abounded." The bricks are fallen down, but the most glorious repairer of our breaches has built with hewn stone. Well might the apostle, having this supremely excellent righteousness in his view, look down with the most sovereign contempt upon every other (cause of) confidence, upon every other object of trust, and reckon them dross and dung. Well might he declare, that he would never be ashamed of the gospel, in which is this transcendently noble righteousness, in all its magnificence, riches, and glory.

Do you think me rather too warm upon the subject? Let me once again remit you to St. Chrysostom: read his exposition of that charming sentence, "The righteousness of God," Πιστις, &c. This venerable father of the church speaks the thing as it is. He does not mingle our wine with water, but gives us the genuine truth, and triumphs because of the truth.

The doctrine of an imputed righteousness seems to have been typically taught, by the remarkable manner of clothing our first parents. All they could do for their own recovery, was like the patched and beggarly mantle of fig-leaves; this they relinquish, and God himself furnishes them with apparel: animals are slain, not for food, but sacrifice; and the naked criminals are arrayed with the skins of those slaughtered beasts. The *victims* figured the expiation made by Christ's death; the *clothing* typified the imputation of his righteousness. "That does not appear," cries Mr. Wesley. Aspasio has produced an authority from the famous Milton. I could reinforce it by another from the elegant Witsius. If you are not satisfied with either, or both these testimonies, I will give you a reason for the sentiment. The victims most properly shadowed forth the expiation of guilt by the Redeemer's blood, because it is the peculiar end of sacrifice to make atonement for sins; the clothing most pertinently denoted the Saviour's righteousness, which is described both by the prophet and the apostle under this very image. "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness," says the prophet Isaiah. "The fine linen which arrays the bride of the Lamb, is the perfect righteousness of the saints,"* says the beloved disciple. "It is like a royal vesture, or a rich suit of apparel, upon all them that believe," adds the apostle Paul. The impartial reader, I promise myself, will allow these passages, if not to be absolutely decisive, yet to have somewhat more weight than that atom in your scale, "This does not appear." As for sanctification, this may very reasonably rank among the effects of being cleansed by the blood, and adorned with the righteousness of Christ. These blessings produce peace of conscience, and love of God; just as commodious clothing produces warmth, and promotes health. And what is love of God, but holiness of heart in the seed, and holiness of life in the fruit?

As this (the nature of true holiness) is a matter of the last importance; is a point on which multitudes, I fear, are mistaken; I will leave it uppermost in your thoughts, in the reader's, and in those of, Reverend Sir, your, &c.

LETTER X.

Reverend Sir,—We are now entering upon a new province. Our business will be chiefly of the philological kind. We shall treat principally of words. But as they are the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, they are like the combs erected in yonder hive: Not empty syllables, made only for sound; but rich with divine sense, and full of the honey of the gospel, replete with the manna of heaven. May this pen be to the reader like Jonathan's rod; when dipt in the delicious juice, it enlightened his eyes, refreshed his spirits, and cheered his heart!

"Almost every text, you are pleased to affirm, quoted in this and the following letter, in support of that particular form of expression, (imputed righteousness), is distorted above measure from the plain, obvious meaning, which is pointed out by the context." Let us examine these abused and distorted texts, in order to discover from whence the misfortune happened; how the violence was done; whether by Mr. Wesley's pen, or by Aspasio's tongue.

The first is from the book of Job; which, as it is greatly venerable for its antiquity, and singularly to be regarded for its impor-

* Rev. xix. 8. Τα δικαιωματα being in the plural number, I think may be translated, *Justitiæ omnibus numeris absolutæ*: A righteousness of all kinds, and all degrees, or comprehending every kind, and defective in no degree. Would you see the beauty of this fine linen, or the wardrobe in which it is deposited, consult Isa. xlv. 24.

tance, I shall beg leave to consider at large. A sinner is described lying under a dangerous sickness, and brought by the force of his disease to the brink of the grave; by the multitude of his sins to the very borders of hell. In this deplorable condition, "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom."*

"If there be with him a messenger" of the living God, a faithful ambassador of Christ, who may administer spiritual assistance to the poor afflicted creature.—"An interpreter," who knows how to open the Scriptures, and rightly to divide the word of truth; who is a preacher of righteousness, and can properly apply the word of grace.—This is not every one's talent; nor within the compass of every one's abilities. He is one of a thousand, to whom God hath given the tongue of the learned; enabling him to speak a word in season, and suit the condition of each respective patient: "To shew unto man his uprightness;" that is, says Mr Wesley, "to convince him of God's justice, in so punishing him."

But is this the instruction which such a distressed sufferer wants? Is this the word of reconciliation which every true minister in ancient times did preach, and in later times doth preach? Or is there any need of a choice instructor? One skilled in the counsel of God, to teach what the common dictates of reason demonstrate? In this interpretation, I can neither discern the true critic, nor the clear reasoner, nor the sound divine.

Not the *true critic:* He would acknowledge that the antecedent in this clause is not God, but man. To man, therefore, if we regard grammatical propriety, the pronoun *his* must be referred. Not the *clear reasoner;* he would observe the emphasis of the word *then*, ver. 24, implying some discovery, or some conviction, in consequence of which deliverance from death ensues, or with which it is connected. Can this be a discovery or a conviction of God's justice in punishing him? No, verily. Much less therefore can I discern the *sound divine.* He knows, and affirms constantly, that this is the consequence of the Messiah's righteousness alone, which being imputed to the sinner, becomes, for the blessed purpose of justification unto life, *his.**

So that Aspasio seems to have the import of language, and the scope of the context, both on his side. And I may venture to add, he has the consolatory genius of the gospel yet more strongly pleading for his interpretation. It must yield but cold comfort to tell a poor wretch, confined to the bed of languishing, and alarmed with apprehensions of eternal vengeance—but cold comfort must it yield to tell such a one, that he has deserved all this misery, and is justly punished. Whereas, to inform him of a righteousness sufficient to do away all his transgressions; sufficient to reconcile him and render him acceptable even to the chastising God; sufficient to obtain his deliverance, very probably from death, most assuredly from hell; this is a reviving report indeed. This will make the bones which sin and misery had broken, to rejoice.

Then the sinner and the sufferer, attentive to this instruction, and applying this righteousness, is made partaker of pardon. God, the sovereign Lord of life and death, "is gracious unto him;" and saith, in the greatness of his strength, as well as in the multitude of his mercies, "deliver him from going down into the pit" of corruption, as a pledge of his deliverance from the pit of perdition. For "I have found a ransom," satisfactory to my law and to my justice. I have received an atonement in behalf of this once obnoxious, now reconciled transgressor.

"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness." This you would render *holiness;* but have you no Hebrew lexicon to inform you that the word which signifies holiness is very different from the expression used by the Psalmist? He says *tzrkh*, whereas holiness is expressed by *kdsh.* Besides, have you not observed that your interpretation would betray the Psalmist into apparent tautology? He had, in the preceding verses, displayed the duties of practical godliness, and the graces of inherent holiness. The person he describes possesses the latter, and practises the former. To say, therefore, he shall receive holiness, when he has it already, would not suit David's correctness, however it may suit Mr. Wesley's fancy, or Mr. Wesley's design. In

* Job. xxxiii. 23, 24, I have the rather chosen to lay this whole passage before the reader, because a new interpretation is given to the word *messenger.* Here it is supposed to denote a faithful and skilful minister of the gospel. In the Dialogues it is supposed to describe our Lord Jesus Christ himself. I scarcely know which sense to prefer. Perhaps both may be included, the author us well as the instrument, of comfort to the sick and sinful man. However, the point in debate between Mr. Wesley and Aspasio, is not affected by the different application of this word. His uprightness, according to either exposition, may signify the Messiah's obedience and sufferings; must signify these things; provided these are the only justifying righteousness of a sinner; the only way of obtaining the divine favour, and removing every evil.

* "The uprightness, (says Mr. Caryl), chiefly intended here, is the righteousness of Christ, in and by which we are reconciled to, and made one with God. We never see where our uprightness is, till we see there is nothing that makes us stand upright in the court of heaven, but only Christ our righteousness. This is the great duty of the messengers and interpreters of Christ, to declare to man this righteousness for his uprightness. And that hence it is (as Elihu speaks) that God is and will be gracious unto him."

this clause, the evangelical moralist touches upon another particular, which enters as an essential part, into the character of a godly man—even "the righteousness which is of faith;" denoted by the blessing of pardon, and the gift of righteousness. Take away this, and there is no acceptance with God. Take away this, and the gates, mentioned in the close of the psalm, are unalterably shut. Unless we are furnished with this passport, the everlasting doors never lift up their heads. If you exclude this peculiarity, the description is very imperfect, and the picture extremely deficient. Whereas, this adds the finishing touch, and gives true perfection to both.

Several passages are quoted in which the word *tzrkh* occurs. Sometimes you would have it signify *mercy;* sometimes *justification;* sometimes *spotless holiness.* But what proof do I find for establishing any of these significations, which differ so much from one another, and still more from the truth? Nothing but the customary argument, "So it unquestionably means." Now you must unquestionably know, at least every novice in the language knows, that the genuine and native sense of *tzrkh,* is righteousness. The word expressive of mercy is *hsd,* neither in sense nor sound alike. As to *justification,* the phrase never denotes that blessed effect, but the divine and meritorious cause which produces it.

Shall I, in this inquiry, appeal to the best lexicons, the most approved translations, or the ablest interpreters? No, I will refer you to the decision of an interpreter, who is superior to all lexicons and all translations; I mean, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. He translates this very word, as it enters into the name of Melchisedek; and he translates it, not mercy, not justification, no, nor spotless holiness, but righteousness; even that righteousness whose fruit is peace with God, and peace in our own conscience. Now, will you play the critic upon this inspired writer, and say, Unquestionably it means, not what the apostle has determined, not what Aspasio, supported by his authority, has adopted; but what I think fit to dictate?

An opposer of our Lord's imputed righteousness, who had more discretion or more subtilty than Mr. Wesley, would have argued in this manner: "The original word, I must confess, ought to be translated *righteousness;* This is undoubtedly the principal and leading signification of the term; but then the circumstances and the context oblige us to understand it in the notion of mercy, of spotless holiness, or of any thing else that serves our purpose." This would be more modest and more plausible, though not more just and solid than your confident assertion.

Suppose we should admit this pretence, what does the critic gain thereby? Must he not have recourse to that noble and comfortable doctrine for which we plead? Let the word be translated *mercy.* Why is mercy shewn to sinners? Is it not on account of the righteousness of their Surety? Let it be translated *goodness.* Wherefore is goodness exercised to rebellious men? Is it not because of the satisfaction made by their crucified Lord? Render it whatever you please, provided it conveys the idea of favour vouchsafed, or of the benefits conferred, it must terminate, still terminate, in that grand central point, the incarnation, obedience, and death of Immanuel.

"Sion shall be redeemed with judgment"—"After severe punishment," you say. The Hebrew preposition signifying *after,* is *achr.* I find no trace of any such word in my edition of the Bible. You may as well render or interpret the passage, *in the midst.* And then, if some other critic should be inclined to translate it *before,* or *round about,* we should have a large compass of meaning; but where would precision and exactness be found? But why is Sion to be redeemed *after severe punishment?* Has her punishment any influence or sway in the work of her redemption? Does the punishment of man pave the way for the salvation of God? Are sinners to wait for pardon and reconciliation, till they have been severely punished? This is very discouraging doctrine: and, blessed be God, it is absolutely without foundation. The gospel says, "To-day, even to-day, (sinners,) if ye will hear his voice, ye shall enter into rest." You need not tarry till you have been severely chastised; but this instant believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved. The Lord Jesus has been wounded and bruised in your stead; he has received all the punishment which you have deserved; yea, as a ransomer, he has paid double; as a victim, he has suffered double for all your sins, Isa. xl. 2. Considering these things, I am still disposed to abide by Aspasio's plain and obvious interpretation; not to go out of my way in quest of the pricking briar and grieving thorn, when I meet with roses and lilies in the common road.

"In the Lord have I righteousness." This will not satisfy our critic. It must be *through* the Lord. What piddling criticism is this, even in case it was true, and answered some specious end! But it is by no means true. Every body knows, that the prefix *b* signifies *in;* and every body but Mr. Wesley would blush to assert the contrary. Neither does it answer any valuable end, but the reverse. It degrades the exalted sense, and impoverishes the rich

blessing. To have righteousness in the Lord, is abundantly more expressive of glorious grace, than barely to have righteousness through the Lord. Mordecai had riches and honours, *through* Ahasuerus and his royal favour; Esther had riches and honours, *in* Ahasuerus, as her royal husband: He by being a courtier, she by being a consort, to the most magnificent monarch in the world.

If Mr. Wesley piddled in the foregoing, he flashes in the following passage. He assures us that *qhlmim tzk* means, *spotless holiness.* This is really a bold stroke in criticism. But like many other bold enterprises, it is likely to prove, not a birth, but an abortion. *Spotless!* You might as well have rendered it *toothless.* It has no more to do with the idea of spotless, than it has to do with the idea of an ivory tooth, or a polished toothpick. Literally translated, it signifies *ages;* and may denote the perpetuity of this righteousness, and of its beneficial effects. It was from the beginning, it is at this day, and it will be even unto the end, mighty to save. It is the one refuge and hope of sinners, in every age of the world, and under every dispensation of religion. Through all the changes of time it has been, and through the unchangeable eternity it will be, their chief joy, and their crown of rejoicing.

What righteousness shall give us peace at the last day, inherent or imputed? To this question Aspasio has replied, in a very explicit manner, by presenting us with a pertinent extract from Bishop Hall, and by commenting upon a most important prophecy of Isaiah. In both which, all human righteousness is set aside, and our peace is derived entirely from the glorious Shiloh.* From him, who made peace by the blood of his cross, and whose name is the Prince of Peace: Having this heavenly blessing, and the right of conferring it, as the peculiar privilege, or unshared prerogative, of his crown.

Mr. Wesley is pleased to deny this doctrine, and to associate with the Papists in ascribing our peace (and if our peace, then our salvation) "partly to inherent, partly to imputed righteousness." But does our church do so? Hear her own words: "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness;" much less then will she dare to approach his judgment-seat trusting in any such thing. Does the apostle Paul do so? Hear his own protestation: "That I may be found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law;" which consists of my personal obedience, and inherent holiness; but having this, as the source of my peace, and the strength of my salvation, "the righteousness which is of God by faith;" even that inconceivably precious righteousness, which God my Saviour wrought, and which a sinner by faith receives. Did Mr. Wesley himself always do so? Let those lines bear witness; of which neither the poet, nor the divine, need be ashamed.

> My righteous servant and my Son
> Shall each believing sinner clear,
> And all who stoop to abjure their own,
> Shall in his righteousness appear.

Will that righteousness give you peace which you abjure? Or is it pious, is it prudent, is it consistent, to trust in a righteousness which you absolutely renounce? That which you abjure (a stronger word could not be used,) you consider, not barely as despicable, but as utterly abominable; whereas, that which gives you peace at the awful tribunal, must not only be excellent, but incomparably excellent and valuable. See, my friend, how "thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips testify against thee," Job xv. 6. O! that you may return to your first sentiments, and to your first love!* and no longer expose yourself and your doctrine to be a bye-word among the people. If you persist in such palpable inconsistencies, who can forbear taking up that taunting proverb, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

But stop. A passage from St. John is introduced to support this opinion. "Christ died for us, and lives in us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." That Christ died for us, and lives in us, I readily acknowledge. But where do you find any of the apostles, from these premises, drawing your conclusion? St. John, whom you quote, has no such logic. His inference is deduced from a very different topic. You give us a fragment of the apostle's words; why do not you exhibit the golden bowl complete? We shall then quickly perceive, that it contains a more sweet and salutary draught than you have provided for our refreshment.

Εν τουτω τετελειωται η αγαπη μεθ' ημων, ινα παρρησιαν εχωμεν εν τη ημερα κρισεως; which

* Gen. xlix. 10. "Shile,"—Schilo. Nomen Messiae peculiare, tranquillatorem designans.—That is, the Maker of Peace, and the Author of Tranquillity, for rebellious and wretched men.

* That Mr. Wesley may not be ashamed to retract a mistaken sentiment, I will break the ice and lead the way. In a copy of verses which I formerly wrote, sacred to the memory of a generous benefactor, I remember the following lines:

> Our wants relieved by thy indulgent care,
> Shall give thee courage at the dreadful bar,
> And stud the crown thou shalt for ever wear.

These lines, in whatever hands they are lodged, and whatever else of a like kind may have dropt from my pen, I now publicly disclaim. They are the very reverse of my present belief; in which I hope to persevere so long as I have any being.

we translate, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." 1 John iv. 17. As you are fond of criticizing upon the original Scriptures, here you might have done it justly and honourably. Here you might have altered and reformed our translation; while every capable judge would have owned your service to be seasonable and important. The true sense of μεθ' ημων is *with us*, or *with regard to us*. That is, God's love, celebrated with inimitable energy and beauty in the preceding verse, God's love towards us is herein made perfect; this is its grand and crowning effect, that we should have, not a bare hope, but an unappalled boldness at the day of judgment.

As though he had said, God, having reconciled us to himself by the blood of his Son; having renewed us after his own image, by his blessed Spirit testifying of Christ in our hearts; having carried us through all the dangers of life, and raised our bodies from the dust of death; he crowns and consummates all these most indulgent acts of his grace, by giving us an undaunted and triumphant confidence at the day of universal audit. According to this interpretation, your own text is against your opinion, and refers this joyful assurance, not to our love of God, but to his love of us; not to inherent righteousness, but to free grace.*

Aspasio thus translates St. Peter's words: "Who have obtained like precious faith in the righteousness of our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Pet. i. 1. Mr. Wesley gives us to understand, that this translation is wrong. It should be faith *through*—and not through the righteousness, but through *the mercy* of our God and Saviour. He will not allow the Greek preposition εν to signify *in*; though I can prove it to have been in peaceable possession of this signification for more than two thousand years. And the substantive δικαιοσυνη must not denote *righteousness*, though it pleads, as a warrant for this weighty sense, the incontestable authority of St. Paul. Give me leave to tell you, Sir, that I can produce a multitude of proofs to overthrow your first puny alteration; but produce, if you can, a single passage from the whole New Testament,† to uphold your last daring innovation.

Here I cannot but observe, you abandon your favourite commentator Bengelius, of whose merit and excellence you speak so highly and so justly. He says, in his notes upon the place, the righteousness of God our Saviour, is the righteousness of Christ; which faith apprehends, and which is opposed to a man's own righteousness. What is more surprising, you depart from your own comment; nay, you expressly contradict your own comment. To edify the readers of your Exposition, you inform and assure them, that this phrase signifies "both the active and the passive righteousness" of Christ. To gainsay what Aspasio has advanced, you more than insinuate, that it signifies no such thing, but only "the mercy of our Lord." Nay, to corroborate the true sense, and determine the words invariably to the active and passive righteousness of Christ, you add, "It is this alone by which the justice of God is satisfied." If then Mr. Wesley would reconcile what he writes in his Expository Notes with what he writes in his animadversions on Aspasio, he must maintain, that by the mercy of God alone his justice is satisfied.

I will not exclaim, on this occasion, as you have too freely and not very genteelly done in your letter to Mr. Law, "Exquisite nonsense!"* But this I may venture to say, Contradiction, didst thou ever know so trusty a friend, or so faithful a devotee? Many people are ready enough to contradict others: But it seems all one to this gentlemen, whether it be another or himself, so he may but contradict.

Permit me, for a moment, seriously to expostulate the case. Why should you be so averse to the righteousness of our God and Saviour? Why should you ransack all the stores of your learning and knowledge; nay, descend to unwarrantable criticisms, and quite unworthy your superior abilities, in order to exclude this most glorious truth from the Bible; in order to exterminate this most precious privilege from the church? Attempt, if you think proper, to pluck the sun from the firmament, to hide the light from our eyes, and withdraw the air from our lungs; but do not attempt to rob us of what is far more valuable than all these blessings, by depriving us of this inestimable treasure, the righteousness of Christ: which being a righteousness, immaculate, all-surpassing, divine, swallows up and annihilates our guilt; as the immense waves of the ocean would swallow up and annihilate the drop of ink that now hangs

* Should it be said, in case you thus interpret the first part of the text, how will it connect with what follows? Perfectly well. And none need wonder that we shall appear with such boldness at his coming; since they cannot but observe, that *as he is, so are we in this world*. We are actuated by his Spirit; we resemble him in all our conversation; and hence it is evident that we are one with him.

† *The righteousness of God, the righteousness of God our Saviour*, never denotes, in all the apostolical writings, the attribute of mercy. If it does, and Mr. Wesley can make it appear, I will confess myself mistaken, and thank him for correcting my error.

* Mr Wesley, in the abridgment of his letter to Mr. Law, inserted in the Preservative from Unsettled Notions, has expunged this and some other indecently harsh expressions.

on the point of my pen: Which, being a righteousness immaculate, all-surpassing, divine, will present us before our God, and before his angels without spot and blemish; in robes more beautiful than the colours of that resplendent bow, which is bended on the skirts of yonder cloud.

"Therein is revealed the righteousness of God."—"God's method of justifying sinners." See this interpretation examined, and this objection answered before.

We establish the law, as we expect no salvation without a perfect conformity to it;* namely, by Christ. "Is not this a mere quibble?" says Mr. Wesley. Quite the reverse. It is no low conceit, but an exceeding serious and momentous truth. It is no *play upon the sound* of words, but expresses a doctrine of great solidity, and of the last importance. Tell me, ye that cavil at this method of establishing the law, by what other expedient you propose to effect it? By your past conduct? That, you must acknowledge, has been more or less a violation of the law. By your present obedience? That, you cannot deny, falls short of the sublime requirements of the law. By your future behaviour? Well, I will suppose that, in some future period, you reach the very summit of perfection. Still the law will have much to complain of, and will lay much to your charge. You have not magnified it by a holy nature. You have not presented it with the consummate righteousness of your whole heart, and your whole conversation. You have not begun, from the first moment of your existence, and persevered in this perfect conformity to the last breath you drew. In this case, either the law must recede from its most righteous demands, and the immutable God must compromise matters with his creatures, or else you can never enter into life. Unless you renounce all such impotent attempts and arrogant conceits, talk no more of "practising it in its full extent;" but betake yourself to Christ, who is the end of the law,† for accomplishing that righteousness which its precepts demand, but which the frailty of man cannot perform.

Thus we establish the law, as the consummate standard of righteousness; as the original condition of life; and as that most venerable system, with which, as well as with its divine Author, there is no variableness or shadow of changing. And does this method of securing the dignity of the law, hinder or discourage a dutiful observance of its commands? If not, your objection derived from that well-known text, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," is

——Telum imbelle sine ictu.

If this be the most rational and the most sure way of producing the love of God, which is the very essence of true holiness, then your objection recoils, and falls upon the head of your own cause. Can there be a more powerful, a more endearing motive to love the Lord my God, than a persuasion of his ineffable love to me, in giving his dear Son, so to fulfil, so to satisfy the law on my behalf, that I am thereby delivered from all my offences; am vested with a perfect righteousness; and, on the foot of justice, as well as mercy, stand entitled to eternal life?

"Though I believe that Christ hath lived and died for me, yet I would speak very tenderly and sparingly of the former." How widely then does your practice differ from the apostle's? We believe, and therefore have spoken, confidently and incessantly, in season and out of season. No, says Mr. Wesley, "We believe, and therefore we speak tenderly and sparingly." If you believe, that Christ has lived for you, and fulfilled all righteousness in your stead, surely you should give him the honour of this wonderful loving-kindness, and both preach, and talk, and sing of his goodness. It should be as a fire shut up in your bones; and you should speak, that yourself may be refreshed, and your Lord may be glorified.

But you "fear dreadful consequences." What! where the divine holiness fears none? and the divine prescience sees none? Are you then more deep-sighted to discern these distant evils than omniscience? Methinks, I would not have spoken thus, unless I had been wiser than the Spirit of inspiration. Do you not, by cherishing and avowing such apprehensions, find fault with the glorious gospel in which this righteousness is revealed? revealed as its most eminent article, and most distinguishing peculiarity? A doctrine taught, and a blessing granted, and both from heaven! yet not fit to be displayed, inculcated, and insisted on! What a contemptible idea must this give of our holy religion, and of our holy revelation, to an inquiring infidel!

"I would never speak of them (the active and passive righteousness of Christ) separately." This insinuates, what Aspasio disavows; and what you cannot hint, without apparent injustice to his sentiments. "I would speak of it (the former) as sparingly as do the Scriptures." Here you appeal to those writings, which must either condemn your conduct or their own propriety. At your leisure consider the case, and

* The reader is desired to peruse Aspasio's own words, Lett. v. There his sentiments are more fully explained; but the passage is not transcribed, on purpose to avoid increasing the size of this piece, which already swells to a larger bulk than the writer proposed.

† Rom. x. 3. Christ is the end of the law. How? By bringing in that righteousness, and giving that life, which the law shows, and shows the want of, but neither itself gives, nor can enable us to acquire.

you will find the dilemma unavoidable. In the mean time, be so candid as to read a short note inserted in Theron and Aspasio, where you may see, that the Scriptures are far from speaking sparingly on this point. It is their favourite and fundamental topic: It runs through them as a golden woof through a warp of silver; or as the vital blood through the animal structure. And whatever you, Sir, may be inclined to do, I hope no lover of Christ will be persuaded to secrete this invaluable truth of the gospel. Shall such a truth skulk in a corner, or speak only in a whisper? No; let us proclaim it upon the house-tops, and wish that the joyful sound may reach the very ends of the earth.

The gift of righteousness must signify a righteousness not their own. Aspasio's expression is, not *originally* their own. Originally, he said, with a view of hinting, that in some other sense, it was and is their own; their own, by way of imputation, though not by way of operation. This word, in order to make the sentence appear absurd, Mr. Wesley drops. But whether such a practice be free from guile, or what the apostle calls cunning craftiness, let the impartial reader judge.

Aspasio's interpretation of the phrase, authenticated by the language of Scripture, Mr. Wesley sets aside; and introduces another, whose only recommendation to the public is, "I come from Mr. Wesley's pen." Do you so? Then we will allow you all proper regard. But, because you come from Mr. Wesley's pen, must you therefore displace propriety and supplant truth? make an inspired writer argue incorrectly, nay, jar with himself? This is rather too much for you to assume, even though you came recommended by a greater name.

"The gift of righteousness signifies the righteousness or holiness which God gives to and works in them." Let us observe the apostle's aim, and the process of his reasoning. His aim is to illustrate the manner of our justification. For this purpose he forms a contrast between Adam's transgression and Christ's obedience. Adam's transgression, which he himself committed, ruins all that spring from him. This is the leading proposition. Now, if the sacred disputant knows how to reason accurately, or to draw a conclusion justly, the conclusion must be to this effect: So likewise Christ's obedience, which he himself performed, recovers all who believe in him. Through Adam's disobedience, without the consideration of their own misdoings, the former are made sinners; through Christ's obedience, without the consideration of their own good qualities, the latter are made righteous. Though I am far, very far from disesteeming the holiness wrought in us, yet what place has it here? In the article of justification, it is utterly excluded. It has no share in the accomplishment of that great work; and every attentive reader will see, that it enters not into the apostle's present argumentation. Besides; if the gift of righteousness signifies the holiness wrought in us, then we shall reign in life, by means of a personal, not of an imputed righteousness; by means of an imperfect, not of a complete obedience. Then all the people of God will be justified, not by the obedience of one, but each by his own, severally and distinctly: which is contrary, not only to a single, but to many express passages of this very chapter.

I said, "Every attentive reader will see." Some, perhaps, may say within themselves, Is not this spoken in Mr. Wesley's manner? the loose presumptive way of arguing which you blame in him? To which it is answered, I am far from resting my point upon this presumptive proof. It is not the pillar which supports my cause, but only a festoon which adorns my pillar. However, was it accompanied with no proofs satisfactory to others, it must to Mr. Wesley, whom I suppose one of the attentive readers, have the force of demonstration. Hear his own words, in his comment on this very portion of Scripture: "As the sin of Adam, without the sins which we afterwards committed, brought us death; so the righteousness of Christ, without the good works which we afterwards perform, brings us life."* It is a righteousness, without the good works, which we afterwards perform; therefore, it is a righteousness not originally our own, but another's. It is not that which God works in us, but prior to it, and independent on it. If Aspasio had suborned an evidence, and put words into his mouth, he could not have devised a more direct and full confirmation of his doctrine than this volunteer witness deposeth. I thank you, Sir, for giving me so valuable an explanation of the gift of righteousness, and its blessed effects. I thank you likewise, for furnishing Aspasio with so incontestable a vindication against the objections of the author of the *Preservative*.

The obedience of one, so highly extolled by the apostle, is Christ's actual performance of the whole law.—This you deny. I wish you had favoured me with your reasons for this denial. But my wishes of this kind are constantly disappointed. However, I will follow our Lord's direction, and do unto others even as I would

* Here Mr. Wesley speaks in perfect agreement with St. Chrysostom: Ο Χριστος τοις εξ αυτω, καιτοιγε ε δικαιοπραγησασι γεγονε προξενος της δικαιοσυνης.

they should do unto me. I will give you a reason for my own or Aspasio's interpretation: The apostle is treating of Adam's actual breach of the law. If so, the proper antithesis must be Christ's actual performance of the law. In the following verses he explains himself. Let them be the comment on our text, and the gift of righteousness means, "The righteousness of one; the obedience of one." This righteousness we have in Jesus Christ our Lord; all other is inherent in ourselves. Justification by this righteousness is alone consistent with free grace; justification by any other, is (inconsistent with it, is) subversive of it.

Farther; As you are a critic in the Greek, you need not be informed that St. Paul uses three several words, δικαιωμα, δικαιοσυνη, υπακοη. Now, can you shew any passages in which all these words are used to signify sufferings or death? Nay, can you shew me any single passage in which any one of them occurs in this signification? If you cannot, what shadow of authority have you for putting this construction upon the words in the present case? What shadow of authority for saying, with that unlimited confidence, Christ's "dying for man, is certainly the chief part, if not the whole, which is meant by that expression?"* If you attend to the tenor of the apostle's argument, or inquire into the import of his language, perhaps you will see cause, not only to alter, but even to reverse this your positive assertion.

Let me subjoin an extract from St. Chrysostom, suited to this and the preceding paragraph, and worthy of our serious consideration; from which it will appear that Aspasio is by no means singular in his sentiments, but speaks the doctrine of the ancient church. "Adam is a type of Christ. How? In this respect: As the former was the cause of death to all his descendants, though they did not (like him) eat of the forbidden fruit; so Christ was the cause, (προξενος)† author, procurer of righteousness to all his seed, though they have not (like him) been personably obedient; even of that righteousness which he finished for us on the cross. For this reason, 'to ascertain and appropriate the honour of this righteousness to Christ—as a work not wrought by us, nor wrought in us, but completed for us on the cursed tree,'—he insists and dwells upon that very observable circumstance, *one*: He iterates and reiterates the emphatical word *one*: He introduces it again and again, and can hardly prevail upon himself to discontinue the repetition. As by *one man* sin entered into the world; through the offence of *one* many be dead; not as it was by *one* that sinned, so is the free gift; the judgment was by *one* to condemnation; by *one man's* offence death reigned by *one*; as by the offence of *one*, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; as by the disobedience of *one*, many were made sinners. Thus does the apostle again and again introduce the word *one*, and can hardly prevail on himself to discontinue the repetition; that if a Jew should ask, How can the world be saved by the well-doing of one, or by the obedience of Christ? you may be able to reply on his own principles, How could the world be condemned by the evil-doing of one, or by the disobedience of Adam?"*

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." That is, by our representative, and in our nature. "Amazing!" cries Mr. Wesley. But why amazing? Is not this the common import of the most common actions? Do not you and I make laws in and by our representatives in parliament? May not every debtor, when his surety has given full satisfaction to the creditor, say, I have satisfied, I have paid, in my bondsman?

To invalidate this interpretation, you allege that the apostle "is not speaking here of the cause of our justification, but the fruits of it." Among all the excellent things which in your studies and in your travels you have learned, have you never learned that between saying and proving there is a wide difference? Never did I meet with a person who seemed so totally ignorant of this very obvious truth. Well, we must take your word without proof; but I hope not without examination. "The apostle is speaking of the fruit." Is then the fulfilling of the law the fruit of justification? This is the first time, I apprehend, that any such thing was deliberately affirmed. It is the cause, the adequate, the immediate, and indeed the only proper cause of justification. But the fruits are, peace of conscience, and love of God; the spirit of adoption, and the hope of glory.

Show me, Sir, where δικαιωμα, in conjunction with τω νομω, signifies the fruits of justification, and not those demands of the

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* The obedience of one, St. Chrysostom expounds by ενος καταρθωσαντος. Would Mr. Wesley venture to affirm, that *dying well*, not *doing well*, is certainly the chief thing signified in καταρθωσαντος? A pretty daring criticism this! Does not the word rather signify, a course of well doing; terminated (if you please) in, not constituted by, a correspondent death?

† Προξενος, an expressive word! It seems to denote such a procuring of righteousness for sinners, as corresponds with the provision made by some hospitable householder for the strangers who are come to be his guests; in which they bear no part either of the expense or of the trouble. Προξενω σοι τουτο, "Hujus rei sum tibi auctor: hanc rem tibi comparo." *Steph. Thesaur. in voc.*

* Chrysost. vol. iii. p. 71, 72. Edit Savil.

law which must necessarily be satisfied before justification can take place. Especially when that phrase is corroborated by that other strong expression, πληρωθη; an expression used by our Lord, concerning himself, and the design of his coming into the world: Applicable to him alone who is the end of the law for righteousness; and descriptive of that obedience by which alone the law is magnified.

This sense, says Aspasio, agrees with the tenor of the apostle's arguing. "Not here," replies Mr. Wesley. Let us then consider the aim, and trace the progress of the apostle's reasoning. He is clearing up and confirming that great privilege of the gospel, "There is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ." This, you will allow, is not the fruit of justification, but justification itself. As this wants no argument to confirm it, let us proceed in our attention to the sacred writer. There is no condemnation to those who are true believers in Jesus Christ; who, in consequence of this belief, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Perhaps, some man will say, How can this be? since even true believers fall short: Nay, they offend; and therefore must be liable to the curse. For this reason, they are delivered from condemnation; because "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," that new dispensation introduced in the room of the old law, promises the privilege of pardon, and the gift of the Spirit, in which things the true life and real happiness of mankind consist: Promises both freely, without any works, purely on account of the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus. And hereby this new, gracious, blessed dispensation "hath made me free from the law," which convinced me of sin, condemned me for sin, and bound me over unto death.

These are glad tidings, doubtless. But are they not attended with two inconveniences? Does not this procedure deprive the law of its due honour, and screen the sinner from his deserved punishment? By no means. "For that which was an absolute impossibility, on account of the" strictness of the "law, and the weakness of human nature," God, to whom nothing is impossible, *has* most wonderfully *accomplished*, by "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," to live among sinners, to come under their obligations, *and* perform the obedience demanded from them. By sending him also to be a sacrifice *for sin;* to be charged with its guilt, and undergo its punishment. By this grand expedient, he has provided for the honour and perfect accomplishment of the law. He has also *condemned* and punished sin with the utmost severity. And both these *in the flesh;* in that very nature which was guilty, disabled, ruined.

Should you further ask, Wherefore is all this? To lay the surest foundation, or make the most complete provision for our justification. "That the righteousness of the law, (both its righteous sentence and its righteous precepts, whatever either of suffering or of obedience it required from transgressors, being fulfilled in Christ) might be fulfilled in us." As it was all done in our name; and as he and we are *one*. One in civil estimation, for he is our representative; one in legal estimation, for he is our surety; one in social estimation, for he is our bridegroom. For which cause his righteous acts are ours, and his atoning death is ours.

There was a time when you embraced these sentiments; when you had such a view of things; when such language came out of your mouth; which even now stands upon record, under your own hand. See your Principles of a Methodist. If you have forgotten them, permit me to remind you of them. "Christ (you say,) is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in him. He for them paid the ransom by his death; he for them fulfilled the law in his life. So that now, in him, and by him, every believer may be called a fulfiller of the law." Since you pronounce *my* sense of the apostle's words unnatural; I adopt, I espouse *yours*.* And so much the more readily, as it will puzzle sagacity itself to discern a difference between them.

"I totally deny the criticism on δικαιοσυνη and δικαιωμα." Then be so good as to suggest a better. Or, if this should be somewhat difficult, at least favour us with a reason for this your total denial. Not a word of either. Strange! that a man of ordinary discernment should offer to obtrude upon the public such a multitude of naked, unsupported, magisterial assertions! Should ever be able to persuade himself that a positive air will pass for demonstration, or supply the place of argument! If this be to demonstrate, if this be to confute, the idiot is as capable of both as the philosopher. May I not cry out, in your own strain, Oh, how deep an aversion to the *imputed righteousness* of Christ does this Arminian scheme discover! since it will make a man gainsay, when he knows not why, or wherefore?

St. Paul declares, that the "Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, had attained unto righteousness." Upon which Aspasio observes, that the righteousness here

* Should Mr. Wesley say, Though I used these words, I never intended them for a comment on this passage. If you did not, I imagine the compilers of our Homilies, from whom they are taken, did. At least they regarded this text as a foundation, a warrant, a proof of their doctrine.

mentioned could not be any personal righteousness. To which Mr. Wesley replies, "It was." And to render his reply quite irresistible, a perfect thunderbolt in argumentation, he adds, "Certainly it was." How, Sir! Did they attain personal righteousness without seeking after it? Are you becoming a Calvinist? you that had rather be an Atheist? Could the zealot of Geneva go greater lengths? Aspasio will not deny, that these Gentiles were sanctified as well as justified; but he will venture to affirm, that no degree of sanctification can make the persons righteous who are once become sinners. Christ, like Elijah, first casts his mantle over them; and then, like Elisha, they forsake all, and follow him.

"The righteousness which the Gentiles attained, could not be a personal righteousness." "Certainly it was."—Then it was the righteousness of the law; whereas, the righteousness which they attained, is expressly said to be the righteousness of faith. Then it was a righteousness consisting of good works and godly tempers; whereas, their righteousness consisted in believing, according to the apostle's own explanation, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Then it was the righteousness of man. Personal righteousness, and implanted holiness, pass in the Scriptures under that denomination. Whereas, these Gentiles "submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." If what these Gentiles attained had been a personal righteousness, it would have been no stumbling-block to the Jews. Even they would have fallen in with such a system of religion, as should ascribe righteousness and salvation to their own duties and their own deeds.

You say, "It was implanted as well as imputed." Here, then, you acknowledge an *imputed* righteousness. You yourself use the phrase; you affirm it to be, if not the whole, part at least, of the apostle's doctrine. I wish you had been of this mind when you began your letter. Then you would not have conjured me, by all that is venerable and important, to discontinue an expression which conveys—your own—the apostle's meaning—and the meaning of the Holy Ghost.

You join imputed and implanted righteousness. So, in case this address to yourself should pass through the printer's hand, would I join a handsome type and pertinent reasoning. Yet I apprehend, when you sit down to examine the essay, you will regard only the latter. What you associate, you associate properly. The first is the trunk, the last is one of the branches which spring from it. But the apostle seems, in the place before us, to be considering the first only. The last he reserves for some future occasion. He is speaking of the righteousness by which we are saved; and that is solely the imputed righteousness of Christ: He is speaking of the righteousness which was an eye-sore and an offence to the self-conceited Jews; and this was the only imputed righteousness of Christ: He is speaking of a righteousness, contradistinguished to that righteousness which is described by "He that doeth these things;" and this can be nothing else but the imputed righteousness of Christ. Therefore, though love of God, and conformity to his image; though the pure heart and the devout affection, are the inseparable concomitants, or rather the genuine produce of imputed righteousness; yet here they come not under consideration. To force them into this passage, is to make them appear out of due season. Such an exposition may bespeak a zealous officiousness, not a distinguishing judgment; because it confounds the order of the apostle's plan; it defeats the design of his argument, if it does not introduce self-contradiction into his arguing.

This righteousness came upon the Gentiles, as the former and latter rain upon the earth. To them was fulfilled the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah, "Let the skies pour down righteousness." As the earth engendereth not the rain; has not the least influence in forming, or the least agency in procuring the refreshing showers, but only receiveth them as the mere gift of Providence; so these Gentiles had not the least influence in effecting, nor the least agency in procuring this righteousness. When the good news came into their territories, they were totally destitute of it, they were utterly unconcerned about it, they knew nothing at all concerning it. But seeing it revealed in the gospel, seeing it displayed as the work of God, and hearing it offered as the gift of God, they were not disobedient to the heavenly invitation. They believed the report, they accepted the blessing, and relied upon it for life and salvation. Then, "as the rain coming down, and the snow from heaven, returneth not thither again, but watereth the earth; and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;" so, this inestimable truth being admitted into the soul, Christ and his righteousness being received to dwell in the heart, Eph. iii. 17, all the powers of intellectual nature, or what St. Paul calls "the inner man," are exhilarated, quickened, and fructified. They bud as the rose, and blossom as the lily; they bring forth the fruits of inward love, of outward obedience, of universal godliness.

"For instruction in righteousness—in the righteousness of Christ." "Was there ever such a comment before?" May I not answer, in your own words, Was there ever

such a method of confutation used before? But you add, "The plain meaning is, For training up in holiness of heart and of life." I wish you had thought of introducing this interpretation by the following short preface, "I take it for granted." You would then have been sure of saying *one* truth. But if this does not appear plain to me, as you see it did not to Aspasio, methinks you should lend me your spectacles, or favour me with your reasons.

If you please to examine the passage, you will find holiness of heart and life comprehended in one of the preceding expressions. Προς επανορθωσιν signifies, For restoration of the man to a state of moral uprightness; which must include a renovation of the mind, and a reformation of the conduct. After this comes, very properly and without any tautology, very needfully and to the exceeding comfort of the sinner, another most valuable property of the Scriptures. They instruct the reader in the Christian righteousness; in the justifying righteousness; in that mysterious, but incomparably precious righteousness, which no other book in the world displays, mentions, or so much as hints: Yet, without which, we could never stand in the judgment, never find acceptance with God, nor be admitted into the realms of glory. If you reject this sense, the apostle's character of the sacred volumes is very defective. It leaves out what is their supreme excellence and most distinguishing peculiarity; what is first, and above all other things, necessary for our fallen race. A traveller undertakes to give an account of some celebrated picture-gallery. He describes the dimensions of the structure, the form of the windows, the ornaments of the roof; but he quite forgets, at least he totally omits, the article of the paintings. Is this a masterly execution of his design? Is this satisfactory to the hearer's curiosity?

"He shall convince the world of righteousness."—"That I am not a sinner, but innocent and holy." How flat and jejune is this exposition! Nothing can be more so, to my taste. *Innocent and holy!* Is this all the Spirit witnesses concerning the most adorable and infinitely deserving Son of God? Does this come up to the inconceivable dignity of his person, and the immensely glorious perfection of his work? Is this sufficient to comfort the conscience, smitten with a sense of most damnable guilt, and alarmed with the terrors of eternal vengeance?

The whole clause contains a platform or summary of evangelical truth; of that all-important truth which ministers are to teach and preach; which the Holy Spirit will own and accompany with his influence, and which is thereby made the power of God to the salvation of the hearers. He shall convince the world of *sin:* of the guilty and miserable state in which all mankind are plunged by nature, and in which every individual person continues so long as he is destitute of an interest in Christ; so long as he believeth not in him who died upon the cross, and is gone to the Father. Of *righteousness:* He shall reveal the Redeemer's most perfect and magnificent righteousness in their hearts; that righteousness which satisfies the justice of the Most High, and brings complete redemption to transgressors: Testifying, not barely that he is innocent; such was Adam in paradise: not barely that he is holy; such are angels in heaven. Shall the eternal Creator, even after his humiliation unto death, have no higher a testimony than a set of mere creatures? Yes, verily; the Holy Ghost will convince the world, that Christ's righteousness is the grand and capital blessing which the prophets foretold, and which not only fulfils, but magnifies the law: That it is the righteousness, the very righteousness of the incarnate Jehovah; and therefore renders every soul, to whom it is imputed, unblamable, unreprovable, complete. Glorious office this, worthy to be the object of the almighty Comforter's agency! in performing which he administers strong consolation. Then he shall convince of judgment; shall condemn and cast out the prince of this world, introducing a most happy change into the heart and life; shall begin and carry on the work of grace, sanctification, obedience; and all through the joyful knowledge, together with the personal appropriation, of this justifying righteousness.

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" which cannot be intrinsically, but must be imputatively. This interpretation Aspasio establishes, attempts at least to establish, from the tenor of the context, from the apostle's antithesis, and from several venerable names. But what are all these to Mr. Wesley? No more than the arrow and the spear to Leviathan. Nay, not so much. That scaly monster "esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood." But Mr. Wesley, cased in his own self-sufficiency, esteemeth all the afore-mentioned evidences as mere nothings. He totally disregards them. Reason, grammar, precedents, are eclipsed by his bare negative, and vanish into an insignificancy not worthy of notice.

When Aspasio, supported by such great authorities, says, this cannot be intrinsically, but must be imputatively; Mr. Wesley, supported by his greater self, replies, "Both the one and the other." But does he duly advert to the apostle's subject, or follow the clue of the context? The subject is reconciliation with God, justification

before God, or that, whatever it be, which is implied in not imputing trespasses. The context intimates, that intrinsic holiness is not yet taken into consideration, but is reserved for the next chapter. There the apostle exhorts the Corinthians, not to receive this infinitely rich grace of free justification in vain; but to shew its efficacy, to shew its excellency, and recommend it to the unbelieving world, by an unblamable conversation, giving no offence in any thing.

Justification, then, is the only point which the apostle in this passage considers; and justification is the fruit of imputed righteousness solely, not of inherent righteousness in any degree. This we must allow, unless we prefer the impositions of Trent before the confession of our church. Faith says unto us, "It is not I that take away your sins, but Christ only; and to him only I send you for that purpose, forsaking therein all your good words, thoughts, and works, and only putting your trust in Christ:" Thus speaks and thus teaches our reformed church. "If any one say, that man is justified only by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, or only by the remission of sins, without the co-operation of inherent grace and holy love, let him be accursed;" Sess. vi. Can. 11: Thus dogmatizes, and thus anathematizes, that mother of falsehoods. Choose now your side. For my part, I renounce and abjure the proud and iniquitous decree. If you persist in your present opinion, there will be an apparent harmony between yourself and Rome, but an essential difference between yourself and Aspasio.

"God, through him, first accounts, and then makes us righteous." How! does God account us righteous, before he makes us so? Then his judgment is not according to truth; then he reckons us to be righteous, when we are really otherwise. Is not this the language of your doctrine? this the unavoidable consequence of your notion? But how harsh, if not horrid, does it sound in every ear! Is not this absolutely irreconcilable with our ideas of the Supreme Being, and equally incompatible with the dictates of Scripture? There we are taught that God "justifieth the ungodly." Mark the words: "*The ungodly* are the objects of the divine justification. But can he account the ungodly righteous? Impossible! How then does he act? He first makes them righteous.* After what manner? By imputing to them the righteousness of his dear Son. Then he pronounces them righteous, and most truly; he treats them as righteous, and most justly. In short, then he absolves them from guilt, adopts them for his children, and makes them heirs of his eternal kingdom. In the grand transaction, thus regulated, mercy and truth meet together; all proceeds in the most harmonious and beautiful consistency with the several attributes of God, with his whole revealed will, and with all his righteous law.

"The righteousness which is of God by faith, is both imputed and inherent." Then it is like interweaving linen and woollen; the motley mixture forbidden to the Israelites. Or rather, like weaving a thread of the finest gold with a hempen cord, or a spider's web. The righteousness which is of God, is perfect, consummate, everlasting. Not so inherent righteousness, your own self being judge, and your own pen being witness. In the righteousness which is of God, the apostle desires to be found, before the great and terrible tribunal of the Lord. His own righteousness, or the righteousness which is inherent, he abandons, as absolutely improper for this great purpose; being no more fitted to give him boldness at the day of judgment, than dung and filth are fit to introduce a person, with credit and dignity, to court. The righteousness which is of God, is unknown to reason, is revealed from heaven, and without the works of the law: whereas, the righteousness inherent, is discoverable by reason, was known to the Heathens, and consists in a conformity of heart and life to the precepts of the law. By the latter, we act, we obey, and offer our spiritual sacrifices unto God; by the former, we work nothing, we render nothing unto God, but only receive of his grace.

They are, therefore, not the same, but totally distinct. To blend and confound them betrays unskilfulness in the word of righteousness; derogates from the honour of Christ; and tends to cherish a legal frame, or what the Scripture calls, "a spirit of bondage." If you would approve yourself a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, thus you should speak, and thus you should write: The righteousness of God is always imputed; but, being imputed, it produces the righteousness inherent. Being justified by the former, saved from hell, and rendered meet for heaven; we are sanctified also, and disposed to love the Lord, who has dealt so bountifully with us. And if to love, then to worship him, to serve him, to imitate him.

"My faith fixes on both the meritorious life and atoning death of Christ."—"Here we clearly agree." How can you clearly agree, either with Aspasio, or with yourself, or with common sense? How with Aspasio? since you question, in direct contrariety to his sentiments, whether the death

* Agreeably to this, our church speaks: "In justification, of unjust, we are made just before God;" and adds, "This is the strong rock and foundation of Christian religion."—*Hom. of Justif.* part 2.

of Christ be not the whole of what St. Paul styles, "The obedience of one."—How with *yourself*? For, did you not declare a little while ago, that fallen man "is not justified by perfect obedience?" Is not Christ's meritorious life perfect obedience? If your faith fixes on this perfect obedience, is it not for the purpose of justification?—How with *common sense*? Since you suppose that the "Scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of Christ;" so entirely ascribes it to the death of Christ, "that there was no need of his fulfilling the moral law, in order to purchase redemption for us;" what reason, or shadow of reason can you have, to fix upon what we call the merit of his life? If what you suppose and affirm be true, there was no kind of meritorious efficacy in his life. His life, and all his labours, were in this respect a mere superfluity. Salvation might have been obtained, and redemption purchased, without their concurrence. Therefore, to fix upon them is to fix upon a phantom, and to rest your hopes upon a thing of nought.

But stay. Am I not repeating the misconduct which proved so fatal to the famous Earl of Warwick and his forces? At the battle of Gladmore, while the scale of victory hung in suspense, they saw a considerable body of troops advancing. Supposing them to be enemies, the bowmen made a general discharge, and galled them with their arrows. But they soon perceived their mistake; that they had been opposing their friends, and annoying their allies. Perhaps by this time you are become my ally. You may have seen your errors, may have corrected your notions; saying, in ratification of both, "We agree."

That is, "I would no longer exclude the meritorious obedience of Christ. But this, together with his atoning death, I look upon as the only cause of my justification. This I call his righteousness; and this, being imputed to me, becomes my plea, my portion, and rational foundation for my everlasting felicity. This I receive by faith. Which I now look upon, not as constituting any part of my recommendation, but only as receptive of the fulness laid up for me in Christ. Though the law of works saith, Do and live; I am now made sensible that the law of faith says,—Be verily persuaded that Christ is sufficient for thy acceptance, without any doing of thy own at all. Since Christ is given to me, in the sacred record given to me as a sinner, to be received without any conditions, I joyfully accept the gift. I am satisfied with his doing and suffering: They are divinely excellent, and infinitely sufficient: I neither wish for, nor think of any thing more, to obtain my complete salvation. This way of salvation effectually excludes boasting; and, at the same time, produces those desirable effects, that love of God, that delight in his perfections, that conformity to his will, which the law of works requires in vain."

If this is what you mean, by "We agree," I would seal and ratify the agreement with the last wish and the last words of the celebrated Father Paul, *Esto perpetua*. Be this the case, and you shall have, not only the right hand of fellowship, but the right hand of pre-eminence. Only I crave one favour in return: Dismiss those injurious insinuations, which cause your readers to suspect that Aspasio considers the meritorious life of Christ separate from his atoning death; whereas, he affirms them to be inseparable, like the correspondence of motion between the two eyes. Try if you can make one of your eyes move to the right, while the other wheels off to the left. When you have done this, then, and not till then, you may have some reasonable pretence for these your suggestions.

Alas! *Quanta de spe decidi!* I find my hopes were too sanguine. We are not come to the desired coalition. In this very paragraph you begin to fly off. By talking of imputed righteousness, you tell us, "we are exposed to an exceeding great hazard; even the hazard of living and dying without holiness." Pray, Sir, have you seen a little piece written upon this subject by the Rev. Mr. Witherspoon? If you have not, let me recommend it to your perusal. In case you are ignorant of that powerful influence which justification through the righteousness of Christ has upon sanctification and true holiness, from this treatise you may learn some valuable knowledge. In case the author of this treatise is mistaken, in maintaining the indissoluble connexion of justification with true godliness, and the never-failing efficacy of the Redeemer's righteousness to bring forth willing obedience in the believer, you may have an opportunity of rectifying his sentiments. You may give us, in your next publication, a preservative, not only against unsettled, but against unsound notions in religion.

Theron, speaking of gems, says, "When nicely polished, and prodigal of their lustre, they stand candidates for a seat on the virtuous fair one's breast." This displeases Mr. Wesley. Would he then have gems placed on the vicious or lascivious breast? Or would he have them put to no use at all, but buried in darkness? Did the Almighty pour such brilliancy upon them, only that they might be consigned over to obscurity? Did he not rather array them with lustre and with charms, that they might display something of his own brightness; incite his rational creatures to admire his transcendent excellency, and teach his faith-

ful people to apprehend the emphasis of that animating promise, "They shall be mine, in the day that I make up my jewels."

"I cannot reconcile this with St. Paul. He says, not with pearls; by a parity of reason, not with diamonds." Do you rightly understand St. Paul? Do not you dwindle his manly and noble idea into a meanness and littleness of sense? such as befits the superstitious and contracted spirit of a hermit, rather than the generous and exalted temper of a believer, "who stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free?" Our Lord says not, they that are *splendidly apparelled*, are apparelled unsuitably to Christianity, or in a manner inconsistent with the fear of God; but they *are in king's courts*, and their dress is adapted to their station. Neither does St. Paul forbid the use of pearls, or costly array, when a person's circumstances will afford them, and his situation in life may require them: He rather cautions against the abuse, against looking upon these glittering things as any part of their true dignity, on which they value themselves, or by which they would be recommended to others. The word is not ενδυσασθαι, put on, (Mark vi. 9.); nor φορειν, wear, (Matth. xi. 8.); but κοσμειν, adorn. "Let them not place their excellency in such mean distinctions; no, nor covet to distinguish themselves by these superficial decorations; but rather by the substantial ornaments of real godliness and good works, which will render both them and their religion truly amiable.

The apostle Peter observes the same propriety of speech, and the same correctness of sentiment: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of wearing of gold, or plaiting the hair, or putting on of apparel." Was this an absolute prohibition of the several particulars mentioned, it would forbid all kind of clothing, or the putting on of any apparel. Take the passage in your rigorous sense, and it concludes as forcibly against garments as against ornaments; we must even go naked, and lay aside our clothes, as well as our gems. Whereas, understood according to the natural signification of the words, (ων ο κοσμος, not ων το ενδυμα) it conveys a very important, and a very seasonable exhortation: "Christians, scorn to borrow your recommendations from the needle, the loom, or the toy-shop: This may be the fashion of a vain world; but let your embellishments, or that which beautifies and distinguishes your character, be of a superior nature. Let it be *internal;* not such as the sheep have wore, or the silk-worms spun; but such as is peculiar to the immortal mind, or 'the hidden man of the heart.' Let it be *substantial;* not such as the moth corrodes, or such as perishes in using; but 'that which is not corruptible;' which being planted on earth, will be transplanted into heaven; and being sown in time, will flourish to eternity. Let it be that adorning, whose excellency is unquestionable, and 'whose praise is of God, (even) the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit:' which will render you, not indeed like the grandees of the earth, but like the Son of the Highest; shewing that you are united to him, interested in him, and partakers of his divine nature."

"In all things, I perceive, you are too favourable, both to the desire of the flesh, and to the desire of the eye." I rather think Mr. Wesley is too censorious of others, and too indulgent to himself. Why may not Theron wear his richly embossed gold watch, and his lady use her golden buckle set with diamonds, as well as you and I wear a silver buckle, or make use of our silver watch? Why may not an earl or a countess put on their robes, sumptuous with embroidery, or their coronet glittering with jewels, as inoffensively as you and I put on a beaver hat, or trail after us a prunella gown? There is no necessity for this our spruceness. A fustian jacket would keep our backs warm, and a flannel cap our heads, as well as our more elegant array. Methinks, therefore, we should either abstain from all needless finery in our own dress, or else forbear to censure it in others. Rather, we should all, in our respective stations, and according to our respective circumstances, use these things as not abusing them; remembering that the fashion of this world passeth away: Looking, therefore, for that city of the living God, "whose walls are of jasper, whose buildings are of pure gold, and whose foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones;" but whose external splendour is infinitely surpassed by the glory of God, which lightens it, and by the presence of the Lamb, which is the light thereof. When we are blessed with clear apprehensions of this ineffable glory, which shall be revealed; when we live under a delightful persuasion that God hath given to us this eternal life; gems will have but little lustre in our eye, and less and less allurements for our heart. All the pomp of this transient world will appear to us, as the palace of Versailles or the gardens of Stowe would appear to some superior being, who, from an exalted stand in either, should contemplate the terraqueous globe, and at one view take in its vast dimensions, its prodigious revolutions, and its most copious furniture.

"You are a gentle casuist as to every self-indulgence which a plentiful fortune can furnish." I would consider the end for which these things were created, and point

out and enforce their proper improvements. They were created, not to tantalize, but to treat us; not to ensnare, but to gratify us. Then they are properly improved, when we enjoy them with moderation, and render them instruments of usefulness; when they are regarded as pregnant tokens of our Creator's love, and act as endearing incitements of our gratitude. What you call my casuistry, is built upon a maxim which will never be controverted, "Every creature of God is good, if received with thanksgiving." It is nothing else but an attempt to display what is affirmed in the former clause, and to enforce what is prescribed in the latter.

In the sixth letter, in the ninth, and in other parts, Theron enumerates some of the finest productions, and most choice accommodations, which the earth, the air, the seas afford: in imitation of the apostle, who in one sentence expresses abundantly more than my three volumes contain, "He giveth us all things richly to enjoy:" in imitation of the Psalmist also, who, in several of his hymns, especially in Psalm civ., celebrates the profuse munificence of Jehovah; profuse, even in temporal blessings, and with regard to our animal nature. Does our nature call for any thing to support it? Here is "bread, which strengthens man's heart," and is the staff of his life. Does our nature go farther, and covet things to please it? Here is "wine, that maketh glad the heart of man;" regaling his palate, and exhilarating his spirits. Is our nature yet more craving, and desirous of something to beautify it? Here is "oil, that maketh the face to shine;" that the countenance may appear both cheerful and amiable; that gaiety may sparkle in the eye, while beauty glows in the cheek. Now I cannot persuade myself, nor is all Mr. Wesley's rhetoric powerful enough to convince me, that it is any discredit, or any error, to follow such examples.

"But I mention the exquisite relish of turbot, and the deliciousness of sturgeon. And are not such observations beneath the dignity of a minister of Christ?" Mr. Wesley does not observe from whom these remarks proceed. Not from Aspasio, but Theron. To make him speak like a minister of Christ, or like a Christian of the first rank, would be entirely out of character. It would have betrayed an utter ignorance, or a total disregard of Horace's rule,

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

However, I am willing to take all upon myself, and be responsible for the obnoxious sentiments. I would only ask, is any thing spoken of which the Almighty has not made? and shall I think it beneath my dignity to magnify the work of his hands?—Is any thing spoken of which the Almighty has not bestowed? and shall I think it a diminution of my character to acknowledge the various gifts of his bounty?—Has God most high thought it worthy of his infinite Majesty to endue the creatures with such pleasing qualities as render them a delicious entertainment to our appetites? and shall I reckon it a mean unbecoming employ to bear witness to this condescending indulgence of the Deity? Particularity in recounting benefits, is seldom deemed a fault. It comes under no such denomination in my system of ethics. If Mr. Wesley has a better, in which neglect and insensibility are ranked among the virtues, I must undoubtedly, upon those principles, drop my plea. Where they are commendable, my conduct must be inexcusable; and if inexcusable, I fear irreclaimable. For I shall never be ashamed to take a fish, a fowl, or a fruit in my hand, and say, "A present this from my all-bountiful Creator! See its beauty, taste its sweetness, admire its excellency, and love and adore the great Benefactor. To us he has freely granted these and other delights; though he himself, in the days of his flesh, had gall to eat and vinegar to drink."

"But the mentioning these in such a manner, is a strong encouragement of luxury and sensuality." If to enumerate a few of these dainties,* be a strong encouragement to luxury, how much more, to create them all, and clothe them with such inviting properties, and recommend them by such delicate attractives? But "the mentioning them in such a manner." What! Is this an encouragement to sensuality? To mention them as so many instances of divine beneficence, and so many motives to human gratitude? This, methinks, is the way to prevent the abuse of our animal enjoyments, and to correct their pernicious tendency. This is the way to endear their adorable Giver, and render them incentives to love. And the love of God is a better guard against luxury, a better preservative from sensuality, than all the rigid rules of the cloister or monastery.

Upon the whole, however well affected Mr. Wesley may be to our civil, he seems to be a kind of malecontent with regard to our spiritual liberties—those, I mean, which are consigned over to us in the Magna Charta of the gospel.

We have liberty, through Jesus Christ, to use not one only, but every creature of God; and to use them in a sanctified manner, so that they shall not sensualize our affections, but refine and exalt them, by knitting our hearts more inseparably to their munificent Creator. According to that clause in the heavenly deed, "All things

* The Scripture calls them royal dainties, Gen. xlix. 20.

are yours." This you would curtail and diminish.

We have liberty to look upon ourselves as justified before God, without any works of our own; made perfectly righteous in his sight, without any personal obedience whatever; entirely through our Representative and Surety, what he has suffered in our name and in our stead; according to those gracious declarations, "In the Lord have I righteousness," and, "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." This you would supersede and abolish.

We have liberty to claim and receive this unspeakable privilege, without performing any conditions, or seeking any prerequisites. Having no other qualification than that of being lost sinners, and needing no other warrant than the divine grant, made and recorded in the word of the gospel. According to that most generous invitation, "Come, buy wine and buy milk, without money and without price." According to that most gratuitous concession, "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." This you would clog and embarrass.

We have liberty, through our Lord's atonement, to look upon ourselves as made free from all guilt; to consider our sins as absolutely blotted out, never to appear again, either to our utter condemnation or to our least confusion.

The three first articles of the charge, I think, are made clear, too clear and undeniable, in the course of the preceding letters. Should you challenge me to prove the last, I refer you to your assize sermon. There you tell us, that the sins of true believers, as well as of unbelievers, will be brought to light, and exposed before the whole world, at the day of universal judgment.

Here I must do you the justice to acknowledge, that you have not, as in your epistolary animadversions on Aspasio, required your audience to assent, merely because you affirm. You attempt to establish your opinion by the authority of Solomon, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." But you seem to forget, that the sins of the believer are τα μη οντα,—Things that are not. "Christ has blotted out, as a thick cloud, our transgressions; yea, as a thin cloud, our sins," Isa. xliv. 22. Consider them as moral stains, or causes of defilement; they are washed away by the blood of Jesus; and surely the blood of God must have as powerful an effect on our souls, as the waters of Jordan had upon Naaman's body, 2 Kings v. 14. Consider them as contracting guilt, or deserving punishment; they are vacated, they are disannulled, and, like the scape-goat, dismissed into the pathless inaccessible wilderness; "when sought for, they shall not be found." Consider them in either of these respects, or under any other character, and they are not only covered or secreted, but abolished; just as the darkness of the night is abolished by the splendour of the clear, serene, delightful morning.

Bring to our sight, if you can, the millstone that is cast into the depths of the sea; restore to its former consistence the cloud that is dissolved in rain; or find one dreg of filthiness in the new-fallen snow. Then may those iniquities be brought again into notice, which have been done away by the High-priest of our profession; which have been expiated by the perfect, most effectual, and glorious oblation of himself. His people, when rising from the bed of death, will "have no more conscience of sin" in themselves: They are fully and for ever free from the accusation of others: So free, that sin shall not so much as be mentioned unto them; no, nor even remembered by the Lord their God any more. They are made holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight. And they shall be presented at the great day, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Thus may we, and thus may our readers be presented! So shall we meet each other with comfort at the awful tribunal; with joy amidst the angels of light, and with everlasting transport around the throne of the Lamb. To promote this blessed event is the sole aim of these remonstrances, and the unfeigned desire of, Reverend Sir, your, &c.

LETTER XI.

Reverend Sir,—My last concluded with a sketch of our Christian liberty, extracted from the charter of the gospel. We have liberty to use all the creatures; and, in a sanctified manner, to consider ourselves as made perfectly righteous through the obedience of Christ; to receive this grand prerogative without performing any conditions; to look upon all our sins as totally and finally done away, through the blood of Jesus.

Perhaps you will ask, Where is your liberty from the power of sin? Does not this come within the extent of your charter? Most certainly. You injure our doctrine, if you deny it. We are undone irreparably, if we continue destitute of it. Every other immunity, without this crowning privilege, would be like the magnificent palace and the beautiful gardens of Pharaoh while

swarms of locusts filled them with their loathed intrusion.

But observe, Sir, freedom from the dominion of sin, is the result of all the preceding blessings. By revealing these in our hearts, and Christ the author of them, the Holy Spirit acts as the Spirit of liberty. You are a philospher; you understand the theory of light. From the association of various rays, or the mixture of many parent colours, springs that first of elements, and best of material gifts, *light*. So from the union and united enjoyment of all those heavenly treasures, springs that most desirable liberty, the "liberty of righteousness." This is that truth which makes us free; this is that knowledge by which we are renewed after the image of him that created us; and these are the exceeding precious promises by which we are partakers of the divine nature. Hence we are taught to love the Lord our God, and to delight in his adorable perfections. By this means they look with a smiling aspect upon us, and are unspeakably amiable to us. Under such views, we say of sin, we say of all our evil and corrupt affections, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies."

"Our Saviour's obedience." This phrase disgusts Mr. Wesley. Therefore he cries, "O say with the good old Puritans, our Saviour's *death* and *merits*." Aspasio speaks with St. Paul, "By the obedience of one." He speaks with St. Peter, "Faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour." He speaks with the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, "In the Lord have I righteousness;" and, "Jehovah is our righteousness." Having these precedents, he need not be very solicitous who else is for him, or who is against him.

Though not very solicitous about this matter, he is somewhat surprised at your vehement address; that you should exhort him so earnestly to "speak with the good old Puritans." Has not your printer committed a mistake? Did not the clause stand thus in your manuscript? "With my good friends the Arminians." They indeed disapprove this expression, because it is, when rightly understood, a dagger in the heart of their cause; but as to the Puritans, they are, one and all, on the contrary side: their language is in perfect unison with Aspasio's; they glory in the meritorious obedience of their great Mediator; they extol his imputed righteousness in almost every page, and pour contempt upon all other works compared with their Lord's. What will not an author affirm, who ventures to affirm or insinuate that the Puritan writers disuse this manner of speaking? For my part, I know not any set of writers in the world so eminently remarkable for this very doctrine, and this very diction. I said, in a former letter, we would inquire into this particular; but the inquiry is quite unnecessary. It would be like Uriel's searching for the sun, while he stands in its orb, and is surrounded with its lustre.

"We swarm with Antinomians." And we must swarm with persons whose hearts are enmity against the law of God, so long as your tenets find acceptance. Who can delight in a law, which neither has been nor can be fulfilled by them; which bears witness against them, and is the ministration of death unto them; testifying, like the hand-writing on Belshazzar's wall, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting?" Whereas, when we see it fully satisfied on our behalf, by our Surety's obedience; no longer denouncing a curse, but pronouncing us blessed; not pursuing us, like the avenger of blood, but opening a city of refuge for the safety of our souls: we shall then be reconciled to its constitution and design; we shall then take pleasure in its precepts and prohibitions; we shall say with the Psalmist, "Lord, what love have I unto thy law! All the day long is my study in it."

"My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation."—"Thy mercy which brings my salvation," says Mr. Wesley, in opposition to the sense assigned by Aspasio: Which sense has been vindicated already. I shall therefore not renew my arguments, but only express my wonder.

As Mr. Wesley is a minister of the gospel, I wonder that he should studiously set aside what is the peculiarity and glory of the evangelical revelation. "Mercy which brings salvation," is what an unenlightened Jew might have preached: nay, what a more ignorant Heathen might have taught; but salvation through a divine righteousness, as the adequate and meritorious cause thereof, is the distinguishing doctrine, and the sovereign excellency, of the gospel.

As Mr. Wesley is a sinner, I wonder he should choose to weaken the foundation of his own and our hope. Why mercy *alone?* Is it not better to put our trust in mercy, erecting its throne on a propitiation, and thence holding forth the golden sceptre? By the obedience of Immanuel, the law is satisfied as to its penalty, is fulfilled as to its precept, and is in every respect unspeakably magnified. This shews us the inexhaustible fountain of mercy unsealed, and every obstruction to its free and copious flow removed.

As Mr. Wesley is zealous for the honour of God, I wonder he should not prefer that method of salvation, by which every divine attribute is most abundantly

glorified. This is not done by expecting pardon and acceptance from mercy alone; but by expecting and receiving them through our Redeemer's righteousness and blood. Then we have a display, not only of infinite love, but of inflexible justice, and incomprehensible wisdom. Here they mingle their beams, and shine forth with united and eternal splendour.

Considering these things, I am still inclined to embrace Aspasio's interpretation of this, and such like passages of Scripture, wherein salvation is ascribed to divine mercy exercised through the obedience and death of Christ; which gives as great a heightening to the blessing, as the atmosphere gives to the rays of light, or as the light itself imparts to the scenes of creation.

"Those divine treasures which spring from the imputation of Christ's righteousness." "Not a word of his atoning blood." I wish you would turn back to Aspasio's definition of this phrase, as it is laid down at the beginning of the conference, to be the groundwork of all the dialogues and of all the letters. You will then perceive that there is not a word of this kind but Christ's atoning blood is included in it. Without this, his righteousness had not been perfect. Without this, his righteousness could not be imputed. Some people have a treacherous memory, and really forget things: Others have a perverse mind, and resolve not to regard them. Which of these is Mr. Wesley's case, I presume not to say; let his own conscience determine.

It is true, "we love to speak of the righteousness of Christ." Yet not because "it affords a fairer excuse for our own unrighteousness." For indeed it affords no excuse at all: On the contrary, it renders unrighteousness quite inexcusable; because it yields new and nobler motives to all holy obedience. But we love to speak of the righteousness of Christ, because it is the most comprehensive expression, and the grandest theme in the world. The *most comprehensive expression;* as it denotes all that he has done and suffered, both his meritorious life and his atoning blood. The *grandest theme:* Consider all those blessings which have been vouchsafed to God's people, before our Saviour appeared on earth; add all the blessings which will be vouchsafed, until the consummation of all things: Consider all that good which is comprised in a deliverance from the nethermost hell; together with all that bliss which is contained in the pleasures and glories of the heavenly state: All these to be enjoyed through a boundless eternity—and by multitudes of redeemed sinners, numberless as the sands upon the sea-shore. Then ask, what is the procuring cause of all? Whence do these inestimable benefits proceed? From the righteousness, the sole righteousness of Jesus Christ. Is it not then worthy to be uppermost in our thoughts, and foremost on our tongues? Might not the very stones cry out, and reproach our insensibility, if we did not love to talk of this divinely gracious righteousness?

Faith is a persuasion, that Christ has shed his blood *for me*, and fulfilled all righteousness *in my stead*. "I can by no means subscribe to this definition." You might very safely subscribe to this definition, if you would suffer St. Peter to speak his genuine sentiments. Describing the faith of the primitive Christian, he calls it Πιστιν εν δικαιοσυνη,—Faith in the righteousness. He says nothing of the atoning blood: But does he therefore exclude it? He speaks of nothing but the justifying righteousness: And will you totally discard it? It is the central point in his faith, and shall it have no place in yours? *Righteousness*, he assures us, was the object of the believer's faith, even the righteousness "of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." But how could this be the object of their faith, if it was not fulfilled in their stead? Or how could they truly believe in this righteousness, if they did not regard it as performed for them, and imputed to them?

"There are hundreds, yea thousands, of true believers, who never once thought, one way or the other, of Christ's fulfilling all righteousness in their stead." Then their faith is like the sight of the person who saw men as trees walking. He saw them, indeed, but very dimly, indistinctly, confusedly. And it is pity but they were more thoroughly instructed unto the kingdom of God. Not one of those thousands, provided he fixes his hope wholly upon the merits of Christ, would reject this delightful truth, if it was offered with scriptural evidence to his understanding. Reject it! No, surely. He would joyfully embrace it, if offered, with that single but undeniable evidence, "Christ was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

"You personally know many, who to this hour have no idea of Christ's righteousness." Surely, then, it behoves you, as a lover of souls, and as an ambassador of Christ, to teach them the way of God more perfectly. So doing, you will be employed much more suitably to your function, and much more profitably to your brethren, than in your present attempt; by which you would weaken the hands, and defeat the designs, of those who endeavour to spread abroad the savour of this knowledge in every place; and who, notwithstanding all that you personally know, must unalterably persist in their method; which is, to regu-

late their definition of faith, not by the state of your supposed believers, but by the express declaration of the unerring word. And from this they have authority to maintain, that faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ is a fundamental principle to every believer who understands upon what foundation he is saved.

These your acquaintance, though they have no idea of Christ's righteousness, yet "have each of them a divine evidence and conviction,—Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." In this case, do not you take rather too much upon you? Have you then the apostolical gift of discerning spirits? If not, it will be impossible for you to know the man, exclusive of yourself, who is certainly possessed of this divine evidence. You may form a charitable judgment or a prevailing hope; which seems to be the utmost you can warrantably claim with regard to others. And while you entertain this hope, we shall allow it to indicate the benevolence of your heart, but cannot admit it as a proof of your point, "That people may be full of faith and love, yet have no idea of Christ's righteousness." We would also caution you to take heed, lest, through an immoderate fondness for increasing the number of your converts, you are led to deceive yourself and others; registering those as real believers, whom the Lord hath not registered. By this means, you may be confirmed in your unscriptural notion, that the righteous fall away and the faithful apostatize: whereas, they who fall away were righteous only in appearance, and they who apostatize were no otherwise than professionally faithful. What you see drop from the sky is not a star, but a meteor only.

Faith is the hand which receives all that is laid up in Christ. Aspasio expresses himself thus: "Christ is a storehouse of all good." Whatever is necessary to remove our guilt, whatever is expedient for renewing our nature, whatever is proper to fit us for the eternal fruition of God—all this is laid up in Christ; and all this is received by faith, for our application, use, and enjoyment. To this Mr. Wesley subjoins a word of objection, but not in due season. Aspasio is displaying the efficacy of faith; Mr. Wesley's argument is levelled against the indefectibility of faith. However, as it is your favourite objection, it shall not be treated as an intruder. "If we make shipwreck of the faith, how much soever is laid up in Christ, from that hour we receive nothing."

Have you never heard of the answer which the Spartan states returned to an insolent and barbarous embassy from Philip of Macedon? You may read it in the book you are censuring, and may receive it as a reply to this and your other surmises of this nature. It was all comprised in that single monosyllable *if*. A mere professor may make shipwreck of the doctrine of faith; a true believer does not make shipwreck of the grace of faith: No, nor ever will, unless Christ's intercession be made of none effect, "I have prayed, that such faith fail not."

Aspasio, describing the dreadful nature of the command given to Abraham, says, "Thy hands must lift the deadly weapon; thy hands must point it to the beloved breast; thy own hands must urge its way through the gushing veins and the shivering flesh, till it be plunged in the throbbing heart."—"Are not these descriptions far too strong?" This is submitted to the judgment of the reader. I would only observe, that the more strongly the horrors of the tremendous deed are represented, the more striking will the difficulty of the duty appear; consequently, the more efficacious and triumphant the power of faith. "May not these descriptions occasion unprofitable reasonings in many readers?" What unprofitable reasonings may be occasioned, I do not pretend to guess; but the just and natural reflection arising from the consideration of such a circumstance is, "What has faith wrought? It purifies and exalts the affections; it invigorates and ennobles the soul; makes it bold to undertake, and strong to execute, every great and heroic work: I see, therefore, it is not in vain that the Scripture so frequently inculcates faith, lays so remarkable a stress upon faith, and places it in the very front of all Christian duties." "This is the victory that overcometh the world," overcometh self, overcometh all things.

"How could he (Abraham) justify it to the world? Not at all." True; not to the unbelieving world. They will argue, as Mr. Wesley on another occasion: "What! stab his son, his best beloved, his only son, to the heart? Could the God of goodness command such a piece of barbarity? Impossible! I could sooner be a Deist, yea, an Athiest, than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the very being of a God, than to make him an almighty tyrant." But to the believing world, who fear the Lord, and hearken to the voice of his servants, Abraham's conduct will never stand in need of a vindication. By them it will be highly extolled, and greatly admired. It will be an undeniable demonstration of the reality and sincerity of his faith, of its very superior elevation and invincible strength.

"You take the direct and certain way to obtain substantial comfort. The righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, after which you inquire, about which you are solicitous, is a never-failing source of consolation." Thus Aspasio writes to Theron. "What! without the atonement?" cries Mr. Wes-

ley. To which he adds, in a following paragraph, "So the death of Christ is not so much as named." This puts me in mind of an objection, no very formidable one, made against that introductory exhortation to the Common Prayer, "Dearly beloved brethren." So, then, said a candid examiner, *women* have no part in your worship; they are not so much as named. But I forbear. If you are not ashamed of repeating, I am ashamed of refuting, so frequently refuting, such an empty cavil; and I believe the reader is tired with us both.

I have no great objection to your alteration of Aspasio's comment. Suppose we compromise matters, and consider the oil poured on Aaron's head, and emptying itself from Zechariah's olive-tree, as typical both of the merits and the Spirit of Christ; which, like light and heat in the sun, are indissolubly connected; or, to make use of a sacred illustration, are like the living creatures and the wheels in Ezekiel's vision: "When the living creatures went, the wheels went by them; when the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up." Whither soever the former were to go, the latter went also. For the sake of obliging Mr. Wesley, I call this a compromise. But if he can prevail on himself to read the paraphrase on the two passages without prepossession, he will find this association of senses anticipated by Aspasio.

"Has the law any demand?" says Aspasio: "It must go to Christ for satisfaction." From which you draw this injurious consequence, "Then I am not obliged to love my neighbour: Christ has satisfied the demand of the law for me." This objection has already received an answer.

I shall therefore content myself with shewing why I call your conclusion injurious; because, like the deaf adder, it stoppeth the ear against my own explication of my own phrase. A note is added, on purpose to limit its sense, and obviate your misrepresentation. This you totally disregard, and argue as if no such precaution was used. The note informs you, that the law, the commanding law, is satisfied with nothing less than perfect obedience; and the broken law insists upon condign punishment. Now, if it must not, for satisfaction to both these demands, go to Christ our divine husband, where will it obtain any such thing? Who is able to give it among all the children of Adam?

However, lest we offend, needlessly offend any reader, I promise, that in case the providence of God, and the favour of the public, call for a new edition, Aspasio shall alter his language. Thus the paragraph shall stand: "Does the law demand perfect purity of nature, and perfect obedience of life? It must go to him for satisfaction. Do we want grace, and glory, and every good gift? We may look to him for a supply; to him, in whom it hath pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell."

"For all his people." With this phrase Mr. Wesley is chagrined. This he will not suffer to pass without animadversion; though he must know, if prejudice has not blinded his understanding, that it is pure Scripture. Why does he not shew the same dissatisfaction with the angel that appeared unto Joseph, and with Zechariah, the Baptist's father? The former of whom says, "He shall save his people from their sins." The latter declares, "He shall give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins." Why does he not put the same question unto them, and draw the same inference upon them? "But what becomes of *all* other people?" Sometimes Mr. Wesley is so attached to the Scriptures, that nothing will please him but scriptural expressions. Here he is so wedded to self-opinion, that even scriptural expressions will not pass current, when they seem to thwart his own notions.

"For all his people."—From this expression, though used by a prophet, authorized by an angel, and to be found in many places of Scripture, Mr. Wesley deduces some very offensive and dreadful consequences; so dreadful, that he "would sooner be a Turk, a Deist, yea an Athiest, than he could believe them." My dear Sir, let me give you a word of friendly advice, before you turn Turk, or Deist, or Athiest: See that you first become an *honest* man. They will all disown you, if you go over to their party destitute of common honesty.

Methinks I hear you saying, with some emotion, What do you mean by this advice? or what relation has this to the subject of our present inquiry?—A pretty near relation. Out of zeal to demolish the doctrine of election, you scruple not to overleap the bounds of integrity and truth.—Mysterious still! I know not what you aim at.—Then be pleased to review a passage in your book on Original Sin; where you have thought proper to make a quotation from my Dialogues. It relates to that great doctrine of the gospel, Christ becoming the representative and federal head of sinners. Upon this occasion Aspasio says, "As Adam was a public person, and acted in the stead of all mankind, so Christ was a public person, and acted in behalf of all his people. As Adam was the first general representative of this kind, Christ was the second and last." Here you substitute the word *mankind* instead of *this kind*; and thereby lead the reader to suppose, that Aspasio considers our glorious Representative as standing in this capacity to the whole human race; than

which nothing can be more injurious to the sense of his words.

I at first thought it might possibly be the effect of inadvertency; but could a person of Mr. Wesley's discernment allow himself to nod over a passage, which he knew to be of a critical and controverted import? Perhaps it might be the printer's fault, an error of the press. I would willingly have admitted one of these extenuating circumstances, till I came to the bottom of the page; where, to my great astonishment, I found the following words, enclosed within the marks of the same quotation, and ascribed to Aspasio: "All these expressions demonstrate, that Adam (as well as Christ) was a representative of all mankind." Then I could no longer forbear crying out, "There is treachery, O Ahaziah!" A false quotation, not made only, but repeated, cannot be owing to negligence, but must proceed from design; and this, I should think, can never be defended, no, nor with a good grace excused, by Mr. Wesley's most devoted admirers. A studious alteration of our words, and an evident perversion of their meaning, are defensible by no arguments, are excusable on no occasion.

"Quite inexcusable this practice." And is not your language equally offensive? Is not your conclusion very precipitate, when you suppose Aspasio, though using the words of Scripture, yet representing God as "an almighty tyrant?" Surely you had better forbear such horrid and shocking expressions; especially as you cannot deny, that many passages in Scripture seem at least to countenance this obnoxious tenet; as you very well know, that many persons eminent for their learning, and exemplary in their lives, have written in defence of it, and bled for the confirmation of it;—as we have proofs more than a few, that you are far from being infallible in your judgment, yea, far from being invariable in your opinion—witness your former notions of matrimony—witness the character you formerly gave of the Moravian Brethren, and the esteem which you once had for the mystics and their writings. Considering yourself, therefore, it would better become you to be diffident on such a subject, and say, "That which I know not, Lord, teach thou me." And I imagine it can never become you, on any subject whatever, to break out into such language as ought not to be named among Christians; ought to have no place but in the bottomless pit. This is an admointion, which, while I suggest to you, Sir, I charge on myself.

The three following paragraphs relate to a doctrine, which you are fond to attack, and which Aspasio studiously declines. It constitutes no part of his plan. It forms not so much as the outworks. Be it demolished or established, the grand privilege, and the invaluable blessing of justification through the righteousness of Christ, remains unshaken, stands immovable. In applying this to ourselves, we proceed neither upon universal nor particular redemption, but only upon the divine grant and the divine invitation. We assure ourselves of present and eternal salvation through this perfect righteousness, not as persons elected, but as persons warranted by the word of God, bound by the command of God, and led by the Spirit of God. Therefore, while you are encountering this doctrine, I would be looking unto Jesus; be viewing the glory of my Lord; contemplating his perfection, and my own completeness in him.

If I divert, for a moment, from this delightful object, it is only to touch upon one of your remonstrances. You suppose, that according to the Calvinistic scheme, God denies what is necessary for present comfort and final acceptance, even to some who sincerely seek it. This is contrary to Scripture, and no less contrary to the doctrine of your opponents. However, to confirm yourself in this misapprehension, you ask, "Would you deny it to any, if it were in your power?" To shew the error of such a sentiment, and the fallacy of such reasoning, I shall just mention a recent melancholy fact.

News is brought, that the Prince George man-of-war, Admiral Broderick's own ship, is burnt, and sunk, and above four hundred souls that were on board are perished. Six hours the flames prevailed, while every means was used to preserve the ship and crew; but all to no purpose. In the mean time, shrieks and groans, bitter moanings, and piercing cries, were heard from every quarter. Raving, despair, and even madness, presented themselves in a variety of forms. Some ran to and fro, distracted with terror, not knowing what they did, or what they should do. Others jumped overboard from all parts; and to avoid the pursuit of one death, leaped into the jaws of another. Those unhappy wretches who could not swim were obliged to remain upon the wreck, though flakes of fire fell on their bodies. Soon the masts went away, and killed numbers. Those who were not killed, thought themselves happy to get upon the floating timber. Nor yet were they safe; for, the fire having communicated itself to the guns, which were loaded and shotted, they swept multitudes from this their last refuge. What say you, Sir, to this dismal narrative? Does not your heart bleed? Would you have stood by, and denied your succour, if it had been in your power to help? Would not you have done your utmost to prevent the fatal catastrophe? Yet the Lord saw

this extreme distress. He heard their piteous moans. He was able to save them, yet withdrew his assistance. Now, because you would gladly have succoured them if you could, and God Almighty could, but would not send them aid; will you therefore conclude, that you are above your Lord, and that your loving-kindness is greater than his? I will not offer to charge any such consequence upon you. I am persuaded you abhor the thought.

"The wedding garment here means holiness." Thus saying, you depart from Bengelius, for whom you profess so high a regard. Bengelius overlooks your exposition, and gives his vote for Aspasio's *hæc vestis est justitia Christi.* Awed by so venerable an authority, you have not ventured to exclude this sense from your comment. You have admitted it into your Expository Notes, yet will not allow Aspasio to admit it into his discourse with Theron. These are your words; "The wedding garment, that is, the righteousness of Christ, first imputed, then implanted." Which, by the way, is not perfectly accurate, nor according to the language of the gospel. The gospel distinguishes between the righteousness of Christ, and our own righteousness. That which is *imputed,* goes under the former, that which is *implanted,* under the latter denomination.

However, let us consider the circumstances of the case, and we shall find, that our common favourite Bengelius has probability and reason on his side. The guests mentioned in this parable consisted of poor outcasts, collected from the highways and hedges. Now we cannot suppose, that people in such a condition, and coming at a minute's warning, should be able to furnish themselves with a dress of their own suitable to the grand occasion. Here then personal holiness is put out of the question. But we must suppose, (which is conformable to the eastern customs), that the king had ordered his servants to accommodate each guest from the royal wardrobe; that each might have this additional token of his sovereign's favour, and all might be arrayed in a manner becoming the magnificent solemnity. This exactly corresponds with the nature of imputed righteousness.

Farther, the banquet, you will readily allow, is the pardon of sin, and peace with God, the divine Spirit, and eternal life. From all which uniting their happy influence, true holiness springs. To say that holiness is the wedding garment necessary for our introduction to this banquet, savours of absurdity; like saying, holiness is necessary to holiness. It is absolute legality; for it makes the performance of all duties the way to the Redeemer's grace: It implies an absolute impossibility; the sinner that can exercise holiness before he receives Christ and his Spirit, is like the dead man who arises and walks before he is restored to life.

The grand end which God proposes in all his favourable dispensations to fallen man, is to demonstrate the sovereignty of his grace. "Not so." Do you mean, Aspasio has not spoken so? that you have misrepresented his sense? have clipped and disfigured his coin? If this is your meaning, you speak an undoubted truth. His words are, "To demonstrate the sovereignty, and advance the glory of his grace." Why did you suppress the last clause? Was you afraid it would supply the deficiency which you charge on Aspasio, and express the idea of imparting happiness? If so, your fears are just enough. Why did you not take into consideration those texts of Scripture with which Aspasio confirms his tenet? Ought you not to have overthrown those testimonies before you deny his doctrine? otherwise you oppose your own authority to the decision of a prophet and of an apostle.

"Not so," proceeds Mr. Wesley: "To impart happiness to his creatures is his grand end herein." The devout prophet speaks otherwise, "I have created him for my glory." The wise moralist speaks otherwise, "The Lord hath created all things for himself." The holy apostle speaks otherwise, "To the praise of the glory of his grace." From which, and from innumerable other places of Scripture; from the reason of the thing, and from the very nature of the Supreme Being, it appears, that the primary leading aim, in all God's works, and all God's dispensations, is his own glory. The felicity of his creatures, though not separated from it, though evidently included in it, is still subordinate to it. And surely it is very meet and right so to be. Can there be a nobler end, or more worthy of an infinitely wise agent, than the display of those sublime perfections, for which, and through which, and to which, are all things? Could God make any other being the principal end of his acting, he would undeify himself, and give his glory to another. Does any creature imagine his own happiness to be a higher end than the divine glory? He thereby usurps the Godhead, making, as far as in him lies, Jehovah the subject and himself the sovereign.

"Barely to demonstrate his sovereignty." The word *barely* is not used by Aspasio. But it gives another specimen of Mr. Wesley's integrity in stating truth, and doing justice to his opponents. It is not said, the sole, but the grand end. Therefore, would any unprejudiced person conclude, there must be some other, though inferior purpose. "No," says Mr. Wesley; "hence I infer,

that it was barely to demonstrate his sovereignty." Do you so? Then your inference is of a piece with the quotation—that as valid as this is faithful.

"Barely to demonstrate his sovereignty," is a principle of action fit for the great Turk, not for the most high God. Such a fraudulent quotation I have not often seen, no, not in the critical reviewers. To mark the sentence with commas, and thereby assign it to Aspasio, is really a masterpiece, especially after you have thrust in the word *barely*, and lopped off the word *grace*. You have treated the passage worse than Nahash, king of Ammon, treated the ambassadors of David. They were ashamed to show their faces, under such marks of abuse and disgrace. I am no less ashamed of the clause, as you have mangled and disguised it: But restore it to its true state; let it wear its native aspect; then see what is blamable, or what is offensive in it.

The grand end which God proposes in all his favourable dispensations to fallen man, is, to demonstrate the sovereignty, and advance the glory of his grace. The *glory*, that it may appear rich, unbounded, and infinitely surpassing all we can wish or imagine. The *sovereignty*, that it may appear free, undeserved, and absolutely independent on any goodness in the creature. That sinners may receive it, without waiting for any amiable qualities, or performing any recommending conditions. That, when received, it may stop the mouth of boasting, may cut off all pretensions of personal merit, and teach every tongue to say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise."

And should we not greatly rejoice in this method of the divine procedure? that the Lord orders all things relating to our salvation, "to the praise of the glory of his grace?" Can any thing be more honourable to our nature, or more transporting to our souls? Can any thing so firmly establish, or so highly exalt our hopes? Angels, principalities, and powers! all intellectual creatures, in all ages and all worlds, are to look unto *us*; unto us men they are to look, for the most consummate display of God's grace. Our exaltation and felicity are to be the mirror, in which the wondering cherubim and seraphim will contemplate the superabundant goodness of Jehovah. How great must that honour and that happiness be, which are intended to exhibit the fullest, fairest, brightest view of God's infinitely glorious grace! How sure must that honour and happiness be, which are so intimately connected with the glory of the omnipotent King! which can no more fail of their accomplishment, than the amiable attributes of the Godhead can be stripped of their lustre.

God is a boundless ocean of good. "Nay, that ocean is far from boundless, if it wholly passes by nine-tenths of mankind." What! if it had passed by *all* mankind, as it certainly did all the devils, would it have been the less boundless on that account? I wish, methinks, you would study the evil of sin more, and not so frequently obtrude upon us a subject, of which neither you nor I seem to be masters. Then we should neither have hard thoughts of God, nor high thoughts of ourselves.

"You cannot suppose God would enter into a fresh covenant with an insolvent and attainted creature."* These are Aspasio's words. To which Mr. Wesley replies, "I both suppose and know he did." *Satis cum imperio.* Then be pleased, Sir, to show us where the Almighty entered into a covenant with fallen Adam; for of him we are speaking. Produce the original deed; at least favour us with a transcript; and we will take your word when it is backed with such authority.

God made the new covenant with Christ, and charged him with the performance of the conditions. "I deny both these assertions." And what is your reason for this denial? Is it deduced from Scripture? Nothing like it. Is it founded on the nature of things? No attempt is made towards it. But you yourself affirm, that these "assertions are the central point wherein Calvinism and Antinomianism meet." Or, in other words, they tend to establish what you dislike, and to overthrow what you have taught. This is all the cause which you assign for your denial. I cannot but wish, that, whenever I engage in controversy, my adversary may be furnished with such arguments.

You deny the assertions now; but do not you forget what you allowed and maintained a little while ago, when you yourself, adopting a passage from Theron and Aspasio, called Christ "a federal head?" Pray, what is a federal head, but a person with whom a covenant is made in behalf of himself and others? Here your judgment was according to truth. Fit, perfectly fit for such an office is Christ; whose life is all his own, who is able to merit, and mighty to save. But absolutely unfit for it, utterly incapable of it, is fallen man; whose life is forfeited, whose moral ability is lost, and whose very nature is enmity against God.

"I have made a covenant with my chosen; namely, with David my servant." True; with David as in Christ, or rather as a type of Christ. You cannot be ignorant that Christ is called by this very name.

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* *Insolvent* and *attainted* creature, Mr. Wesley has changed into "a rebel."

The Lord, speaking by the prophet Ezekiel, says, "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David." Was David beloved?* Christ was incomparably more so. Was David God's chosen one? Christ was so likewise, and in a far sublimer sense, and for infinitely more momentous purposes. Was David God's servant? So was Jesus Christ; and by his services brought unspeakably greater honour to the Lord his God, than all kings on earth, and all the princes of heaven. Several parts of this psalm must be applied to Christ; and if several of them must, the principal of them may and ought.

"He will wash you in the blood which atones, and invest you with the righteousness which justifies."—"Why should you thus put asunder continually what God has joined?" How difficult is it to please Mr. Wesley! When Aspasio spoke of Christ's righteousness, without particularly mentioning his blood, you said it was better to mention them both together; it behoved us never to name the former without the latter. Yet here, when both are mentioned, and the particular use of each is specified, you complain of his putting asunder what God has joined; which, in truth, is no disjoining, but an illustration and amplification of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

God himself, at the last day, pronounces them righteous, because they are interested in the obedience of the Redeemer. "Rather, because they are washed in his blood, and renewed by his Spirit." God will justify them in the last day, in the very same way whereby he justified them in this world; namely, because they are interested in the obedience of the Redeemer. As for their renewal by the Spirit, though it will then be perfect, yet it will be no cause of their acquittal, but the privilege of those who are acquitted. A proof of this, at least an attestation of it, the world has received from your own pen: "for neither our own inward nor outward righteousness is the ground of our justification. Holiness of heart, as well as holiness of life, is not the cause, but the effect of it. The sole cause of our acceptance with God is the righteousness and death of Christ, who fulfilled God's law, and died in our stead." Excellent sentiments! In these may I ever abide. To these may you also return.

THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT *of the Doctrine of a Sinner's Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, taken from a little Piece, entitled,* A DISCOURSE UPON JUSTIFICATION, *printed at London in* 1740, *which Mr. Hervey highly esteemed, and warmly recommended.—Being no improper Supplement to the Doctrine contained in* THERON *and* ASPASIO, *and* ASPASIO VINDICATED.

1. SINCE the justification of a sinner is by the complete obedience of Jesus Christ imputed to him, and received by faith unto such great and glorious effects; we may hence learn what reason we have to admire that infinity of wisdom which shines forth in the contrivance of this wonder; and to adore that immensity of grace which is displayed in this glorious provision made for the favourites of heaven! When the beloved John was favoured with a visionary sight of the woman-bride, the Lamb's wife, as clothed with Christ the sun of righteousness, and shining forth in the resplendent rays of her bridegroom's glory, he says he saw *a wonder*, Rev. xii. 1. And a wonder it is indeed; so great, that it calls for the admiration both of men and of angels. This is one of those glorious things that by the gospel is revealed unto us, "which the angels desire to look into." 1 Pet. i. 12. And while sinful men have the forgiveness of their sins through Christ's blood, and the acceptation of their persons in him, "the beloved, according to the riches of" the Father's grace, "wherein he has abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence," it becomes them to admire and adore the same, and to cry out with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Eph. i. 6, 7, 8; Rom. xi. 33. That the obedience of the Son of God should be made our righteousness, the righteousness of a sinner, to his complete justification before God, is such a project of infinite wisdom, such a provision of infinite grace, for the salvation of God's chosen, that every way becomes the great Jehovah, and will be the endless wonder of men and angels.

2. Since the justification of a sinner is wholly by the righteousness of another, which is a way of life above nature, above being discovered by nature's light, and seen by nature's eye, or discovered by the light of the law, and discerned by natural reason; we may learn hence what an absolute necessity there is of a supernatural revelation thereof, in order to the soul's receiving of this righteousness, and so of the grace of

* *Beloved.*—This is the meaning of David's name.

justification thereby. This is one of those things that God has prepared for his people, that never entered into the heart of the natural man to conceive of, which he has neither known nor can understand; and therefore deems it foolishness, or a foolish thing, for any to think they shall be justified by the obedience of Christ, exclusive of all their own works. But the people of God "receive not the spirit which is of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that they may know the things which are freely given them of God." And this, of "the free gift of righteousness, is revealed unto" them by his Spirit, though it is one of those "deep things of God" which are hidden from the natural man; which are impossible to be known by any but heaven-born souls, under a special revelation from above. 1 Cor. ii. 9, &c.

3. Since the justification of a sinner is by the obedience of Christ alone, we may hence learn how greatly important the knowledge thereof is. The knowledge of this righteousness must needs be of the utmost importance, since ignorance of it, and non-submission to it, (which always go together,) leave the soul in an unrighteous state, Rom. ix. 31, 32, and x. 3. All those miserable souls who are "ignorant" of Christ's "righteousness, go about to establish their own righteousness;" and, alas! "the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself upon it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it," Isa. xxviii. 20. There is no true rest for a sinner from the works of his own hands; no covering for a naked soul from the fig-leaves of its own righteousness, though ever so artfully sewed together. Our Lord told his disciples, that except their "righteousness did exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matth. v. 20. These Scribes and Pharisees were the zealous, the religious men of that age; the strict observers of Moses' law, that trusted in themselves that they were righteous by their own legal performances, and thought to get to heaven by means thereof. But our Lord declares, that none shall ever come there but those who have a better righteousness, a righteousness that exceeds a Pharisaical righteousness, *i. e.* such a righteousness that every way answers to all the extensive requirements of the law, in heart, lip, and life; and this is no other than the righteousness of Christ imputed to poor sinners, or made theirs by imputation: in which, being completely justified according to law and justice, they shall, as righteous persons, be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, or into the glory of the heavenly state; while all those who trust in their own righteousness, and think they have done many wonderful works which they dare plead for acceptance with God, shall be sent away from Christ into eternal misery, with a "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Matth. vii. 22.

And as our Lord, in this his sermon upon the Mount, had been expounding the law of God in its spirituality, as extending to the heart as well as life; and asserting the necessity of keeping the commandments in the same extensive manner that the law required, in order to make a person righteous; so, in the conclusion thereof, he says, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock," ver. 24, 25. These sayings of our Lord contain the substance of the moral law; and the doing of them unto righteousness before God, is by believing; as faith lays hold on Christ, who has obeyed the law perfectly, as the representative of his people; on which account they may be said to have done, or fulfilled the law in him, his obedience being imputed unto them for their complete justification before God, as the surety's payment among men is accounted to the debtor, and is the same in the eye of the law, and as effectual for his full discharge, as if he himself had paid the debt. And he that thus doth the law, or these sayings of Christ, he likens him "unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock." It is a piece of natural wisdom, to lay a good foundation for a stately structure; and the most firm that any house can be built on, is that of a rock. And he that is spiritually "wise, wise unto salvation," lays the whole stress of it, and builds all his hope of life, upon Christ, the Rock of ages: in which it appears, that he is wise indeed; for as, in nature, a house that is built upon a rock will stand the storm, so the soul that is built upon Christ shall never be removed: "The rain may descend, the floods come, and the winds beat;" afflictions, temptations, and trials of all kinds, may beat vehemently against that soul, but shall never distroy its salvation, nor make it ashamed of its hope. No; Christ, the rock of immutability, will hold it unshaken, in a state of salvation, through life, through death, at judgment, and for ever. Such a soul stands as immovable, in the grace of justification and life, as the rock itself on which it is founded. "Because I live," saith our Lord, "ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. Christ's life is the life of that soul, that depends upon him alone for all its justification and eternal salvation. And therefore the wisdom of faith is great indeed, in that it fore-

sees the storm, and thus provides against it.

"But he," saith our Lord, "that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not," (*i. e.* that heareth the law's requirements, and endeavours to obey the same for righteousness before God, and so doth them not, because his obedience cannot come up to that perfection which the law requires), "shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it," ver. 26, 27. O the folly of that poor sinner, who lays the stress of his salvation, and builds his hope of life, upon his own righteousness! For this sandy foundation cannot endure the storms of divine wrath which shall be revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men, nor secure the soul from being driven away by the tempest of God's anger, and the floods of his indignation, into the abyss of eternal misery. The house fell that was thus built upon the sand, "and great was the fall of it!" Oh! what a miserable disappointment will it be to that soul, that "goes down to the chambers of eternal death with this lie of his own righteousness in his right hand;" from which he had all along hoped for eternal life! when this "way that seemed right to him in his own eyes," as if it would lead him to everlasting life, by his depending thereon, shall end in eternal death! "The hope of the hypocrite," or of him that trusts in himself that he is righteous by his own external performances, when yet his heart is far from that conformity to God which the law requires, "shall perish at the giving up of the ghost. His hope," *i. e.* his salvation hoped for, "shall then be cut off. He shall lean upon his house," *i. e.* his own righteousness, which he had raised up in his imagination, to shelter him from the storm of divine vengeance, "but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure," Job viii. 13—15. No; this house of his shall be as soon destroyed by the storm of God's indignation, as a spider's web is swept down by the besom that comes against it; and the miserable soul, that trusted herein, shall be driven away into eternal perdition. Thus, an error in the foundation will prove fatal to the building; and therefore the knowledge of Christ, as the alone way of a sinner's justification and life, must needs be of the highest importance; since no other refuge can stand the storm but Christ, as the Lord our Righteousness; this glorious hiding-place, which God has prepared for poor sinners, whether they may run, and be for ever safe. And as for those who live and die in ignorance of, and non-submission to, the righteousness of Christ, they will certainly die in their sins, and perish for ever. They will all be found filthy at the day of judgment, that have not been enabled to believe in Christ's blood, for cleansing from all sin; they will all be found unjust at that awful day, that have not believed the Redeemer's righteousness, for their justification before God; and so must remain for ever: For concerning them it will then be said, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is unjust, let him be unjust still;" *i. e.* let him abide so to an endless eternity. But,

4. Since there is but one way for a sinner to be justified before God, and that is by the obedience of Christ alone, this informs us what great folly those persons are guilty of, who press poor sinners to obey the law, to make themselves righteous in the sight of God, when there is no law given that can give life unto them; and how dangerous it is for souls to sit under such a ministry, that naturally misleads them; since, while "the blind leads the blind, both fall into the ditch." "If there had been a law given that could have given life," says the apostle, "verily righteousness should have been by the law," Gal. iii. 21. But as there is no law given that can give life to a sinner, it is a vain foolish thing to press such a soul to get a righteousness by his own performances, which was never appointed of God, nor can be attained by man. No; "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise (of life) by faith of Jesus Christ (as a sinner's righteousness) might be given to them that believe," ver. 22. And those who receive it not in this way shall never attain it in any other, but must go without it for ever. "The labour of the foolish," says the wise man, "wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city." Eccl. x. 15. A man may labour, all his days, to make himself righteous before God by his own performances, and to make his peace with him by his legal repentance and humiliation for sin; and yet lose all his labour at last, and so weary himself in vain, being never able to reach that city, that eternal rest, which God has prepared for his people; because he knoweth not Christ, the only way that leads thither, and so walks not by faith in him as such. All men are by nature ignorant of Christ's righteousness, as it is God's way of justifying and saving a sinner; and it is dangerous for souls to sit under such a ministry, that presseth doing, and persuades them their safety lies there, instead of believing. "For how shall they believe," says the apostle, "in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Rom. x. 14, 15. How shall poor souls believe in

Christ for justification, when they have never heard of his righteousness, which is the proper object of faith? And how shall they hear without a preacher of that gospel that declares it? And how shall they preach the gospel to others, who have never seen that salvation it reveals for sinners, by the righteousness of Christ, themselves? How shall they declare the glory and efficacy thereof to others, that have never seen nor experienced it themselves? And how does it appear that they are sent by Christ to preach the gospel, who neither know nor proclaim his righteousness for the justification of a sinner, which is such a main doctrine thereof? Have we not reason to fear, that many of those who are called ministers of the gospel, are rather preachers of Moses than of Christ? and that their ministry rather tends to lead souls to the bondage and death of the law, than to the liberty and life of the gospel? But "how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things!" That publish that peace with God, which was made for sinners alone by the blood of Christ's cross, and is possessed only by faith in him! That proclaim the glad tidings of those good things, which God has prepared to be enjoyed by sinners, through the justifying righteousness of his Son! And how great is the privilege of those souls who sit under a gospel ministry; since this is the means appointed of God to work faith in them, and to bring salvation to them! Once more,

5. Since the justification of a sinner is by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and received by faith alone, we may hence learn, how great the obligation of the justified ones is, to live to the glory of that grace which has so freely and fully justified them, in and through Christ, unto eternal life, by him! When the apostle had asserted the justification and salvation of God's people, both Jews and Gentiles, to be wholly of his free mercy, in and through Christ, Rom. xi. 32, and admired the riches of his wisdom, which was so brightly displayed in the dispensations of his mercy towards them, ver. 33, he thus concludes his discourse, ver. 36, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, amen." It is as if he should say, Since all things, relating to the justification and salvation of God's people, are of him, and through him, it is meet that the glory of all should, by them, be given to him. And therefore, when he applies this doctrine of God's free mercy in Christ, to them who had obtained it, he thus addresses them, chap. xii. 1. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." I beseech (you), says he, you that have obtained mercy, (therefore) or since it is God's design to glorify his mercy in the salvation of sinners, that you give him the glory of it; (by the mercies of God,) those mercies of God which you are partakers of, in the forgiveness of all your sins, and in the justification of your persons, ("that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,") that ye continually offer up yourselves, as a whole burnt-offering, in the flames of love, unto him that hath loved you, in all holy and acceptable obedience, to the glory of that God who has thus had mercy upon you; ("which is your reasonable service.") For it is a most reasonable thing, or a thing for which there is the highest reason, that you should ever serve the Lord, to the glory of that grace by which you are freely justified, and shall be eternally glorified. And thus the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 9. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood," who are washed from all your sins in Christ's blood, and clothed with his righteousness, "an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." And, "You know (says the apostle Paul) how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, (*i. e.* of you justified, saved ones), that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12. And, in short, as it was God's design to get himself glory in the justification of sinners, by the righteousness of Jesus Christ; so the display thereof, throughout the whole gospel, lays them under the highest obligation to live to his praise. Does God the Father impute the obedience of his Son to poor sinners? Did God the Son obey in life and in death for them? and does God the Spirit reveal and apply this righteousness to them; and enable them to receive the same, as a free gift of grace, unto their eternal life in glory? What thanks, what praise, is due to God, in each of his glorious persons, for this abundant grace! And let the language of the justified ones, in heart, lip, and life, in all kind of holy obedience, both now and always be, "Thanks be unto God for the grace of justification! for this his unspeakable gift!" 2 Cor. ix. 15. Amen! Hallelujah!

DEFENCE

OF

THERON AND ASPASIO,

AGAINST

OBJECTIONS CONTAINED IN A LATE TREATISE, ENTITLED

LETTERS ON THERON AND ASPASIO

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A SERIES of LETTERS from MR. HERVEY to the Author, authenticating this DEFENCE with his entire approbation, and manifesting it to be the only one that can be presented to the Public with that authority.

PREFACE.

THE intention of prefixing Mr. Hervey's letters to this reply, is in fact to recommend it to the attention of the public, as such a farther explication and defence of Theron and Aspasio as was quite agreeable to his own judgment; such as, in substance, would have appeared in the world in his elegant and entertaining manner of address, had it pleased the Sovereign Disposer of all events to have continued him in life, and such as the present situation of his writings require.

It has been already remarked, in the public intimation of printing Mr. Hervey's letters, that "when writers of a distinguished superiority have gained our admiration and applause, we are fond of penetrating into their more retired apartments, and associating with them in the sequestered walks of private life." A curiosity of this nature cannot be more usefully gratified; we cannot be ushered into Mr. Hervey's company to better purpose, than to hear him declare what he himself counted most valuable in all his writings; that which was his main design, and to which he would have his readers continually advert; those sentiments which, as he expresses it in one of his letters, "I wish to have written on my heart; such as I wish to speak and teach while I live; and in my writings, if my writings survive me, to testify when I am dead;" more especially, if what he so esteemed is the doctrine of our Lord and his apostles; otherwise Mr. Hervey's esteem will be but of small account.

It seems the more necessary that he should thus be made to speak for himself, since some who have distinguished themselves as his peculiar friends, and as very angry with Mr. Sandeman in his behalf, are at the same time very likely to be no friends to his Defence. The reason is, whatever may be the motive for their professed regard, they have, for many years past, and do unto this day, manifest great ignorance,

if not great enmity, in respect of the principles which formed and influenced Mr. Hervey's faith and practice, and on which he ventured his eternal concerns: stigmatizing, or, I should rather say, honouring them with the same kind of reproaches as the ancient opposers of Christianity cast upon our Lord and his disciples. Perhaps it may awaken the attention of some to inquire of the unerring oracles, *What is truth?* when they find by these letters, that there is no dependence to be placed elsewhere; and that those in whom they have trusted as spiritual guides, applaud or censure with very little judgment, or with a worse design.

After all, I am not so sanguine in my expectation, as to think that by this, or any other method, the despised truth of the gospel will prevail with many, against the stream of the reputed devout and highly esteemed of this world. We must remember the treatment which our Lord and his disciples met with; and as the world is not better now than it was in those days, we have little reason to expect better success.

Mr. Hervey began to find he had been in a mistake in this respect, and would have publicly acknowledged as much, had he lived but a few months longer. He began to be acquainted with that true grace of God, which is contrary to the course of this world, in its devoutest form, for upwards of twelve years before our correspondence commenced. He was willing to recommend it to their consideration, and, if possible, make it appear lovely to their view. He dressed it up with all the beauties of eloquence, and all the winning arts of persuasion. He concealed whatever he thought might give his readers disgust, and even entreated his friend to conceal their correspondence for the present, lest the power of prejudice (raised by his professed friends) should prevent them from looking into his books; and all this in hopes to prevail, and give the despised gospel of Jesus a recommending appearance in their eyes. But, alas! he died before he had accomplished this design; and perhaps, had he lived to the age of Methuselah, he would never have brought it to pass. So that we can only look upon this as his fervent desire, that the important truth in which he had found all he wanted, should be as great a blessing to others, as it had been to him. He gained a return of compliment for his favourable sentiments and kind behaviour, but it was in vain for him to expect to prevail any farther.

His notion was, as he himself expresses it, that "the taste of the present age is somewhat like the humour of children; their milk must be sugared, their wine spiced, and their necessary food garnished with flowers, and enriched with sweetmeats." His desire that what he called his principal point might be, if possible, made thus palatable, engaged him in several correspondences, suited to the embellishment of his works: his superiority as a writer caused many to covet an acquaintance and friendship with him; and his tender and complaisant behaviour, even to those who differed, gave some of them hopes of prevailing with him, or by him, to advance their own various and opposite sentiments. Filled with these hopes, their behaviour towards him was accordingly respectful; which, together with his retired situation in life, prevented him, in a great measure, from discerning their enmity to his principles. Taking it for granted they meant as they spake, he judged them aiming to promote the same important cause. Had this been fact, they would have still merited the regard he paid them; their professed zeal would have been commendable, had it been subservient to the true grace of God for which he pleaded; but bears as different an aspect when their enmity and opposition thereto is discovered, even as Paul's most hardened wickedness was to the piety and zeal of his Pharisaic state.

No sooner was he dead, than consultations were on foot, tending to bury his principles as well as him. His private letters were publicly advertised for, in order to be printed; which, by the use made of them, seems not done with any design to establish the truths he contended for, but to pick out, if possible, something to their disadvantage; and, what is still more unworthy, to establish their own characters in such attempts, on the encomiums he had at one time or other bestowed on them, for want of seeing them properly; for want of knowing that their ruling principle was a fixed enmity to that gospel which was his sole delight. Besides this, several reports were spread, detrimental to the important truth he had so contended for: and, knowing that all and every one of them could be fully disproved by Mr. Hervey's own handwriting, I counted it my duty to print the defence, and to publish the letters to the author, to authenticate it with Mr. Hervey's approbation; though I was apprehensive, at the same time, it might carry the appearance of ostentation, to such as did not know what was in hand, and so could not be sensible that the support of the important truth which shines through all his works depended, in some measure, on the publication of these letters.

Notwithstanding all this, the persons concerned in the publication of two volumes, under the title of "The Letters of the late Rev. Mr. James Hervey," have exerted themselves, with uncommon boldness, in

disfiguring his principles; and, at the same time, introduce their own. This is evidently manifest from several notes annexed to these letters.* In these volumes they have insinuated, that the author of the Defence of Theron and Aspasio was "on the Antinomian side of the question, and that Mr. Hervey by no means approved of his sentiments." Upon this there immediately appeared in the Gazetteer, Aug. 22, and London Chronicle, Aug. 26, a letter to the editor and publisher of these volumes, signifying the shocking appearance of slander and detraction, in volumes under the name of a man so averse to such proceedings; and proving, from Mr. Hervey's own words, the most apparent falsehood in their assertions; there being no letter in the whole two volumes so expressive of sameness of sentiment, as the letters to the author of the Defence of Theron and Aspasio, and concluding with these words: "The secret stabs that are given to characters, by modern pretenders to piety, would make a court of justice blush. And I am persuaded the real friends to Mr. Hervey's memory, or writings, will not be pleased to find his name made subservient to such base purposes."—The proceedings are a little more open in the Gentleman's Magazine for August; where we are told, that Mr. Hervey himself "is by no means free of the charge of stretching the principles of Calvin into Antinomianism." It is very evident Mr. Hervey concerned himself with no Calvinistical or Arminian disputes. In one of his letters, speaking of Mr. Wesley's conduct, he says, "I am sometimes apprehensive that he would draw me into a dispute about particular redemption. I know he can say startling and horrid things on this subject; and this, perhaps, might be the most effectual method to prejudice people against my principal point."

As to the charge of Antinomianism, unless the particular errors are pointed out, (which may as well be done without the assistance of reproachful names,) it is no more than a very vague uncertain sound, made use of by some leaders in the various classes of religious people as a political bugbear, whereby they disguise and disfigure the party they intend to reproach. It is a term not confined to any dictionary interpretation, but admits of a variety of definitions, according to the various sentiments of the persons who use it, from the most professed preachers of Christ, down to the monthly reviewers, who esteem no better of any that concern themselves with the name of Jesus, farther than what becomes a decent complaisance to the profession of their country. These gentlemen can read the Bible as well as these volumes, "without the least intellectual improvement" in the doctrine of Christ; and can also give a solid reason for it, viz. that they have no taste for this kind of reading—it is very disagreeable to them. They judge, "that one virtuous design promoted, one good action done, or one bad habit subdued, is worth more than all such trifling considerations" as the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Scripture language concerning salvation only by Christ, must be Antinomianism in their esteem. They expect to be saved in doing well; and the Scripture assures them, that "if they do well, they shall be accepted." Our Saviour declares, he never came to interrupt such people in their good intentions; but to save the lost and worthless, such as ought to perish according to every rule of equity; and the real gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ will ever prove "foolishness," a "stone of stumbling," and "rock of offence," to any but these sort of people.

Any one who has read the letters on Theron and Aspasio, or ever seen Mr. Hervey's sentiments of that author, will easily perceive that a reply to that performance was absolutely necessary, or else, as he observes in one of his letters, "what is not confuted by argument, is confirmed by silence." It was also necessary, if possible, that this defence should be by himself, or by his approbation, and also that the public should be ascertained of this, that so it may be considered as a proper and necessary supplement to his volumes. As these particulars can be so plainly discovered by the letters prefixed, it is well that Mr. Hervey was so open in his declarations.

As to our debate with Mr. Sandeman, it seems to stand as follows:—

The turning point from despair to good hope, he observes, is the hinge of the controversy; and this point is, with Mr. Sandeman, the finished work of Christ, as it is fully sufficient to vindicate the divine justice in saving the most guilty. All the hope he has by this, is represented by the hope a man has from hearing of the plentiful importation of corn in the time of famine, while it yet remains a hazard whether he shall ever obtain any; and his expectation to obtain, is by labouring and painful desire and fear till crowned with enjoyment.

Aspasio's turning-point is the finished work of Christ revealed in the gracious declarations of the gospel, not only as supporting the divine justice in saving the most guilty, but also as the sufficient object of the sinner's immediate trust and confidence, agreeably to the repeated divine assurances that such shall not be confounded or disappointed. And the works and labour of love

* All these notes are thrown out of this edition of our Author's Works.

Aspasio pleads for, are works of love to God thus manifested and trusted in.

Aspasio's former opponents have objected to this immediate trust of a sinner upon Christ alone for everlasting life, by pleading for what they have conceived to be previously necessary, under the names of faith, repentance, sanctification begun, &c.

Mr. Sandeman has undertaken to prove, that all true sanctification, conversion, faith, &c. springs solely from the truth of Christ's sufficiency for the most guilty, without any addition whatever, as the central point of divine revelation; and that all other religion is not any part of Christianity, not any part of that doctrine which came from heaven, but only the vain efforts of the natural man to lower the divine character of the infinitely righteous and just God, and quiet his guilty conscience with a righteousness insufficient, or in other words, a righteousness stained with sin; and that the names of conversion, faith, sanctification, applied to this kind of religion, are only fitted to deceive; and supposing our appropriation or trust to be a denial of this sufficiency of Christ alone, he opposes that also. This, then, is what we are concerned to defend.

To this purpose I have endeavoured to show, that in trusting to the sufficient righteousness of Christ alone for everlasting life, we keep clear of the charge of denying the sufficient righteousness, and of adding or mixing another righteousness with it. We may rather ask, How does it appear that any man believes it to be sufficient, when he dare not trust his soul upon it, but waits, in painful desire and fear, to discover himself possessed of the distinguishing qualities of a believer? And as he carefully separates what he believes from all foundation of hope or confidence therein for everlasting life, he appears to us involved in the absurdity of hoping for eternal life by Christ, because he discovers himself without any foundation of hope, either in himself, or in the gospel he believes.

He may say, "He trusts to be saved by what Christ has done, if saved at all;" but that very *if* signifies, that he does not trust upon what Christ has done, but is waiting to discover something else as a more proper ground of his confidence. And what is that something else, but the difference he discovers betwixt himself and other sinners? So that, after all our flourishes against self-dependence and Pharisaic doctrine, if we are not upon our guard, we shall be at last settled on no other foundation.

Mr. Sandeman, in endeavouring to prove that his view of the gospel "quiets the guilty conscience of a man as soon as he knows it," acknowledges with us, that the gospel is designed for that end; but fails in his attempt to make out that the guilty conscience of that man is quieted, who discovers no foundation in what he believes, to trust in Christ's righteousness for everlasting life. He supposes, that the uneasiness and dread of conscience arises only from the appearing impossibility of a just God being a Saviour; from whence he infers, that the revelation of a righteousness removing this seeming impossibility, brings the rest and peace the Scripture speaks of, without revealing any ground for trust and confidence in that righteousness. But this supposition is not true; few or none are troubled with such apprehensions; nor does the Scripture address men as though they were. It is self-evident, that the cause of our dread is an apprehension of our want of a righteousness acceptable to the divine purity; and what relieves must be, our having such a righteousness, either in ourselves, or by God's free gift. This Mr. Sandeman himself seems to acknowledge, when he talks of "labouring in painful desire and fear," as the effect of his cramped view of the gospel. For why is this the effect, but because what he believes does not afford the proper satisfaction?

Mr. Sandeman's jealousy is, lest we, by pleading thus for a sinner's trust and confidence on Christ, should lead man into a self-dependence on his doing something to relieve himself from his dreadful circumstances, instead of being supported only by what Christ has already done. But how easy is it to perceive, that no man is, or can be, supported by what Christ has already done, but he that discovers it the object of his trust and confidence for everlasting life? and that so to depend on Christ, and what he has done, is the very opposite of all self-dependence, and inconsistent with our depending on our doing any thing either present or future?

It is true, a man that is at an entire uncertainty without any dependence whatever, is as clear of self-dependence as he is of dependence on what Christ has done. So a man that neither eats nor drinks, is as much out of danger of dying with gluttony and excess, as he is of being poisoned with unwholesome food. But how long can a man live thus? And how long can a man support, without having some dependence or other for his soul? It is as natural for the mind of man to depend on something against the fears of hereafter, as it is for his body to gravitate or sink till it meets with a proper support. Hence we find, that those who depend not on the truth, depend on some falsehood or other which they suppose to be true; and when a man is beat off from one false dependence, he is sinking to despair till he finds another, or is relieved by the real truth. And that truth which relieves, must reveal a foundation of de-

pendence for everlasting life: to attempt to rest short of this, is to attempt to build a castle in the air. The discovery that "God may, if he pleases, have mercy upon me as I at present stand," although it tends to remove the Pharisaic wish or want to know that I am distinguished from others, yet leaves me unsupported as to original and real dread of conscience arising from my personal deficiency. And as such slight the divine warrant for the sinner's trust and confidence in Christ's sufficient righteousness, they naturally sink to the hope of eternal life, not by what Christ has done, or what the gospel declares, but a hope that they are the sheep of Christ who hear his voice, which is in fact only a hope in themselves.

The generality of mankind are but little concerned about the truth of the foundation of their peace of conscience; so they have got some hope, it is enough; they do not care to be disturbed from it with such a controversy as this; especially if they can but conceit themselves holy, or feel themselves happy; not considering, that if their hope is founded on falsehood, their whole religion is a deceit. But they who are taught of God, are not led by fond conjectures; they will not be satisfied with any other reason of their hope, than the voice of that God who speaks in the conscience; and Christ, the Saviour of the guilty given to be trusted in, is the only foundation that God has laid in Zion.

I have only to add, that the manner in which the subject is treated, that is, by short remarks on the passages we are concerned with, was the way in which the subject was treated for Mr. Hervey's view; and as I could think of no shorter method of defence, it is so presented to the public.

LETTERS

FROM

MR. HERVEY TO THE AUTHOR.

Weston-Favell, April 15, 1755.

DEAR SIR,—LAST night I received your kind letter;* and this morning I have but a moment's space in which to acknowledge it. However, I cannot neglect the first opportunity. Are you the author that has given us an abridgment of Mr. Marshall? Truly, I think you have well bestowed your labour, and well executed your work. I wish you had not given yourself the trouble of sending me the book, because I have it, and highly prize it—the abridgment, I mean.

I should be very glad if you would read that Dialogue you mention with a critical attention—if you would point out the places where you think I am confused in my apprehensions, injudicious in method, or weak in argument. As you have so thoroughly studied the point, and so often taught the doctrine, you must easily see where the essay lies most open to objection, and where the point might receive additional strength. You would much oblige me if you would do this with the utmost impartiality and freedom; and I hope you would do service to the truth as it is in Jesus. Several persons, I find, are dissatisfied with my opinion on this head. Do, Sir, review Dialogue 16, and favour me with your free remarks and friendly improvements. Whatever of this kind is done, I beg may be done speedily; because a new edition is in the press, and the printers will soon come to that part. When I hear from you again, I will speak my sentiments with relation to your well calculated design of an evangelical library.*

* When I perceived, by his first edition of Theron and Aspasio, that he had so publicly espoused the truths for which I had incurred the displeasure of many of his professed friends and admirers I wrote him, signifying my fellowship with him in the despised truth.

* An intended collection of the most evangelical pieces, from the beginning of the Reformation down to the present day. And as nothing was designed but

At present, I have leisure only to assure you, that I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend in Jesus Christ,

JAMES HERVEY.

April 22.

DEAR SIR,—I received your present by the coach; I thank you for it, and am much pleased with it. The doctrine* which you approve in my essay, and have clearly displayed and fully proved in your own writings, is not relished by every body; no, not by many pious people. I take the liberty to send you a couple of letters containing objections.† I wish you would be so kind as to consider them, and in your concise way, which I much admire, to make your remarks upon them. One of the letters, in case it exactly coincided with my sentiments, I should think too diffuse and prolix. I love to have the force and spirit of a subject contracted into a small compass, and exhibited to our minds in one clear and easy view. Long discourses and protracted arguments dissipate the attention, and overwhelm the memory. I think you are very happy in expressing yourself with a brevity that is striking, yet perspicuous.

I am not shaken in my opinion by these attacks; but I should be glad to deliver it more clearly, and establish it more firmly, in another edition. If you can spare a little time from your own labours, I hope you will gratify me in this request; and I trust he whom you serve will make it a blessing to me and to others.

I would beg of you to return these letters, and if the Lord should enable you, with free observations on the most material points, as soon as possible; because our new edition goes on apace, and will soon come to Dialogue 16. I have some thoughts of enlarging it a little, and dividing it into two Dialogues. At present it is rather too long to be read at once.

I heartily wish you success in your projected work. I assure you it is my opinion, that such a work, if well executed, will be one of the most valuable services to the present age. You will not, I hope, be too hasty. Mr. W—— has huddled over his performance in a most precipitate, and therefore most imperfect manner. One would think his aim was, not to select the best and noblest passages, but to reprint those which came first to hand. If I live to see another edition of Theron and Aspasio published, I will desire your acceptance of a set, and I hope it will be improved and enriched with your observations; which will be a favour acknowledged by, dear Sir, your affectionate friend in Jesus Christ,

JAMES HERVEY.

P. S. Pray do not spare my own performance, but freely animadvert upon Aspasio. I am sensible he sometimes speaks unguardedly, and sometimes seems inconsistent with himself.

DEAR SIR,—I received your last valuable letter, and sincerely thank you for the judicious observations it contained. Your other letter also, which conveyed an answer to ———, came safe to hand. How is it, dear Sir, that godly* people are so averse to this doctrine.†

I have another letter from ———, containing remarks upon, and objections to Mr. Marshall. I would transmit it to you by this conveyance, but I remember you have already work upon your hands. In my next it shall wait upon you. My only aim, I trust, is to find out the truth as it is in Jesus; which, at present, I am convinced is with you. There is so much clearness and simplicity in your doctrine, it is so suitable to the goodness of God, and so eminently conducive to the comfort, recovery, and happiness of a sinner, that I cannot be persuaded to relinquish it. I should be glad to maintain it in a convincing, yet the most inoffensive manner. I propose to allot two Dialogues for this very important subject. How, in what form or order, would you advise me to proceed? Pray do not scruple to express yourself with all possible freedom. Direct and correct as a friend and fellow-labourer,‡ &c.

May 8.

DEAR SIR,—Last night I received the favour of your two packets, and I assure you a real favour I esteem them. Your answers

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the marrow of each performance, so he judged it might be comprised in six volumes, and desired that an abridgment of Theron and Aspasio might have a place in one volume of it.

* This was a summary of doctrine, extracted from Theron and Aspasio, in Aspasio's own words.

† These objectors were adding no revealed truth to our minds, but, on the contrary, were only attempting to overthrow the solid foundation laid for the hope, confidence, and salvation of guilty sinners; that which makes the gospel glad tidings indeed to such.

* Mr. Hervey here uses the word *godly*, in the common signification of it, as distinguishing the religious from those who profess no religion; but, in the Scripture sense of the word, it is confined to those whose religion is formed by the belief and love of that truth which came from God for the hope of the guilty.

† These godly people he mentions, mistook him continually, by apprehending all he said in the light of the properly qualified faith; whereas his apprehension was totally in the light of free salvation to the guilty, as the ground of immediate confidence; and as they could make no hesitation about confiding in the Lord, if (as they termed it) *their evidences were clear*, so he made no hesitation about confiding in the Lord, as a guilty sinner; the divine declarations to the guilty answering to him as the foundation of his confidence, as their evidences would to them, if they could conceive them to be clear.

‡ The remainder of this letter is lost.

are so clear, so consistent, so comfortable, they very much tend to establish my mind. I find by your experience, the "account, I mean, of God's dealings with your soul," that you have incurred, but surely without any just cause, the displeasure of many. Now, as this is the case, my dear Sir, let us act prudently, be wise as serpents. Do not think, I beg of you, that I am ashamed of your friendship. God forbid! But as I have some concern, and you have a greater zeal for these precious doctrines, let us use the most probable means to spread them. You know the power of prejudice is great; is almost incredible. Many people, were they to know that you and I have been laying our counsels together, perhaps would never look into my book. We seem now to have a favourable opportunity of diffusing these sacred and delightful truths.* My books have been well spoken of in three of the London Magazines successively; and there is printing a new edition. The Lord Jesus, the Wonderful Counsellor, direct us in this truly important affair. I will now, relying on his unerring Spirit, set about preparing the 16th Dialogue for the press; and I should be very desirous to have it pass under your examination, before it is launched into the world. You will give me leave to expect an answer; and let me know from time to time where a letter may find you, sent by, dear Sir, your obliged and affectionate brother in Christ Jesus,

J. Hervey.

May 31.

Dear Sir,—I have been so poorly in my health, and so much engaged in company, that I could not possibly get the enclosed ready before this time; which is the cause, the only cause of my deferring my thanks for your last favour.

As to the doctrine under consideration, I have given a favourable and attentive ear to all that is said against it; and yet the more it is attacked, the more I am convinced of its truth. The Lord Jesus enable me to deliver and testify, with clearness of sentiment and meekness of temper, what I am persuaded in my own conscience is the true gospel of grace! The enclosed paper contains some of the alterations which I propose to make. Another sheet will comprise the remainder. Let me desire you, dear Sir, to examine them, and remark upon them, as freely and impartially as you have done upon other papers. Pray treat me with a kind severity. Whatever sentence or expression appears wrong, I beg of you animadvert, correct, spare it not. I assure you I can bear to be told, by your friendly pen at least, This is not evangelical—here you contradict yourself—this is redundant, and that ambiguous. Please to make little marks of reference in the MS. and pen down your observations on a separate paper.

I think to drop my first design of dividing the essay into two Dialogues, and answering the various objections. This I intend to postpone for the present; and would print no more than is needful to explain, establish, and guard the tenet. I think to add, in a note, a friendly invitation to any serious and ingenious person on the other side of the question, to debate and sift this very important point; professing, that if it can be proved erroneous, I will retract and renounce it, not only without reluctance, but with pleasure and thankfulness. Truth, the truth of the gospel, is my pearl; wherever I find it, thither, without respect to names or persons, would I resort, and there would I abide. May that gracious promise be fulfilled to us in our searches, "The Lord shall guide thee continually!" I hope to send you very soon the residue; and am, dear Sir, your obliged and affectionate friend in Christ Jesus.

J. Hervey.

June 12.

Dear Sir,—Last night I was favoured with your second letter, and sincerely thank you for the freedom you have used, and the corrections you have made. Herewith I send the remainder of Dialogue 16; those parts, I mean, that are to undergo some alteration. I wish you could borrow the larger edition; to that the numeral references are made, as from that the new edition is printing. I hope you will be so kind as to examine this MS. also with a friendly severity. Spare no sentiment or expression, I beseech you, that so much as seems contrary to the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you see any thing that may conveniently be omitted, I wish you would enclose it in a parenthesis, for I fear the Dialogue will be too long, and overwhelm the attention.

I am sorry that I am so straitened in time, and can say no more: my servant waits, and if I delay him any longer, will be too late to despatch some necessary business for the family. Be pleased to favour me with your observations as soon as possible, because the printers will, if they are delayed much longer, be tempted to impatience. I should be glad if you would make Weston in your way when you return from Norwich. May the Lord Jesus strengthen your judgment, make you of quick understanding, and enable you to detect every

* How evidently does Mr. Sandeman appear to be mistaken, in calling this the popular doctrine,—in judging that Mr. Hervey had gained a public esteem on the account of it!

thing in my poor essay that is not agreeable to his word!—I am in doubt whether this letter should be directed to you at London or Norwich. A mistake in this particular may cause a longer delay in the affair. The all-seeing God guide me in every thing! I choose London, and hope it will come to your hand before you set out. I am, dear Sir, your obliged and truly affectionate friend in Christ Jesus,

J. HERVEY.

July 6.

DEAR SIR,—I should be very glad, and much obliged, if you could give me your company in your return from Norwich, that we may thoroughly canvass, and carefully examine the important subject of our correspondence. I have ordered the printers to keep their types, composed for this part of my work, standing; and to proceed with the remainder before this is worked off. So that I hope to have the whole in proof-sheets to lay before you in one view, provided you could favour me with your company pretty soon.

A celebrated divine from abroad writes thus, in a private letter to his friend; in which he speaks the very sentiments of my heart; and, I apprehend, of yours also.

"I apprehend Mr. Hervey's definition of faith will expose him most to the generality of divines, both of the church of England and dissenters; though it is a very good one, when well explained. The persuasion or assurance which is in the very nature of faith, must be carefully distinguished from that which has, in a manner, appropriated the name of assurance to itself; I mean that exercise of spiritual sense following upon saving faith, whereby a believer sees, and, upon good grounds, concludes himself to be in a state of grace and salvation, and that he has an actual interest in Christ, and his whole purchase, even eternal life. The foundation of this assurance of sense, is the believer's experience and feeling of what the Holy Ghost has already wrought in his soul, and it runs into this conclusion: 'I find the fruits of the Spirit planted in my soul—I am a new creature—I love the Lord Jesus in sincerity; and it is one of the greatest burdens of my life, that I have no love suited to so glorious a One.* From all which, I am sure, God has given me Christ, pardoned my sins; I am in a state of grace, and must go to glory.' But the ground and foundation of that particular persuasion and assurance, which is in the nature of saving faith, is the glorious authority and faithfulness of God in the gospel record, promise, and offer; and it rises no higher than this, that God offers, and thereby, as he is true and faithful, gives Christ with all his fulness to me, to be believed on, and trusted in, for life and eternal salvation.* So that I not only safely and warrantably may, but am obliged, to receive, apply, and make use of Jesus Christ, as my own Saviour, by resting on him, and trusting to him as such. Jehovah's great gift, offer, and promise, gives every sinner a sufficient warrant to do this, and are a strong immoveable foundation for this persuasion or assurance of faith. Nor can any other solid satisfying answer be given to a broken-hearted, humbled creature,† who puts away from himself the gracious promises and offers of the gospel upon this ill-grounded imagination, that they do not belong to him: To whom it always may, and ought to be answered, That they do belong to him, in the sense I have mentioned."‡

This extract is, I think, the precise explanation of our doctrine. If you find any expression not exactly suited to your opinion, please to observe it. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate and obliged brother in Christ,

J. HERVEY.

August 4.

DEAR MR. CUDWORTH,—Last night I received your favour, and, according to your request, have written to my excellent friend, without delaying a single post. The Lord Jesus accompany my conciliatory offices with his heavenly blessing!

I hope you had a good journey, and are well in health, and joyful through faith. We shall all be glad to hear that ——— bore his journey comfortably, and is returned home more and more established in the love of his blessed Lord.

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* This manner of expression, which this friend never learned from the Scriptures, but catched (as I suppose) through common custom, savours too much of the leaven of the Pharisees.

* This is well expressed, and evidently distinguishes his meaning of the word *offer*, from the offer of a bargain to any who will come up to the terms. He evidently means the real grant of the blessings, as when money, food, and clothing, are offered to the poor, famished, or naked.

† If this gentleman, by *a broken-hearted, humbled creature*, means some that were hereby more qualified for mercy than the rest, he would differ from us widely; but if, (as I apprehend) he only means those whose criminal remorse renders them absolutely destitute of every other hope than by Christ alone, we are of one mind.

‡ One of the most evangelical appearing objections against this grant of Christ to be believed on, is "That, according to this doctrine, the free gift does not secure their reigning in life on whom it is bestowed; because they may rise to damnation for all that abundance of the gift." To which it may be answered, That gift, though to sinners indefinitely, that they may live by it, yet is a non-entity to every one till he hears it, and no conveyance of righteousness to any man that does not believe it according to that which is spoken. And, on the other hand, where a man does really believe it, he undoubtedly lives by it: and there "grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life," over all who are thus begotten again.

I hope you do not forget me and my family, my people, and my work at the press. May the good Lord prosper you, and your labours of love!

I am much straitened for time, and can add no more at present, but that I am yours most cordially, J. Hervey.

September 9.

Dear Mr. Cudworth,—Mr. W——d has been with me, and went away last week. We had much talk concerning you. I told him what I thought of your conversation and doctrine. What I could urge seemed to make no impression. I assure you my esteem for you is not diminished. I am more and more persuaded, that your method of stating that grand and precious doctrine, the doctrine of faith in Christ, is the truth of the gospel. Your company, whenever you come this way, will be truly acceptable to all my family.

I wish you would inform me of the mistakes which you apprehend to be in Dr. Crisp's sermons. I have the new edition, intend to read them very attentively, and should be glad of your cautionary hints.

Pray, let me hear from you soon; and believe me to be, dear Sir, your cordial and faithful friend, J. Hervey.

October 9.

Dear Mr. Cudworth,—I received your welcome letter from London. I should have answered it much sooner, but I had quite forgot where to direct. The direction was given in the first letter you ever wrote to me, which, consisting only of kind and friendly expressions, I suffered to perish, as I do all letters of that kind. Your other epistolary favours I carefully preserve. I have waited and waited, one day after another, in hopes of seeing you at Weston in your return to Norwich; and have been uneasy in myself, lest you should think I neglect your correspondence. Indeed I do not. Neither do I forget my promise. I have a set of the new edition reserved on purpose for you; to be delivered into your own hand, if you call upon me. Or I will order a set to be left for you in London, wherever you shall appoint.

I sincerely thank you for the copy of your letter. The sentiments are such as I wish to have written on my heart; such as I wish to speak and teach while I live; and in my writings, if my writings survive me, to testify when I am dead. May the good Lord bear witness to such doctrine, by making it healing to the conscience, and fruitful in the conversation.

Your treatise of Marks and Evidences I will attentively read. If any thing occurs which seems to need explication or alteration, I will most freely communicate it.

Pray let me hear from you soon. Inform me how you go with Mr. ——. Depend upon it, I will do you all the service that lies in my power. Not merely because you are a friend whom I esteem, but also because I am persuaded you work the work of the Lord Jesus. To whose tender love I commend yourself and your labours; and am, dear Sir, your truly affectionate friend,

J. Hervey.

November 8.

My Dear Friend,—Your welcome letter is now in my hand. I thank you for the remarks it contains. The Lord make us of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord!

I have read the treatise concerning Marks and Evidences. I am going, as soon as I have despatched this letter, to read it again. If to do the heart good be a sign of its value, I can very confidently bear this testimony to its worth. It refreshes my spirit, and comforts my soul. I hope, when republished, it will be attended with this blessed effect to multitudes of readers. I believe it would be advisable to send it abroad without a name, and commit it wholly to the disposal of Him who is head over all things to the church.

Did you ever see a little treatise written by one Mr. Beart, formerly pastor of a church in the place where you now reside? It is styled, "A Vindication of the Eternal Law and Everlasting Gospel." It is but very lately that it came to my hands. It appears to me a truly valuable piece. I forgot to desire, that you would present my most cordial salutations to Mr ——. It is not for want of esteem that I do not write to him, but for want of health and multiplicity of engagements. I should be very glad if we would communicate, with all freedom, any remarks that he himself has made, or has heard from others, relating to Theron and Aspasio.

Mr. —— called upon me, about ten days ago, in his return to London. He staid only to make a hasty breakfast, so that I had very little conversation with him. I hope the God of power, and the God of peace, will unite our hearts in the love of the Spirit, and unite our hands in the work of the Lord.

There is no stage goes from Northampton to Suffolk. I believe I may convey a parcel by the Cambridge carrier. I will inquire of him when he comes this way; and, if it is a practicable thing, you shall have the books by his next return.

We shall all be glad to entertain you at Weston; and my best prayers will always

accompany your labours in the Lord. I send a frank, lest your stock should be exhausted. Write to me soon, and pray for me ever, who am, dear Sir, your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. HERVEY.

November 25.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I sent, last week, by the Cambridge carrier, a set of my books. He promised me to deliver them to the Bury carrier; and I hope by this time they have reached your hands. Whenever you peep upon them, pray be so kind as to note down any expressions or sentiments that are not thoroughly evangelical. I shall be pleased with them, and thankful for them, even though I should not have, through the want of a new edition, an opportunity of inserting them in my volumes.

I have been thinking of your proposal to republish your treatise on Marks and Evidences. Suppose you transmit it, detached from any other piece, under a frank to me: Suppose I send it to an understanding and sagacious friend; and learn his sentiments, and get his critical observations on it: By this means you will see what is likely to give offence, or meet with objection; and may perhaps be enabled so to form your arguments, so to draw up your forces, as to prevent or baffle any attack. If you approve of this scheme, send me a copy of the piece, tearing off the title-page, and I will immediately convey it to a friend, who lives at a great distance from London, who knows nothing of the author, and will give me his opinion without favour or disaffection.

Lest you should not be furnished with a frank, I send the enclosed. My sister is gone from home; my mother is in health, and will always be glad of such conversation as yours; which will be equally agreeable to, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and brother in Christ Jesus,

J. HERVEY.

January 26, 1756.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received, with pleasure and gratitude, your letter and its contents. Would have made my acknowledgments immediately, but waited a post or two, in hopes of transmitting to you some remarks on your treatise. But my friend has not sent them. As soon as they come, they shall be forwarded to you.

I am very much pleased with your explanation of *In the Lord have I righteousness*. "*I* a sinner, not I a new or sanctified creature." This is encouraging, this is delightful, it is like a door opened in the ark for me, even for me to enter. Blessed be God for such truths! Such truths make the gospel glad tidings indeed to my soul. They are the very thing which I want, and the only thing which can give me comfort, or do me good.

When people inquire, whether sanctification is an evidence of justification? I suppose by sanctification they mean what St. Paul calls the fruits of the Spirit—love of God, charity to man, meekness, temperance, &c. Now, may we not allow these to be proper evidences of faith, but maintain, that the appropriating faith, or the faith of persuasion,* is the appointed means of producing them? "The life which I live in the flesh," the life of holiness, usefulness, and comfort, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." What this faith is, he explains in the next sentence; by viewing the Son of God, "as loving me, and giving himself for me." Pray favour me with your opinion of 1 John iii. 19. This seems one of the texts least reconcilable with our doctrine.

I have a long letter from a new hand, wrote very fair, and drawn up in an elaborate manner, in opposition to my account of faith, and to several parts of Dialogue 16. It consists of five sheets wrote on every side; too large, I apprehend, to come under a frank, otherwise I would transmit it to you for your perusal. I hope to see you ere long; then we may examine it together.

I am glad to hear that you are acquainted with Mr. ——, and that he is so well acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus. The Lord enable him, and raise up many more ministers, to spread abroad the joyful sound. When you give me your company, do not forget to bring with you the evangelical piece on the work of the Spirit in bringing a soul to Christ.

There is one passage in Dialogue 16, which I think is very injudiciously inserted, and is really a mistake. I observed it a good while ago, and expunged it from my copy: and my new opposer has not spared to animadvert upon it. What need have we to pray for that divine Guide, "who leads into all truth!" May this divine Guide dwell in us, and walk in us, be our counsellor and comforter even unto death! Dear Mr. Cudworth, I hope, will not forget in his prayers the weakest of ministers and the weakest of believers, but his affectionate brother in Christ, J. HERVEY.

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* By *appropriating faith*, he means the confidence arising from the belief of the truth, of righteousness and salvation freely presented to the guilty in Christ Jesus, as their immediate ground of confidence; which he also styles the *faith of persuasion*, to distinguish it from that which is described, not by what we are persuaded of, but as a hidden, holy principle, discoverable only by the good qualifications which distinguish us from others.

April 21.

My Dear Friend,—I received your valuable remarks, and sincerely thank you for them. May our divine Master enable us both to discern and to display the truth as it is in Jesus.

I am much pleased, and thoroughly satisfied, with your explanation of Acts ii. 39. The proposals seem to me clear, pertinent, and weighty. If I am able to make any slight correction in the style, it shall be transmitted in my next. I would now only ask, how far you have proceeded in the work? I think you should by all means get the greater part, the whole, I would rather say, completed, before you begin to publish. If this is not done, many unforeseen accidents may arise, which will probably straiten you in point of time, and oblige you to be precipitate in your preparations for the press. And I am inclined to query, whether it is not a piece of justice we owe to the public, not to engage them in purchasing a piece, till it is put beyond the power of common casualties to render it imperfect. Pray, therefore, let me know what progress you have made. I could wish to have it judiciously executed, and not performed in that confused, inaccurate, slovenly manner, which must be a continual discredit to Mr. W———'s Christian Library.

I rejoice to find that the gospel of our salvation is spreading. May it have a free course and an extensive circuit! till the fountain becomes a river, and the river widens into a sea!

The enclosed came a little while ago. My friend is very severe. It will give you an opportunity of exercising forbearance and gentleness. He knows nothing at all of the author. When your other affairs will allow leisure, please to return the letter, with your observations; which will oblige, and I trust edify, dear Sir, your affectionate friend, J. Hervey.

May 27.

Dear Mr. Cudworth,—I have only time to beg of you, if you have the letter of remarks on Mr. Marshall's book, to return it to me as soon as you can. If there are any observations that are just, and such as animadvert upon passages truly exceptionable, be so kind as to give me your opinion on them. The reason of my desiring this, is a prospect of a new edition of Marshall. A bookseller is inclined to print one, and sell it at half-a-crown price; I believe encouraged thereto by my recommendation of it. The recommendation has been printed in our Northampton newspaper, and immediately there was a demand for twenty-three of your abridgments. But the printer could not procure enough to supply the demand. Mr. K—— desires you will send a fresh supply to him. In the greatest haste, but with great sincerity and affection, yours,

J. Hervey.

June 17.

My dear Friend,—This comes to inform you, that Mr. —— has begun an edition of Marshall, in much the same size, and exactly the same letter, as Theron and Aspasio. If you have any thing to observe, pray let me have it with as much speed as you can make. If you have Mr. ——'s objections, examine them attentively; and I hope you will be enabled to obviate what is material. I should be glad if you could, after you have digested your notes, give me your company, that we might talk them over. Now is the time, in all probability, to make Marshall a well-known spreading book. I hope the Lord will enlighten your understanding, fructify your invention, strengthen your judgment, and enable you to write "sound words, such as cannot be condemned." I am, very affectionately, yours, J. Hervey.

My Dear Friend,—Yesterday I received your letter, and am much obliged to you for it. Pray do not mention Mr. ——'s name, nor show his letter. I hope to adhere to the truths of the gospel; but yet I would endeavour to live in harmony of affection, and friendly intercourse at least, with those who differ. I cannot think that Mr. —— could have any knowledge of the author of the discourse against Marks and Evidences. I will read your treatise over again with my best attention; for, I assure you, it always does me good. I will also compare it with your remarks on Mr. ——, which in my opinion are solid and satisfactory: I am sure they are encouraging and comfortable.

When Marshall was advertised in our newspaper, the gentleman that inserted my recommendation added this note, to explain one sentence: "By *uncommon road*, it is presumed, the recommender means the very evangelical nature, and remarkably instructive method, of the directions laid down by Mr. Marshall, (than whom no man, perhaps, was ever better acquainted with the human heart,) for the effectual practice of holiness, as likewise somewhat of obscurity which is confessedly in his 3d and 4th direction."

I apprehend, the obscurity of chapter 3d and 4th arises not from any improper manner of treating the subjects, but from the

mysterious* nature of the subjects themselves. I will write to the bookseller to suspend his procedure of the press till he hears farther. But let this hasten you, my dear friend, in communicating what you have to observe. I should be glad to have our common favourite as clear and unexceptionable as possible, &c.†

October 6.

My Dear Friend,—The cause of my writing is this: Mr. —— is upon the point of publishing a new edition of Marshall. I have given him the enclosed letter, to introduce it into the world; but was desirous to have you peruse it, and correct it, before it goes to the press. Be so kind, therefore, as to examine it strictly; and wherever you think it should be altered, use with it the freedom of a friend. The more rigour, the more kindness.

I send a frank to be the vehicle of your observations, together with the printed half-sheet.

As soon as I have finished what you mention, it shall be transmitted; though I would fain see one of the books completely abridged, before any proposals or advertisements appear. It is a matter of great importance; pray let it be executed with care and correctness. May the Keeper of Israel protect you in your journeys, and the Light of the world guide you in your work! Affectionately yours,

J. Hervey.

December 24.

My Dear Friend,—Mr. —— told Mr. W——d that I offered to write a preface to your remarks on his sermons. I told Mr. W——d the whole of the affair: That you informed me of your design, and what I answered: That I desired it might be conducted in a tender and respectful manner: That the title should be more friendly and benign: That you read what you proposed to say concerning my mentioning of Marshall; which I observed was inexpressive: If you said any thing, I thought it should be more weighty and significant. This was all the concern I had in the affair.

That I had promised, not offered (for I do not remember I ever did such a thing in my life) to write a recommendatory introduction to the work which you have in hand: That it was at your request, but with the real approbation of my judgment; for I apprehended that your design, when well executed, would be a valuable present to the world.

This comes by a gentleman who knows you. Let me hear what Mr. —— says about the affair. And remember to give me a direction where to write to you. You date from Margaret-street; but this I suppose is not particular enough. I can add no more, lest the bearer should be gone. Only I wish you much success in preaching Christ. Yours affectionately,

J. Hervey.

My Dear Friend,—I received your parcel containing several copies of the Friendly Attempt, &c.* My thanks should have been returned sooner; but I have been under that indisposition and langour of spirit, which renders me unfit for every thing.

I think there is rather too much asperity in the close; and I wish that expression, "refined idolatry," had been a little softened. This I mention only to yourself, and to give you a specimen of that openness and freedom which I would have take place in all our personal and epistolary intercourses.

I have read your manuscript again and again, with my best attention, and with much delight.† I have made here and there a small alteration with regard to the language, only to render the sense somewhat more perspicuous, not to vary the peculiar cast of your diction. I heartily concur in receiving and embracing these doctrines. I think them to be truths of very great importance, and shall be truly glad to see them in print, that they may be spread, and be universally known.

If I should be enabled to finish a fourth volume of Dialogues, I propose to have one conference on the assurance of faith;‡ to state it more clearly, and to establish it more strongly. In this, I shall be glad to borrow several of your thoughts, and will make my acknowledgments accordingly; declaring, at the same time, my opinion of the piece which lends me such valuable assistance.

Present my most affectionate salutations to ——. I received his obliging letter: I most sincerely wish him success in displaying the unsearchable riches of grace, and the infinitely glorious righteousness of Christ.

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* *Mysterious*, because contrary to our natural notions, the "natural man not receiving the things of the Spirit of God."

† The remainder of this letter is lost.

* A Friendly Attempt to remove some Fundamental Mistakes in the Rev. Mr. W——d's Sermons.

† *Aphorisms on the Assurance of Faith.* The substance of them originally was what Mr. Hervey takes notice of in his letter, dated Oct. 9, 1755. Afterwards Mr. Hervey desired me to draw up the substance of the whole that had been canvassed, in as concise a manner as possible, for his own use. This, some time after, I proposed for printing, and is the manuscript here mentioned.

‡ Or, in other words, the confidence that is founded on the truth we believe concerning Christ given to be believed on, or confided in.

I hope he will not be displeased with my silence. It proceeds from no disrespect, but from a multiplicity of engagements, and a poor pittance of strength, utterly insufficient to fulfil them. Please to thank —— for his very encouraging and comfortable letter. I wish, when he is at leisure, he would favour me with another on this subject—How holiness springs from faith, or a view of sanctification as the effects of justification.

When shall I see you? If —— writes to me on the subject you mention, he shall have a speedy answer. You need not send me the twelve queries, because they have been transmitted me from Scotland. But cease not to send up your prayers and supplications in behalf of your truly affectionate friend,

J. Hervey.

My Dear Friend,—I have, with attention and delight, read over your pamphlet. A slight alteration or two, relating to the language, I have made. But I desire you will follow the determination of your own judgment. As soon as they are printed, send me a quarter of an hundred; not as a present, but as a purchase.

The Lord has lately visited me with a dangerous fever; which confined me to my room many days, and excluded me from the pulpit several Sundays. I am extremely weak in body. Pray that I may be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ—in his most precious and everlasting righteousness. I remain affectionately yours,

J. Hervey.

P. S.—Send me a dozen of your Aphorisms, when they are published.

Sept. 8, 1757.

My Dear Friend,—One principal cause of my long silence, I do assure you, was my ignorance of the place of your residence in London. I knew not, till Mr. —— yesterday gave me a direction, where to write to you.

I thank you for your last packet. But you must give me leave to insist upon paying for the contents, when I have the pleasure of your company, which I want much. Cannot you take Weston in your way, and contrive to spend a couple of days with me? I cannot be satisfied with a shorter stay. I have much to say to you; but as I hope to see you, and converse face to face, I shall not attempt to communicate my thoughts by ink and pen.

I have just published three sermons. If you will call upon Mr. R——'s, in St. Paul's Church-yard, or send a messenger with the note subjoined to this letter, he will deliver two of my pieces. Let me beg of you to peruse them, with your pen in your hand; and to transmit whatever observations may occur. I have some remarks upon your Aphorisms, which you shall see when you give me your company. Have you seen a couple of volumes, lately published, and entitled, Letters on Theron and Aspasio? You come in for a share of chastisement. What is your opinion, in general, of this performance? As to particular passages, we will postpone the examination of them till God's providence grants us a personal interview.* Do you know who is, or who is supposed to be, the author of this piece?

May the work of the Lord Jesus prosper in your heart, your tongue, your pen, and in those of your truly affectionate friend,

J. Hervey.

Feb. 22, 1758.

Dear Mr. Cudworth,—I received your letter, and return you my very sincere thanks for your remarks.† I only wish that there had been more of them.

I hope it will not be long before you give me your company at Weston. Then we will examine the three Dialogues, as they appear in their new form; and will consider and determine concerning their publication;‡ or rather will beseech the only wise God our Saviour, to overrule and guide our determination. Contrive to stay some time with me.

Try if you can get me Taylor's book; or any of those which you showed me. Neonomianism Unmasked, if you can light on, purchase for me. I wish you growing consolation in Christ, deliverance from all your troubles, and abundant success in spreading abroad the savour of our Redeemer's name. In whom I am, dear Sir, your true and affectionate friend and brother,

J. Hervey.

March 1.

Dear Mr. Cudworth,—Yesterday your favour came to hand. I hope to see you at Weston ere long, and then I will deliver the letters§ into your own hand.

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* The result of this consideration, and of my after correspondence with Mr. Sandeman, at Mr. Hervey's request, see in the Defence of Theron and Aspasio.

† Remarks on Theron and Aspasio, considered with regard to the objections raised by the Author of the Letters.

‡ The publication of the 15th, 16th, and 17th Dialogues, corrected with regard to the objections of Mr. Sandeman.

§ Letters of Correspondence between me and Mr. Sandeman.

I have sent you a couple of franks. If you want more, when I see you I will endeavour to supply you. I am glad you are debating the important point with Mr. Sandeman. He seems to be an acute person; and if there is a flaw in our cause, he will be likely to discover it. But as far as I can judge, he has found no such thing hitherto.

May the God of truth and grace be with you; and enable you to understand and defend the first; to experience and abundantly enjoy the last.

Please to present my very affectionate respects to your worthy kinsman Mr. ——, and recommend to his prayer, and remember in your own, dear Sir, your brother in Christ, J. HERVEY.

July 15.

DEAR MR. CUDWORTH,—This comes to desire you will inform me how I may direct a large letter to you; which I will send, as soon as your answer is received. It is a manuscript,* which wants your examination, and it is of some importance. Therefore I am somewhat solicitous that it may not miscarry. Yours affectionately,

J. HERVEY.

P. S.—You may direct your letter to stop at Northampton. Do not use any of your franks. You will have greater occasion for them. Or, if your stock is spent, let me know.

July 27.

DEAR MR. CUDWORTH,—This day I received your letter, with the two manuscript sheets enclosed. Accept my thanks for your remarks, and let me beg of you to examine the two sheets which are now sent. I will take your advice with regard to Mr. B——; and follow your hint concerning your own work. I apprehend there will be about ten such sheets; and that the piece will make a two-shilling pamphlet. I must entreat you to get time for the revisal of all; which shall be sent you as you shall be able to despatch the work. I am, dear Sir, most cordially yours, J. HERVEY.

August 2.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Last week I sent you two sheets of the manuscript, now I send you two more for your revisal. If you see a fair opportunity of contracting, please to make use of it; for I fear the piece will be too long. Enclose what you think may be omitted in a parenthesis, by a pencil. Pray examine rigorously, by which you will very much oblige your truly affectionate J. HERVEY.

August 9.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Here I enclose two sheets more. They are very long; but I hope you will get time to revise them. Your last packet I received, and am much obliged for your remarks. I apprehend the piece will make a two-shilling pamphlet. If you could suggest or introduce any thing to make it edifying and useful, I should be glad. Would it not be proper to print Mr. Wesley's letter, and prefix it to my answer? Have you left your own two books for me at my brother's? If you have not, please to leave them at Mr. J. R—'s in St. Paul's Church-yard. I am, dear Sir, cordially yours in Christ Jesus, J. HERVEY.

P. S.—I suppose about three sheets more will finish the work.

August 16.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Here are two more sheets. The last I received with your valuable remarks. Pray bestow the same attention on these. Two more, or less, will finish the essay; then I will discontinue writing, and employ myself in reading, especially in reading Luther's comment.* Cannot you procure for me Taylor's book? I am, dear Sir, affectionately yours,

J HERVEY.

September 23.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received in due time your last letter. Should have sent the conclusion of my manuscript, but it has been lent out, and is not yet returned.

I shall be glad to see your correspondence with Mr. Sandeman. The enclosed is a copy of a letter, which I sent, some years ago, to two malefactors under sentence of death. It is got into a good many hands. Some would have me print it. I wish you would be so kind as to revise it, and give me your opinion. People say, there is not enough said concerning the spiritual change, or the new heart.

My next shall bring you a little piece of mine, which, without my knowledge, has passed the press. I have lately been in great want of franks, but now I have got a recruit.

I have been very ill this week, but had

* This was an answer to Mr. John Wesley's objections against Theron and Aspasio, and is so valuable a defence of imputed righteousness, that its publication is much to be desired. It has been since published by Mr. Hervey's brother, and may be seen in the preceding part of this volume.

* As abridged and designed for the Evangelical Library.

strength enough to read in your book. I was much edified by Mr. Simpson's sermons. Pray, are his whole works to be procured? and are they of the same spirit with the sermons which you have given us? If so, I should desire to see, to possess them all. I am, very affectionately, yours,

J. Hervey.

December 2.

My Dear Friend,—Excuse me for keeping your MS.* so long; I have been extremely ill. This morning I have been up for four hours, and in all that time not able to look into a book, or hold up my head.

I fully assent to your opinion. Think you have proved the warrant for a sinner's application of Christ very satisfactorily. If I live, I should much desire a copy of this your correspondence, when you have revised and finished it; or do you intend to print it?

Have you got some complete sets of your works? If you have, I wish you would lodge about four of them at Mr. R—n's. Let them be only in sheets. And when you have given me notice that they are deposited with him, I will order him to pay you a guinea for them. I promised a worthy clergyman a set some days ago. Yours affectionately, J. Hervey.

December 15.

Dear Mr. Cudworth,—I am so weak I am scarce able to write my name.*

J. Hervey

* The remaining part of my correspondence with Mr. Sandeman.

* Hearing how dangerously ill Mr. Hervey was, I wrote to remind him of leaving something under his hand in regard to his writings, as he knew the situation of them now required it; and this was all the answer he could give me.

A DEFENCE

OF

THERON AND ASPASIO.

The sum and substance of the doctrine pleaded for by Aspasio is, "That God hath so given eternal life in his Son to guilty sinners, as that they are fully warranted to receive Christ, or assure themselves of salvation by him alone, without waiting for any inward motions, feelings, or desires, as any way requisite in order to such a reception or assurance."

This doctrine has been hitherto opposed, under the notion, 1. That some inward motions, feelings, or desires, were some way requisite in order thereto: That these inward motions, feelings, or desires, were the faith or reception of Christ spoken of in the Scripture, or at least the indications of it; and must be discerned in us in that light, before there can be any well-grounded assurance of salvation by him. 2. That if we are called directly to live by Christ, or appropriate him, he is ours, and we are safe, whether we appropriate him or no. 3. That it is assuring ourselves of what, for aught we know, is absolutely false. 4. That the wicked, the presumptuous, and the hypocrites, may, and do often thus assure themselves. 5. That there is nothing in faith, thus understood or exerted, which is a proper spring and cause of good works, by which it is in itself different from a false faith. 6. That it is contrary to all self-examination, and assurance thereby. And, 7. That such doctrine is a great discouragement to weak souls.

In answer to all this, we have asserted, 1. That the divine revelation concerning Jesus is addressed to sinners, the world, the lost; and that, without being directed to wait for any inward motions, feelings, or desires, remission of sins, and eternal life in Christ, are said to be presented or given to

them; and they are immediately called to believe on him as so granted. That the inward motions, feelings, or desires, correspondent to these gospel declarations, are motions, desires, &c. to live by Christ alone, immediately, without waiting for any thing previous thereto; and that this voice of God, in these declarations of the gospel, was a sufficient authority for the whole we plead for, without waiting for any inward motions or excellencies in us to add thereto. 2. That it is very absurd to infer, that Christ being given for us to feed upon, or live by, that there is therefore no need to live by him. Nor is it, 3. Assuring ourselves of what may be false; the divine declaration having secured this—that they which believe on him shall not be confounded; nor does any man thus live by Christ alone, but he who is chosen to salvation by the belief of the truth: Notwithstanding, many deceive themselves, professing great confidence; but it is in some undue mixture or addition of their own to what God hath spoken. And, 4. That it is here the presumptuous and the hypocrite do err and destroy themselves, and not in believing according to that which is spoken. 5. That good works are works of love to God, thus manifested; and therefore it is the only principle of good works on this account: "We love him, because he first loved us." So that it differs from a false faith, as the belief of a truth differs from the belief of a falsehood, and as an apprehension of the divine favour begets love and obedience, rather than an apprehension of wrath. 6. That a proper self-examination is therefore, whether we thus live by Christ alone, or whether we are waiting for something more? And, 7. That it is far from discouraging the chiefest sinners, to let them know that God hath given to them eternal life in his Son, although it very possibly may, and ought to discourage every one from seeking relief in themselves, while the divine declarations point us so plainly to the salvation given in Christ Jesus to the guilty.

We have now to engage with another kind of an opponent, one that tells us, "That on account of our thus pleading for assurance of salvation, by receiving or appropriating Christ as given to us, we are also to be classed with the popular preachers, in as much as we also lead the guilty, as they do, to seek after some inward motions, feelings, or desires, as some way requisite in order to acceptance with God, not understanding how God can appear just to an unrighteous person, in justifying him as he at present stands, without some motion in his will, &c. That the whole doctrine of the popular preachers is devised for producing, animating, and directing this motion, that so the anxious hearer may find about himself some distinguishing reason why the Deity may regard him more than others. That the work finished by Jesus Christ in his death, proved by his resurrection, is all-sufficient to justify the guilty. That the whole benefit of this event is conveyed to men, only by the apostolic report concerning it; and that this whole benefit is no more than a possibility of salvation, depending upon the divine sovereignty. That every one who understands this report to be true, or is persuaded that the event actually happened, as testified by the apostles, is justified, and finds relief to his guilty conscience, *i. e.* the relief of the above-mentioned possibility. That such are relieved, not by finding any favourable symptoms about their own heart, but by finding their report to be true. That all the divine power which operates on the minds of men, either to give the first relief to their consciences, or to influence them in every part of their obedience, is persuasive power, or the forcible conviction of truth. That our primary notion of the divine character can give no comfort to the guilty, but, on the contrary, make them miserable by a sense of fear and shame. That when a man knows how God may be just, in justifying him as he at present stands, he finds relief from the aforementioned disquieting fear."

To this we reply in general, That we agree to the greatest part, to almost all these assertions, as most valuable truths, and stand corrected by some of them; particularly wherever we have too charitably supposed or admitted a belief of the report, contrary to the Scripture declaration, "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee;"* and thereby have been sometimes† led to fall in with the multitude, who make light of the belief of the report, as a common thing; whereas, to know the real truth of the gospel, in distinction from every corrupting and contradictory falsehood, is the peculiar teaching of God; and every one that has "so heard and learned of the Father, comes to Christ." We agree, that "our primary notion of the divine character makes the guilty miserable, by a sense of fear and shame;" but we deny that relief from this fear is obtained, without being as certain that we have righteousness, as we are that we have guilt. The divine declaration of Christ, given to be believed on, affords a foundation for this certainty, and contains, therefore, more than such a possibility as is above-mentioned. We also deny the charge, that we lead the guilty, as the

* Mr. Hervey had begun a correction of his three last Dialogues in this view.

† *Sometimes;* for the force of truth frequently prevailed against this mistake, before Mr. Sandeman's performance appeared.

popular preachers do, to seek after some inward motions, feelings, or desires, as some way requisite in order to acceptance with God. For, notwithstanding the righteousness appropriated relates to acceptance with God, the appropriation we plead for, relates only to the consciousness, knowledge, and enjoyment of that righteousness whereby the guilty are justified. And we affirm, that to receive a gift is no pre-requisite or condition, as such receiving has no existence without the thing received; and to be so enriched, is not to be enriched by our act of receiving, or what we do, but only by what we receive. But as Mr. Sandeman's attack well deserves a more particular defence, we consider it as follows:

"Has our favourite author then, at least so far, lost sight of the imputed righteousness, as to mix another with it? Has he so embarrassed, or rather shut up our access to the divine righteousness, as to hold forth a preliminary human one as some way expedient, or rather necessary, to our enjoying the comforts and benefits of it."*

No, far from it; but as the pinching point in the conscience is not, that there is no such righteousness in being as pleaseth God, but that we have no such righteousness; so we understand the comfort and benefit of Christ's righteousness to be, that it is a sufficient righteousness in our behalf. And we who plead for the divine grant of this righteousness to sinners as such, very evidently maintain, that there is no preliminary righteousness necessary to such a conclusion.

"I speak of those teachers, who, having largely insisted on the corruption of human nature, concluding the whole world guilty before God, eloquently set forth the necessity of an atonement, zealously maintained the Scripture doctrine concerning the person and work of Christ, yet, after all, leave us as much in the dark as to our comfort, as if Jesus Christ had never appeared; and mark out as insuperable a task for us, as if he had not finished his work."

This charge may be very properly exhibited against those teachers who leave us as much in the dark as they found us, unless we can find out something within ourselves to distinguish us from other sinners. But Aspasio's doctrine brings Christ near to guilty sinners as such, for their immediate enjoyment. Take and have, receive and possess, relates only to personal enjoyment; is no task, no entitling condition; the appropriation being fully warranted by the truth believed, and effected by the belief of it.

"While, with great assiduity and earnestness, they are busied in describing to us, animating us with various encouragements, and furnishing us with manifold instructions how to perform that strange something which is to make out our connexion with Christ, and bring his righteousness home to us."

We say, Christ's righteousness is "brought home to us" in the gospel declaration, without the necessity of any intervening righteousness to warrant us to call it ours. We only receive what is freely given,—that is all the strange something we have pleaded for; and that not for our acceptance with God in virtue of our act, but only to know and enjoy that righteousness as ours, on account of which alone we are accepted.

"Setting them to work to do something, under whatever name, to make up their peace with God."

Not so with us, who receive and live by Christ's righteousness; with which God hath declared himself already well pleased.

"Every doctrine which teaches us to do or endeavour any thing toward our acceptance with God, stands opposed to the doctrine of the apostles."

But the doctrine we plead for, teaches us to live by what Christ has already done, as being given to us for that purpose. To say that I must do, or endeavour any thing, that I may be accepted, is a contradiction to that believing on Christ we plead for; which is in fact, neither more nor less than living upon him as our whole, only, and complete salvation: and will, on that account, bear the test of the apostle's word, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly," &c. As this faith cannot be separated from the truth believed, nor the truth believed from Christ the subject of that truth, so to be justified by faith, by Christ, or by his blood is the same thing. Nor can any doing for acceptance be charged upon this believing on Christ, while its native language is, "In the Lord have I righteousness."

Palæmon's* main argument is, "If the work finished by Jesus Christ is alone sufficient to justification, then no appropriation or reception is necessary thereto." We reply, that that alone is sufficient; therefore reception or appropriation belongs to our conscious possession and enjoyment of the justifying righteousness, to the manifestation of our justification by it, and to the influence of it in our lives and conversations.

Palæmon thinks he does not deny the sufficiency of Christ, when he connects

* *N. B.* Mr. Sandeman's words are included within ommas: the other paragraphs are the reply.

* The name the author of the Letters has chosen for himself, as Mr. Hervey is to be understood by Aspasio.

faith and salvation together, and maintains that all who believe this sufficiency will be saved, and all who believe it not will perish.

He admits, that a work of God is necessary in the justified, that is, to beget faith, to beget in them a persuasion of the sufficiency of the justifying righteousness.

He judges this cannot be a contradiction to the one thing needful alone; because it is wholly a persuasion of the sufficiency of that alone, without more. In what light then are we to consider this farther work of God, in persuading us of the sufficiency of this righteousness? Not as an addition to the sufficient righteousness, but only as relative to the knowledge of it. He is justified by believing, only as he is justified by what he believes.

Neither does he think he denies the sufficient righteousness, when he maintains faith, love, and self-denied obedience, as necessary to demonstrate his portion in this righteousness, or that he is a justified person; because, in these acts, or in this obedience, he is not doing something to be justified, but proceeding in the way "of painful desire and fear," in order to know himself to be justified.

Hence it is apparent, that he must be obliged to allow, that although the work finished by Christ on the cross is the sole requisite to justification, yet, in this view, something more is necessary to the knowledge of his interest in this righteousness, or of his justification by it; and that, to maintain this, is no contradiction to the sole requisite, but a procedure upon it. What he is obliged to plead for himself, he must also allow to us; and the difference between us is not in regard of the sole requisite, but our present enjoyment of it, or the knowledge of our justification by this alone. He says, with the multitude, "in the way of painful desire and fear," till we come to the knowledge of the difference God has made between us and others; we say, by the free grant of the gospel to the absolutely guilty, without difference.

"The doctrine of the apostles, instead of directing us what to do, sets before us all that the most disquieted conscience can require, in order to acceptance with God, as already done and finished by Jesus Christ."

A disquieted conscience requires a righteousness pleasing to God in its own behalf. No righteousness will quiet my conscience, unless I consider it as a righteousness for me. The righteousness which pleaseth God is already done and finished by Jesus Christ. Palæmon considers this righteousness as respecting himself, only as far as he discovers his own faith, love, and self-denied obedience. We consider it as given to the absolutely guilty, warranting such to live by it, as so given to them for that purpose.

Palæmon's notion, that God hath appointed no way but by our works, to be assured of salvation by Christ alone, renders his doing, endeavouring, striving, &c. scarcely different in any thing from doing that we may live. There are few so weak as to think that they can alter God's mind or purpose by their performances: but, not knowing what he has proposed, they do, that they may obtain satisfaction in their minds about their salvation; and Palæmon's doing seems to be wholly of this sort, that is, in fact, for peace with God, and not from it.

"What Christ has done, is that which pleaseth God; what he hath done, is that which quiets the guilty conscience of man as soon as he knows it."

As soon as he knows it respects him a guilty sinner. If the fear of the guilty conscience consisted only in an uncertainty of there being any righteousness which pleaseth God in the behalf of the elect, or the qualified, than the guilty conscience would be quieted as soon as it is evident there is such a righteousness. But this is not the case; the fear of the guilty conscience is a dread of God, because I have no such righteousness—because I have no righteousness upon which I can be assured he is pleased with me. And this guilty conscience cannot be quieted, unless I discover the righteousness which pleaseth God in my own behalf.

As we conceive the report of the gospel, as sufficient righteousness freely given in Jesus, suits the guilty conscience thus understood; so we agree, that whenever we hear of this provision of divine grace, we have no occasion for any other question but this, "Is it true or not? If we find it true, we are happy;" and it is Palæmon, and not we, that stands in need of another righteousness to quiet the guilty conscience.

Palæmon considers "the work of Christ as a sufficient foundation whereon to rest the whole weight of our acceptance with God," while, at the same time, he asserts that his own part or lot in this righteousness "is not so easily settled;" but that he must wait and work for it in the way of "painful desire and fear, till he is at last crowned with enjoyment," in a clear discovery of his having faith, love, and self-denied obedience. We judge ourselves not left to this uncertainty; and that, without the discovery of any such difference betwixt us and other men, we are allowed to receive, enjoy, and live upon Jesus Christ, as freely given to sinners in the gospel; even as those who are invited to an entertainment are freely allowed to partake of what is set before them. Palæmon's view of the

gospel report sets him at a distance from enjoyment, or leaves him in uncertainty, till his obedience manifests a difference betwixt him and others. Our view is of the sufficient righteousness brought quite home, so that our first act is to live by it, that in the strength thereof we may be influenced by love to him that first loved us.

It is true, the Scripture "nowhere ascertains that Christ died for me in particular." But it allows, invites, and commands me, a guilty sinner, without more, to believe on him, live by him, &c.; phrases evidently expressive of the appropriation, trust, or confidence we plead for.

Our author says, "That Christ died, that he gave his life a ransom for many, is indeed a truth fully ascertained in the Scriptures, for the relief of the shipwrecked and desperate." But can it relieve any farther than it respects ourselves? And if the gospel declaration concerning this righteousness doth not respect us any farther than as we apprehend we may be of the elect, or that we have their qualifications, how does it relieve the shipwrecked and the desperate? It rather relieves the elect and the qualified. This point seems to be Mr. Sandeman's mystery; and he guards the inquiry with something like, Hence, ye profane! "The world," says he, "will always be objecting thus." A plain acknowledgment, I think, that that is the question to be answered, or the guilty conscience cannot be relieved; and a vindication of our view of the gospel report, as furnishing us with the gracious answer.

"The Scripture often affirms the final perdition of many, not merely hearers of the gospel, but who have heard and received it with joy."

This is an objection against depending on any thing I at present feel, but not against complying with the divine invitation, to live by the sufficient righteousness of the Son of God; an objection against the certainty which arises from inherent qualifications, but not against that which proceeds solely on the divine invitation and faithfulness.

"Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Because they seek not by faith, (by the truth of the gospel), but as it were by the works of the law.

"Notwithstanding their great confidence about their acquaintance with Christ, and their interest in him, and their experience of his presence with them, he will at last say unto them, *I never knew you, depart from me.*"

The confidence of those condemned is evidently not a confidence built upon the finished work of Christ given to them, or the divine faithfulness pledged to sinners in the gospel report but a confidence on their own attainments and experience, wherein they judged themselves peculiarly entitled to the heavenly admission.

Let who will be condemned, it is allowed by Mr. Sandeman, that every believer of the sufficiency of the work of Christ to justify the ungodly, is justified. And it is very evident, that whosoever lives by that, as sufficient for him, believes that sufficiency, and is really saved by what he believes, though ten thousand professors perish.

"When they are condemned, then, as hypocrites and unbelievers, they are not condemned for want of Aspasio's faith; and that for these two reasons: The first is, it was never true that Christ died for them; the second is, that they were not faulty in this respect; for the sacred text describes them as rather too confident about their interest in Christ."

As to the first, it is not Aspasio's faith that Christ died for them, whether they believe it or no; and as to the second, they may be condemned for neglecting or rejecting the gospel grant of a Saviour to the guilty, (which is the truth Aspasio pleads for), and at the same time too confident upon their imagined attainments on which they found their hopes.

"The gospel proposes nothing to be believed by us, but what is infallibly true, whether we believe it or not."

But it proposes something to be immediately received and enjoyed by us, without performing any entitling condition whatever. We plead for such a persuasion as is the reception of a gift; and what we thus receive, or assure ourselves of, depends for its truth, or infallible certainty, on the veracity and faithfulness of God, who has promised such shall not be confounded. We agree, that a persuasion of a proposition, true in itself, must be grounded on the evidence of that truth. But this is not the case when we are commanded to believe on, or trust in the Lord.

"The gospel, which foretells the final perdition of so many of its hearers, so many seriously and zealously exercised about it, can never warrant us to persuade every one who hears it, that Christ died for him."

The gospel, which foretells the final perdition of so many of its hearers, at the same time warrants every hearer to live by the righteousness it reveals; and assures them of eternal salvation who thus believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, or live by his righteousness alone, without more.

"Unless we shall say, that Christ died for every individual of mankind, and consequently that none of mankind owe their salvation wholly to his death."

They owe their salvation, and ascribe their salvation wholly to his death, who live and found all their hopes on that alone. Be-

sides, our appropriation relates only to our conscious possession or enjoyment of that which justifies, and therefore is no more liable to the above-mentioned objection, than Palæmon's working to the same end, in a way of painful desire and fear, till he is crowned with enjoyment. If a man receives L. 10,000 as a gift, does the act exist without the gift? And is it the act that enriches him, or the riches he receives? We, on both sides, plead for the conscious enjoyment of the divine righteousness. He, that we enjoy from our consciousness of our acts of obedience, &c.; we, by a discovery of the sufficient righteousness granted indefinitely to the guilty, in such a manner as warrants each one's particular application. Who stands freest from the doctrine of self-dependence, I leave others to judge.

In the second letter, our author wishes Aspasio's faith had been "equally precious with the apostolic." As the difference between his faith and ours is, that we believe the righteousness which pleaseth God is given to us guilty sinners immediately, to live by as our own, which he does not; his faith does not in that respect appear to be more precious, or more apostolic.

It is true, "the apostles never taught men to make one step of advance towards God, on the prospect that God would condescend and come down the rest of the infinite distance to meet them."

And this may be a suitable argument against those who spend their time in offering Christ, upon certain terms or conditions to be performed by the sinner. But this is far from being the case in what we plead for. Christ, or his righteousness, does not meet our believing application, but is the object of it, the thing applied. It is Christ, and his righteousness, that is immediately received, applied, or accounted ours, as being freely given or granted in the gospel report. So that our appropriation terminates in its object, and can no more exist without Christ, than eating can without food. Is it proper to say, that, in eating, a man makes only a step of advance towards his food, on the prospect that the food shall meet him? Just as improper to apply such representations to the appropriation pleaded for.

The apostles called men to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, in such a manner of address as is inconsistent with intending thereby only such convictions as are purely passive—only such as force themselves upon the mind by the evidence of their truth. The apostolic language is, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Acts ii. 38. "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation," ver. 40. And again, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted," chap. iii. 19. And again, "To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins," chap. x. 43. And again, "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin. And by him all that believe are justified," chap. xiii. 38, 39. And again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," &c. chap. xvi. 31. In all these instances, there is something exhorted to, called believing on, or in Christ; being baptized in his name for remission of sins; repenting, and being converted; something more than passive conviction, and, at the same time, something consistent with the alone sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, which can be neither more nor less than the appropriation, trust, or confidence we plead for.

That "the promises of the gospel are made only to believers," will never invalidate our plea for appropriation, while it remains true that the grant of Christ, and the salvation in him, is made to sinners; and, in receiving the grant, they evidently commence those to whom the promises are made; that is, those who believe on Christ according to the apostolic exhortation. And to sinners, thus immediately believing on Christ, the promises are made; *first*, To encourage such to draw near, and live with confidence on the sufficient righteousness; *secondly*, To give them a certainty dependent upon the divine faithfulness, and animating thereby to the most ready and willing obedience.

To say no one must account the righteousness of Christ as belonging to him, in any sense, until he discovers himself a true believer, as it excludes the application we plead for, so, in its room, it introduces all the pernicious consequences this author professes to avoid in his accusation of Aspasio, viz. "holding forth a preliminary human righteousness as some way expedient, or rather necessary, to our enjoying the comfort and benefit of Christ's." Unless Palæmon can make it manifest, that we enjoy the comfort and benefit of Christ's righteousness, while we are, according to him, "working in the way of painful desire and fear, till we come to that enjoyment," common experience teacheth us, that righteousness can only relieve or comfort us, as far as it respects us. That he is able to save his elect, is no comfort to me, further than I conceive myself to be one of them; and in this case I am comforted, either by conjectural hope, or by a hope founded on the difference there is between me and others.

"And to obviate the difficulty, how shall I know that the promise is to me? They address their brethren in this manner: In the name of the great God we declare, that

the promise is to thee, and thee, O man, woman, whosoever thou art."

The promise of salvation to whomsoever believes on Christ, is evidently to the sinner, as his encouragement to come to the sure enjoyment of the righteousness and salvation given in him, by receiving, appropriating, and trusting confidently on him, as so given.

"In his name, we call you this moment to stretch out the withered hand, and the withered heart, and take hold of Christ, saying, He is mine, and I am his."

That may be understood thus: "We speak not in our own name, as signifying our own importance; but inform you of the glad tidings, that it is God's command, and your duty, not to wait to feel some power or alteration in yourself, as a ground for your confidence, but, just as you are, in obedience to the divine command, receive or appropriate Christ, saying, 'He is mine, and I am his.'"

The withered hand, and the withered heart, are expressions used to signify a powerless, helpless, condition; which, consisting in the prevalence of our naturally evil dispositions, serves to denominate us sinners, and spoils our hopes of living by our own performances; yet it is no objection against living by his obedience, who hath become the righteousness of the guilty. For it must be remembered, we are not justified by our acts, but by the righteousness we appropriate; and our appropriation only serves to give us the divinely authentic enjoyment by the word, of that justification of the ungodly, and without strength, whereby we are saved. Hence we are called, not to wait for strength to do something for the enjoyment of this justification, but stretch forth the withered hand, or, just as we are, to live by Christ's righteousness, when we feel nothing but what marks us out for eternal destruction. When Lazarus was made to hear, he came forth, according to the command he heard, or in obedience to the voice that quickened him; and when we are made to hear the divine invitation and command to live by this righteousness, we appropriate it in obedience to him that makes us hear his voice. The righteousness itself is that by which we are accepted; the appropriation respects our possession and enjoyment. In the latter, we may be weaker or stronger; in the former, is the invariable ground of our confidence.

That God has given to us eternal life in his Son, is the apostolic style, and the very record which is pointed out for our peculiar attention; and when the word *offer* has been made use of, and understood to convey nothing more than this important truth, the believer of the record has become the receiver of the gift, or the enjoyer of the blessing.

"Hence we see, that 'this is mine, or this was done for me,' is a truth, whose evidence takes its rise from the pains I take to believe it."

Its evidence depends on the veracity and faithfulness of him who spake the world into being, has provided the sufficient righteousness, and has commanded us to give him this honour of depending on his word, in our enjoyment of this salvation.

It is not in this case the language of the belief of a truth, but of the reception or appropriation of a free gift; the belief of the truth of the sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and of his being freely given, goes before, and is that knowledge of the name of the Lord which emboldens us to put our trust in him. What we thus assure ourselves of, in compliance with the divine invitation, &c. as it is a certain truth in the divine mind, so it appears a truth by the divine word, when it is evident I am begotten to this Christian faith, hope, and charity. The difference here between us, is, that, with Palæmon, "This is mine, this was done for me," is a truth, whose evidence takes its rise only from a discovery, that I am distinguished from other sinners by my faith, love, and self-denied obedience. With us, it is the language of a reception, appropriation, trust, or confidence, grounded upon the divine declarations to sinners for that purpose.

"This, I must say, is indeed a very strange and uncommon way of distinguishing truth."

But such a way of dependence on the divine veracity and faithfulness as becomes us, and gives glory to God. It is the reception of a gift by a persuasion of the mind. It is trusting to the faithfulness of God to make out, in this particular case, a blessing indefinitely promised; not assuring myself of a proposition being true, but of eternal salvation by a Saviour given to me.

To receive a gift, or to partake of any thing upon invitation, is nothing strange or uncommon. In this case, when the gift is given in divine declarations, and the reception of it purely mental, an answerable persuasion of the mind, or (in dependence on the divine veracity and faithfulness) an assuring ourselves of the blessing granted, what we are persuaded of, is in a way peculiar to itself, and very consistent before him who said, "Whatsoever things ye desire when you pray, believe that you receive them, and ye have them." Palæmon will allow, that Christ's death is an uncommon affair, as is also imputing righteousness without works, &c. Why, then, should the peculiarity of thus enjoying righteousness without works, be so much the subject of sneer, because accounted strange and un-

common? May it not rather be accounted such a way of dependence on the divine veracity and faithfulness, as renders him his proper glory?

"If he (namely, Christ,) died for them that perish, then the happiness of them who are saved must be owing to something else besides his death."

Aspasio is no farther concerned here, than as he maintains, that Christ is given for the guilty to appropriate and live by. And in this regard, may it not be said with as much propriety, If an entertainment, provided in common, is refused by some, that then the nourishment of those who partake of it is owing to something else besides the food? This is coming pretty near to our Lord's representation, John vi. 53. A fallacy or impropriety charged upon the former is also a reflection upon the latter.

If we understand, by the happiness of them who are saved, their redemption from the wrath to come, and title to future glory; this is owing strictly to his perfect righteousness. If we mean their present happiness in a conscious possession, knowledge, or enjoyment of this redemption; this, we may say, is owing to his death, given to be received. Palæmon says, to a discovery of our faith, love, and self-denied obedience.

It is a very just observation, that "in speaking of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, we had need keep clear of all human systems, and hold close by the Scriptures."

And it is in strict conformity to this we assert, that although God has given eternal life in his Son, even unto them who by disbelieving it make God a liar, yet no man has that life but he that hath the Son. God gives being to that which he commands, authorizes, and thereby enables us to receive, appropriate, or be persuaded of. And if we admit of his character as a just God and a Saviour, in justifying the ungodly, why should we object thus giving him the glory of his power and faithfulness? Thus "Sarah received strength to conceive seed, because she judged him (not only able but) faithful that had promised." And thus our Lord speaks, Mark xi. 22—24. Shall it be disputed, whether God can give an existence to things that yet are not, and make out that to be true, which we, according to his word, depend upon him for? This confidence is due to God only, and is giving him glory. On the other hand, to suppose this cannot be, and, on this account, to set aside this manner of believing or trusting in him, is to rob him of his proper glory.

This persuasion may properly be called *trusting* in the Lord, because it proceeds neither on pre-evidence nor inward qualifications, but on God's bare word of invitation, promise, &c. taking that as a sufficient authority and security. By this a proper dependence of the creature on the Creator is preserved and kept up. And unless it can, without misrepresentation, be shewn inconsistent and anti-scriptural, all other objections raised against it are but of small account; and all labour to form it into a proposition, true in itself, whether we believe it or no, is the labour of diffidence and unbelief. For it is plain, they cannot trust to God's invitations, commands, and declarations; and are seeking a reason of hope more agreeable to themselves.

"Aspasio maintains, that none have the proper scriptural faith, but those who are taught by the enlightening Spirit to draw the conclusion."

Aspasio maintains, "that when the divine Spirit opens our eyes, &c. we discover and make use of the same right or warrant as is the privilege of the vilest miscreant; a right founded, not on our awakened desires, but purely, solely, entirely, on the free grant of a Saviour."

"They maintain, that reprobates have as fair a revealed warrant to draw the conclusion, as the elect have."

That is, that no man need to wait to see his election, or, in other words, any difference between himself and other men, to warrant his confidence in Christ. The general indefinite expressions contained in the declarations of the gospel, such as, *whosoever, any man, he that believeth on him,* &c. fully authorizing or warranting *he, any man, whosover* he be, to *believe* or *trust confidently on Christ alone* for everlasting life. Being taught of God this truth, he lives by Christ as the Saviour of the lost; even as being taught the sufficiency of Christ, he lives by that alone.

In the third letter, our author mistakes the real question between us. It is not, "Whether or not did Christ finish upon the cross, all that God requires, every requisite, without exception, to procure acceptance for, and give relief unto the guilty conscience of the most profane wretch that lives?"

This is not disputed by us, but maintained more properly on our side than by our author. The question between us is, Whether the guilty conscience can be relieved from the sentence of condemnation, by the consideration of a sufficient righteousness for the elect and the qualified? Or, whether God hath not provided for the relief of the guilty conscience, by giving his only begotten Son, that we might live through him? giving him not only to die, but giving him in the divine declarations to be believed on?

"It must be the very same thing which placates divine justice, or which fully expresses the necessary opposition of infinite goodness to evil or sin, that relieves the sinner from the sentence of condemnation, which is no other than the voice of God naturally residing in the conscience."

As it would be very absurd to suppose it placates the divine justice, without being considered by that justice in the behalf of the transgressor; so it seems to be equally absurd, that it can "relieve the guilty conscience from the sentence of condemnation," without being appropriated by that conscience.

The sentence of condemnation naturally residing in the conscience, requires a revelation of righteousness, that I may as really impute to myself as the sin that condemns me, or the condemnation still remains untouched. A possibility that I may be an elect person, cannot give relief, because it may be ten to one it is not true. My hope is only in proportion as I apprehend many or few to be elected; and, after all, it is not in fact Christ's righteousness that relieves me, but my conjectural or fond hope of being one of the elect.

Christ did finish upon the cross that righteousness "which placates the divine justice, or which fully expresses the necessary opposition of infinite goodness to evil or sin;" that righteousness which alone can relieve the sinner from eternal death, entitle him to eternal life, and bring peace and hope of everlasting life to the most guilty conscience. At the same time, it would be absurd to say, Christ finished on the cross every requisite or commandment relative to this righteousness, as preached or declared in the world. For instance, "He hath commanded all men everywhere to repent;" which I understand a repentance respective of this righteousness; and the same with the commandment, "that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Again, the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," was attended with a commandment to *hear him*, agreable to Isa. li. 1—5. If it is again inquired, of what avail are these commandments? It may be answered, as the commandment to preach the gospel to every creature, availed to be the savour of life unto life in them that are saved, and of death unto death in them that perish; so the commandment to believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ avails to encourage and warrant the sinner, as such, to trust, believe in, or appropriate and enjoy that righteousness. I am persuaded Palæmon will not say, that Christ finished upon the cross any of the commandments above mentioned; as it may be affirmed, on the other hand, that the obedience to these commands is no part of that righteousness which procures acceptance for, or gives relief unto the conscience of the most profane wretch that lives. But Palæmon's reply is, That obedience to these commands supposes the belief of the gospel report. Be it so; the commandment speaks to them, not as to believers, or to the distinguished among mankind, but as to sinners or children of wrath, even as others; and is the divine method of grace in giving us a conscious possession or enjoyment; which Palæmon seeks totally by works.

"What is the turning-point from despair to good hope?"

The finished work of Christ alone. How is that our hope? As it is given for that purpose to be the hope of the guilty.

"Aspasio's faith rests, one foot on the work of Christ, and the other on human efforts, or the motions of man's heart."

Quite a mistake. Aspasio's faith is, that the work of Christ is given to him: on this he rests, and on no motions of his heart whatever.

"What gives right to eternal life? The imputed righteousness. What gives right to that? The work of faith. Who have a right to act faith? Those who feel an aversion to sin," &c.

This is also far from being Aspasio's view of the matter; he should be represented thus: What gives right to eternal life? The imputed righteousness. What gives right to that? The declarations of the gospel, giving it freely to sinners as such. Who have a right to act faith, or appropriate this righteousness? All the ends of the earth; as many as can be included in the word *whosoever*. To any of all the ends of the earth were the apostles commissioned to say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." To exhort thus to a passive involuntary conviction, would be very absurd.

Aspasio's observation is, the "grant is made to sinners; in receiving the grant we commence believers," according to the above-mentioned apostolic exhortation.

"But Aspasio will still insist, that these qualifications are by no means the ground of their right. Let us see, then, where the ground of their right lies."

In the divine declarations to sinners as such.

"I think the obvious meaning of Aspasio's words is this: these persons so qualified, have the right, exclusive of unqualified sinners."

It is very obvious this is not his meaning.

"Where, then, can the ground of this right lie, but in the distinguished qualifications? It cannot lie in any thing common to both; for in that case, the unqualified would have as good a right as the qualified."

They have so. These are Aspasio's real

sentiments: whatever qualifications make a difference between one man and another, they confer no right to the kingdom of God, they confer no right to the imputed righteousness. For, "as all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," they who are justified, are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ."

"They have nothing in the heaven above, nor in the earth below, to keep their hearts from sinking into utter despair, but the bare propitiation. This, and this alone, encourages them to make their address to God."

Can this encourage further than they see their interest in it, or right to draw near to God thereby, in virtue of his gracious declarations? And how are they to address God? As their friend and father, on account of this righteousness? Then they, in fact, appropriate it, and our debate is at an end; we are agreed. Or do they address God only as the friend of some who are to be known in time by suitable qualifications? If this is our author's meaning, then it is he, and not Aspasio, that in drawing near to God seeks for inherent qualifications, instead of the imputed righteousness.

"By this, and this alone, God conveys the first taste of his favour and peace into their hearts."

Unless we conceive of the imputed righteousness as graciously granted unto us in this destitute condition, where is the connexion? What taste of favour and peace can be admitted barely by the consideration of sufficiency for the elect? Sufficient for me a guilty sinner, without any other consideration, is evangelical. To wait for something more before we are allowed to call him friend or father, on account of this righteousness, is not at all adapted to bring us nigh to God by the bare propitiation.

"And it pleases me to find Aspasio had not courage to close this period, without bringing forth the plain truth at last. For pointing to the poor, indigent, and guilty sinners, he concludes, "For such the Saviour is provided; to such his benefits are proposed; and on such his grace will be magnified."

If it is allowed that his benefits are proposed to such, the debate is ended. We mean no more. It is undoubtedly warrantable to receive and appropriate what is provided for the enjoyment of any, or whosoever among the guilty, and proposed to our trust and confidence under that name. If any other consideration must intervene, then it is plain the benefits are not provided for and proposed to such, but only for and to those who have the additional consideration.

"As for the bare work finished on the cross, or the bare report about it, however true we think it, so far have we mistaken it, that, setting aside our active operations about it, we do not see what comfort or benefit can be derived from it."

This proceeds on a total mistake and misrepresentation of Aspasio; he is not putting the least slight on the report or persuasion of the sufficiency of the finished work of Jesus Christ, to justify the most guilty, without more; he is here opposing a qualified persuasion, or rather mere profession, artfully substituted in the room of the sufficient righteousness, and the sinner's living by that alone. A persuasion, "that the shelter of the summer-house is free for our use, accompanied with a high esteem of its accommodation, and earnest desire after its protection, or an habitual tendency towards it." Aspasio asks not, whether a persuasion of the sufficiency of Christ, but "a persuasion that the summer-house is free for our use;" whether this, though accompanied with esteem, desire, or tendency, unless "carried into actual entrance and possession," would answer the end and design of such a truth,—"would be a proper safeguard, or indeed any manner of advantage as to our persons;" that is, in respect of possession, enjoyment, and advantage from that enjoyment. These are his very words. And let any one impartially judge, whether Aspasio is here objecting against the finished work of Jesus; or rather, is he not setting aside a fruitless persuasion, or rather profession, that the shelter is free for our use, with dependence on our supposed esteems, desires, tendencies, &c. that the soul may rest purely and entirely on Jesus Christ alone? whom he describes, from the prophet Isaiah, as "a place of refuge, as a covert from the storm and from rain." Aspasio asks, If a persuasion that Christ is such a place of refuge and covert, free for our use, accompanied with any esteems, desires, and tendencies, will answer to such a representation? Which is in fact, whether we may trust in such a persuasion, esteem, desire, and tendency, instead of that righteousness which is our appointed refuge? It is plain, all the active operations pleaded for, is to live by this alone, in distinction from any other dependence. And the advantage arising from these active operations, is the enjoyment, comfort, and influence of this sufficient righteousness.

If the objector had been pleading for the entire sufficiency of the work of Jesus, Aspasio would readily agree to that, and have recommended living by that alone. But after he had so far coincided with Aspasio as to allow, "that all this grace, and each of these benefits, are free, perfectly free for you, for me, for others;" might not Aspasio ask, Would this bare persuasion answer the end and design of such a truth, unless I was induced thereby to really use it as a shelter? That is, to oppose Christ's right-

eousness, thus freely given unto me, to every sense of guilt and condemnation, and assure myself of salvation by that alone. As I suppose Mr. Sandeman, in his view of things, will allow the believer of the gospel report to oppose the truth of Christ's sufficiency to every declaration or conviction of guilt tending to despair, and this may as properly be called *reducing* that truth *to practice*. This is what Aspasio calls *reducing to practice*, the truth of Christ being given for us to receive and live by him as such a gift, as a refuge from all the curses of the law and danger of damnation, unto the end of peace, assurance, and holiness. We do not consider the gospel as barely furnishing us with good and excellent materials to work upon, but with blessings to enjoy and possess as our own; and our whole comfort, or any part of it, does not arise from the success of our labour, but wholly from the blessings so freely presented to us to take comfort in them, and is very far from making them fit to comfort us.

"Now, it does not signify much by what name we call the mean of escape, whether we call it the law or the gospel; for the great concern we have with either of these, is to obtain righteousness or a title to life."

However true this may be of those who seek by works, in a way of "painful desire and fear, till they are crowned with enjoyment," Aspasio is not chargeable, whose doctrine allows an immediate enjoyment, without the intervention of any righteousness or work whatever.

"For, it is not the bare knowledge of the law or gospel that can do us any service, but the use we make of them."

This is but mere sound; for our author pleads for the above-mentioned use to be made of the report, previous to the enjoyment of the privilege. The use we make of the gospel report, is immediately to live by the righteousness it reveals; whereas the use of the law is, to do that we may live. Is not here a manifest, yea, is not here a sufficient difference?

So each one reasons thus: "Seeing many shall perish, and seeing the gospel says nothing to me but what it says to every one, what comfort can I reap from it, unless I can find about myself at least one grain of odds casting the balance in my favour, in comparison with others, or in comparison with what I myself have hitherto been?"

But this is not Aspasio's language, which may rather be represented, Seeing the gospel authorizes me and every sinner to live by the righteousness it reveals, why should I not make this use of it? Since the door into the kingdom of God is thus open for sinners, why should I any longer hesitate?

"But what signifies all this, says the proud devotee, unless I can find some reason about myself, why the Deity should distinguish me as his favourite beyond other men? And thus he treats the bare truth of the gospel with scorn and contempt."

Aspasio waits for no such reason, therefore this representation does not affect him.

"In vain shall he (any sinner) expect to hear one syllable more from God, to encourage him to draw nigh to him, than that 'he is well pleased in his beloved Son;' that 'Jehovah is well pleased for his righteousness.'"

Hath not God already said, "He that believeth on him shall not be ashamed?" that "he that cometh to him shall in no wise be cast out?" &c. Hath he not given him as bread from heaven, that "whosoever eateth him should live by him?" Has he not given "eternal life to us in him?" even so given to us, that "whosoever" of us "believe not this record" that he hath given of his Son, "makes him a liar?" Are we to set aside these declarations as no encouragement to us to appropriate or to draw nigh to God, lest we should not sufficiently submit ourselves to the divine sovereignty? Or, are we not rather to look upon them as the declarations of sovereign grace; which has found out a way consistent with the highest justice thus to show favour to the guilty, and for the encouragement of such to believe on him, or draw nigh with confidence through the faith of him?

"The apostle John says, 'This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son;' *not* that we should do any thing to obtain life, but that we should live by what he hath done. It is a commandment not requiring any thing of us, but bestowing life by the knowledge which it conveys."

If I live by what he hath done, I account what he hath done given me for that purpose. And this is also the use I make of it; and this commandment so understood, requireth nothing of us, but bestows life by the knowledge it conveys. So that what our author has here said, expresses our whole mind, and may end the dispute.

"Paul, in the deepest of all his distresses, was relieved by that very faith which we modern Christians, in the height of our complaisance, choose only to call of the enfeebled and infantile kind."

A mistake this; Paul was relieved by a view of the sufficiency of grace for himself in particular: "My grace is sufficient for thee." He waited for no other righteousness to certify him that this sufficient grace belonged to him.

"If we hearken to them, the great point about which our faith is principally concern-

ed, is a matter which turns out to be true—no book nor man can tell how."

It turns out to be true in God's faithfulness, answering to his gracious declarations. Our assurance or appropriation is founded and exercised upon God's faithfulness to answer to what he has revealed as the ground of our confidence: That "he has given to us eternal life in his Son;" that "in this man's name is preached to us remission of sins;" and that "whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." So that, in the very nature of the thing, the appropriating language is only the language of trust and confidence, and will turn out to be truth, if God may be depended on, as he most surely may.

"In the gospel offer, we are told, is presented to the poor bankrupt, a bond, or bill indorsed to him, to relieve him from his poverty. It is not his as yet."

It is freely given to him, it is his in right to possess and enjoy, as any thing we are invited to partake of. It is therefore his to live upon, though not his in present enjoyment. It is not presented to him but in common with others who perish, rejecting it as insufficient; yet it is so really presented to him, that he is welcome to live by it, or avail himself of it as his own, without performing one act, or obtaining one qualification to entitle him to it. The difficulty lies in a man's being thoroughly persuaded that this is true; which when a man really is, he immediately lives by this revealed righteousness without more.

"He at last lays hold of it, so it becomes his."

It becomes his by that same grace which has convinced him of its truth, and influenced him thereby to appropriate and enjoy it. It becomes his in possession and enjoyment. Not that God imputes it on account of our appropriation; that only serves the use of peace of conscience by it, and a warrantable enjoyment by the divine word, and to demonstrate we are those to whom it is imputed.

Mr. Marshall, Mr. Boston, and Messrs. Erskines maintain, that, according to the law, "man is bound to believe whatever God declares, and do whatever he commands; that the duty of believing to be true what God has reported, and receiving what he has commanded us to receive or take to ourselves, belongs to the law; which fastens the new duty upon us, the moment the gospel reveals the new object." And if this is not true, how will the hearers of the gospel be condemned for despising or neglecting this great salvation? And if this is true, why may not gospel ministers declare against the rejecters of this grace, what will be matter of their just condemnation? or, in other words, what proves that they that perish, perish justly, and of their own will and choice, vindicating the righteous judgment of God.

And is it not to be maintained, consistent with this, that the gospel is purely and entirely a revelation of a sufficient righteousness for the most guilty? That where it takes place in the heart, it is by the sovereign grace of him who provided the righteousness it treats of? That in receiving it for true, and living by it, they are fulfilling the command of the new covenant; they are performing of duty; and, at the same time, the subjects of the New Testament promise, in having that obedience or law written on their heart, by the Spirit of the living God, as a Spirit of grace and truth?

"I hope Satan does not chain you to your houses, nor stake you down to your fields on the Lord's day."

This is rather to be considered as a convicting them of their sinful negligence and willing ignorance, than giving any directions what we must do to be saved. In that case we allow the answer is, Either keep the law yourself, or live by what Christ has already done.

"We may now turn our eyes more particularly to those who are most successful in propagating a perverted gospel. These men do indeed press very hard upon the conscience to awaken fear; but when they have driven the serious hearer almost to despair, by an awful description of his miserable condition, and by representing him as utterly unable, in every respect, to contribute any thing towards his own deliverance, they at last condescend, with no small art and address, to make some comfortable exceptions from the foregoing awful doctrine. Now is described, in a variety of particulars, a convenient resource, where the pride of the serious hearer may exercise itself with great hopes of success."

The pride of the serious hearer is the conceit of his being able to do or obtain something to deliver himself, as proceeding from his propensity to live by something he is to do, whereby he becomes self-dependent. The truth is, the gift of the divine righteousness depends on no doing or difference in man. The being quickened by the truth of the gospel, to hear the voice of God therein, depends on the sovereign good pleasure of heaven. A man hearing this voice of God, not to the qualified, but to the absolutely guilty and lost, is made obedient to the commands and exhortations to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, or to live by his righteousness, without waiting for any other; and the obedience that answers as an echo to that divine voice, command, invitation, &c. is, and can be no other, than trusting, depending, and assuring ourselves

of salvation by Christ alone, in obedience to the divine declaration, as Lazarus came forth in obedience to the voice that quickened him. When we bid sinners believe on Christ, we would be understood as exhibiting a quickening truth, as well as a divine command; that is, that there is a sufficient Saviour, who may safely be depended on. And in obedience to this voice we are not doing that we may live, but we are living by Christ alone, in obedience to him who makes the dead to hear his voice. The pride of the serious hearer may be as much excited by being told to do, that they may know their salvation, as to do to be saved.

"The preacher finds it necessary to warn his hearers to avoid all thoughts of this doctrine of election at present."

That is, when election is objected against the divine declarations, encouraging the guilty under that character, and without any evidence of election, to live immediately by Christ's righteousness. For the jailor to have objected election against Paul, when he bid him believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, would have been from the enemy.

"Because (says he) there is in this doctrine no visible ground for faith to rest upon, no visible resource for the pride of any man."

No visible ground for a sinner's confidence or trust in Christ alone, which is not the pride of man, but essential to the faith of God's elect.

"Sometimes they take great pains to shew us how little we do when we put forth an act of faith."

The act we plead for, is to live alone by what Christ has done; whether we call it believing on Christ, receiving, appropriating, trusting, or whatever name we give it—this is what we mean. Our opponents on this head, are those who are for having some good thing to be wrought in us, or done by us, before we are to be allowed to live by what Jesus has done; which is, in fact, a denial of its being wrought for the guilty. When they have been driven out of every subterfuge, they at last plead, that we tell people to believe on Christ; whereas it is the Spirit's work, and they must wait for this working of the Spirit before they are able to believe. We do not pretend to deny, that for a man to believe on the Son of God is the Spirit's work; but at the same time are assured, that when a man is taught of God to believe Christ's righteousness a provision for the guilty, he is not taught to assume any other character as his title to it. Nor is he taught of God to consider himself in any other light than as guilty, and justly condemned. And therefore, we farther insist upon it, that a man, without waiting for any thing more than what Christ has already done, is to live by that, as sufficient for him, and given to him in the indefinite grant of the gospel. And this he has to do, that is, live by Christ's righteousness in obedience to the divine command and invitation, when he feels nothing good in him to embolden him thereto; and to depend upon it, that that righteousness will not fail him. And thus far we proceed scripturally, according to the answer given to the Philippian jailor.

We have also asserted, that a man may ask the question, What shall I do to be saved? and yet be but upon nature's bottom. The direction to that man, is not to wait for to do something, or to get something done in him, but to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. When it has been objected to this, that nature cannot believe on Christ, and therefore such are not to be told so; we have answered, He that gives the command is able to overcome this difficulty by divine conviction of the truth, writing his laws in our hearts and minds. And while we, thus taught of God, in obedience to the word, are endeavouring to believe or trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, to obtain our certainty, and rest satisfied with this righteousness, the Spirit of grace and truth may further dissipate every distrustful suggestion, and make us fully so. And here, by believing on Christ, we mean such a trusting, confiding on him, as we allow follows a divine passive conviction of the truth; that kind of activity which is intimated in the Scripture phrases, Acts xvi. 31, John vi. 35, and John iii. 23.

We cannot believe through our own natural averseness to live by the righteousness of another, or our proneness to establish our own. But at the same time, he that is taught of God, when he acknowledges he can do nothing, he rejoices that nothing is left him to do, but, on the contrary, that he is called to live by what Christ has already done. And they who will not distinguish this life from an endeavour to live by our own righteousness, cannot be farther talked with.

As conviction of the truth of the sufficiency of Christ, and his being freely given to the guilty and lost, is the only conviction of truth that is free from self-righteousness; so to live by this sufficient righteousness as so given, is the only activity that most immediately answers to the above-mentioned truths.

Palæmon cannot deny but coming to Christ has the promise of "being in no ways cast out;" but he judges it to be an obedience in consequence of faith, or the belief of the truth. This, on the other hand, is not denied him; and it may be also affirmed, that the promise is an encouragement of certainty of success to every one that comes to

him, and a divine declaration which ascertains the sufficient righteousness to be imputed to every particular person answering that character. *Coming to Christ* is allowed to be more than a passive conviction; it is allowed to be something active in consequence of such a conviction; and as it cannot be any such activity or coming as contradicts the alone sufficiency of Christ's finished work, what answers to the Scripture descriptions or names given to this activity more properly, than living by that sufficient righteousness, instead of doing, or seeking to do, any thing to add thereto?

And as far as Aspasio, Marshall, &c. plead for, or encourage to, an activity of this kind, they cannot be accused justly of setting up another righteousness. This activity terminates in its object, and resolves itself entirely therein. The business to be accomplished by this activity, is only to come under such a certainty of salvation by Christ alone, as is implied in the words *trust* and *confidence*; and the nature of it is as opposite to setting up another righteousness, as the persuasion of Christ's sufficiency. Palæmon pleads for activity in coming at the certainty of our interest in Christ's sufficient work; and we plead for no more. Which, therefore, removes our plea beyond the reach of his objections.

To plead for appropriation as something to be added to entitle to acceptance, is liable to Palæmon's objections. To plead for it so as to make the sufficient righteousness depend on that act for its acceptance with God in our behalf, may also be accused as a doctrine of self-dependence; but to appropriate it as an effect of the report believed, as a means of ascertaining to ourselves eternal life by that righteousness revealed, and as an animating principle of obedience, evidencing our special interest therein, is not at all liable to such objections.

"If faith must be called an instrument, and if it be at the same time maintained, that justification comes by faith only; then I am at full liberty to affirm, that he who is possessed of the instrument, hand or mouth, is already justified, without regard to his using the instrument," &c.

Quite a mistaken view; because faith, or appropriation of Christ, has no existence in itself without its object, as material instruments have.

"We shall seldom find them speaking any thing like the language of the gospel, without cautioning, mincing, or clogging it with some exceptive, *but*," &c.

The apostle says, "To him that worketh not, *but* believeth," &c. There is a believing that stands opposed to working; and if our *but* is the *but* of the apostle, and only respects our receiving the record, and appropriating the revealed righteousness accordingly, it is free from this exception.

"Though Theron is divested of all *righteousness of his own*, of every *qualification* and every *recommendation*, he must yet be well provided with *requisites*, even such as may embolden him to make the appropriation."

A wide mistake: Aspasio's scope and design throughout, is to show, that nothing emboldens to appropriation but the divine grant to sinners as such.

"He (Theron) is very willing to believe that he is a gracious person."

How evident does it appear, from the passage here quoted, that the faith or truth recommended was, "that all was his;" that is, by way of the divine grant of heaven to the guilty. Quite different from believing about himself, that he is a gracious person.

"And while Theron cannot be brought to believe, Aspasio beholds his title perfectly clear."

Aspasio beheld his title or warrant to appropriate from the divine grant made to sinners, not from the prerequisites of Theron.

"I must frankly own, that I see no more difference betwixt a careless and convicted sinner, than is betwixt a felon ranging his round at large and one newly apprehended by the officers of justice; and, for my part, I think it would look liker an impertinent sarcasm than any thing else, to tell either of these last, that he was now in a very hopeful way."

As faith comes by hearing, we hope for another when we can prevail with him only to hear. This does not imply, that there is a foundation of hope in them. We hope, when we see people concerned about their everlasting state, that this concern will terminate in listening to the remedy that is graciously provided.

"As if one could reap any spiritual benefit from studying the divine law, or know how pure, how extensive, how sublimely perfect it is, before he knows Christ the end thereof for righteousness; as if such a one could judge of his spiritual state impartially."

Palæmon seems to forget that he has intimated, that "it was for want of comparing themselves with the divine law, that the Pharisees made their mistake." He that measures himself by others, instead of this sublimely perfect standard, must at last stand self-condemned. He that measures himself hereby, will know his state to be desperate, unless relieved by the finished work of Christ.

"Aspasio, then, hath found out a path, by walking wherein the guilty may confidently hope to arrive at righteousness at last."

Not so; but Aspasio hath found himself

guilty by comparing himself with the divin law. He hath found the difference so great, as to lead him to despair of himself; he hath found Christ the end of the law for righteousness, and the principle of new evangelical obedience. He testifies of this with confidence, as a subject wherewith he is really acquainted, and testifies of what he has experienced to be true.

"The doubtsome faith he (E. E.) complains of, is that which admits of a doubt concerning one's own state. Now, a man may have some doubts about this, who is very firmly persuaded of the truth of the gospel."

The doubtsome faith we complain of, is the want of that confidence answerable to the gracious declarations of salvation in Christ to the absolutely guilty; and not a man's doubting about himself, or what he at present is. On the contrary, we maintain, that this persuasion of a new state in Christ, implies our natural state to be quite bad, and past recovery; and the particular application we plead for, is flying from a bad state in our natural situation, to a good state in the person, righteousness, and blessing of Christ.

As existence, and consciousness of existence, bear such a relation to each other in the human mind, that the former is only enjoyed by the latter; so is justification, and the consciousness of it. If I pereeive not my justification, it is to me as if I was not justified. If I apprehend it is so from a false foundation, it will prove to me as a dream which vanishes when wide awake. If a man, by some kind of argument, was to persuade me that I existed a thousand years ago, though I am not now conscious of it, it would be the same delusion as if he was to persuade me that I am now King George, or the King of Prussia. For a hundred such existences is, in fact, a hundred men; every man's own consciousness ascertaining himself to himself, in distinction from any other. In like manner, if a man was to use arguments to persuade me that I was justified long ago, when I was not conscious of it, he could propose no other end, his labour could no otherwise terminate, than in persuading me that I am now justified. And that which is brought to prove that I am one of those who were justified long ago, when I was not conscious of it, may as well give me a consciousness of my present justification, without all that roundabout labour. Unless it is, that while we are considering these pre-existing justifications, we are apt to slip ourselves in for a share, upon a foundation that will not bear a present scrutiny. The Scripture, therefore, does not thus metaphysically subtilize, it does not thus separate our justification from the consciousness of it. He that is justified by the finished work of Christ, without any conciousness of a difference between himself and others, is justified as ungodly; has peace with God by that which justifies him; and is justified by his faith; that is, not by what he does, but what he believes; and the additional confirmation, by the fruits of faith, or consciousness of our not being deceived in our justification by faith, is called by the apostle James, justification by works, without bearing any contradiction to the alone righteousness by which we are justified. If my justification arises to me from the difference there is betwixt me and others, I may be said to be justified, or enjoy justification, by that difference. If the spring of my hope arises to my view from the report making me welcome to the finished work of Christ, as the righteousness provided for the guilty to live by, then I am justified, or enjoy justification, by Christ's righteousness given to me, in opposition to any thing done by me, or performed in me. If my personal justification, and the consciousness of it, stand so nearly related, it is not at all improper that the ground of our acceptance with God, and the ground of our consciousness of that acceptance, should be of the same kind. So that if I am accepted with God by the work of Christ alone, given to me, I am to know my acceptance with God just upon the same, and no other foundation. If it were not so, the favourite something might be set up, and the pride of man as fully gratified under the name of marks and evidences, as it is under the name of entitling conditions; and we are as effectually taught to draw near with a "God, I thank thee I am not as other men." The sufficient righteousness justifies a man, or gives him a consciousness of his acceptance with God, when he knows it is graciously given to him, so that he is made welcome to draw near to God on that account. He that believes, to the peace of his conscience, believes this, and does not rest in an uncertain conjectural hope. Says Palæmon, a hope grounded on the sovereignty of God; say we, not unless that sovereignty has declared a ground of hope for us; otherwise we rest in bare conjecture. But hearing that Jesus has fulfilled all righteousness for the justification of those guilty ones who believe in his name, from a conviction that the doctrine is true, we assure ourselves, in dependence on the divine veracity and faithfulness, that the privileges are our own; or that we shall not be confounded in so trusting to Jesus.

"Paul calls upon some whom he himself looked upon as believers, to examine themselves whether they were in the faith; and he exhorts others, about whom he observed

the surest tokens of their being true Christians, to give all diligence to remove every doubt concerning their state."

When Paul bid the Corinthians "examine themselves," &c., he plainly intimates their being in the faith a self-evident matter; and that to be in the faith, and to have Christ in them as the peace of their consciences and hope of glory, is the same thing; and this was the surest evidence that he had been a minister of Christ unto them. He is not here calling them to remove the doubts concerning their own state, by a discovery of their faith, love, and self-denied obedience. It is also very improbable, that the apostle should (as Palæmon says) have the surest tokens of their being Christians, and yet call them to doubt of it.

"I am sorry to see Aspasio so much carried away with their (*i. e.* the popular preachers) dissimulation." He points out to Theron his danger and remedy in the following manner: "If you fail in one point or in any degree, you are guilty of all. If your conformity be not persevering as well as perfect, you incur the penalty, and are abandoned to the curse," unless you find mercy by what Christ has already done. No; but "unless, renouncing all your personal performances, you place all your affiance on a Saviour's atonement, and a Saviour's righteousness."

They who endeavour to renounce their personal performances, as an entitling performance required of them, act inconsistently; but they who evidently renounce their own, from a gospel discovery of the Redeemer's righteousness, and live alone by that, in virtue of the divine declarations, are taught of God, and find mercy by what Christ has already done.

"This good conduct of ours, by which we are said to escape the curse."

So we are, according to Palæmon, to take care that we have no affiance, or confidence in Christ's atonement or righteousness, because that is escaping the curse by some good conduct of our own!

"Were (says Aspasio) that firm and joyful reliance on Christ Jesus in any degree proportioned to his infinite merits and inviolable promises." "And, if (says Palæmon) I cannot find acceptance with God, but in being conscious of perfect conformity to this new law, then I am in as great danger as before."

Aspasio moves this very question, not to obtain a prerequisite, but to manifest the necessity of a better righteousness than our reliance, considered as a performance or work of ours, that we may rely upon the sufficient work of Christ, without recurring to any other.

The gospel declarations are not to be separated from our Saviour, his atonement, or righteousness. Nor can our affiance, knowledge, or enjoyment, through that report, be separated from either. Is Christ's righteousness presented to me as a security from the curse of the law? My affiance therein, or knowledge thereof, is Christ, my security, enjoyed by me, and manifested to me. The apostle was not so curious as to distinguish and divide with our author, when he said, "I count all things but loss," not for the excellency of Christ, in distinction from the knowledge of him, but "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;" and this he styles, "not having on his own righteousness."

"My expectations were greatly raised by the beautiful and affecting description of the royal stag-chase, in Dialogue 9, till I saw the sinner's relief described as coming to him by means of such conflicts and struggles," &c.

Aspasio does not mean, struggling to believe the report, but struggling for that rest, which comes at last in a way they thought not of; that is, by the report. The reasons of the soul-struggles described, are ignorance and self-righteousness, seeking other methods of relief than by the declaration of eternal life given in Christ; and it frequently proves, that after many useless struggles in diverse ways, the soul thus finds rest.

"They knew their interest in Christ's death, by the effect that his death had upon them."

Christ's death hath its effect upon us, when we draw near to God thereby; which is, in fact, when we appropriate it.

"They imagine, that something besides the bare truth may contribute more or less toward their escape."

They are clear of this charge, who escape by what that truth declares.

"The gospel leads a man to the greatest reverence for, and submission to the divine sovereignty, without having any claim upon God whatsoever, or finding any reason why God should regard him more than those that perish.

Palæmon maintains, that all who acknowledge the truth of Christ's sufficiency have the promise of salvation. He does not imagine a dependence on this promise opposes the most absolute submission to the divine sovereignty; but is rather a dependence on the promises of sovereign grace. And if we are persuaded of a grant of this sufficient righteousness to the guilty, why may not this be admitted as fully consistent with the same submission to the divine sovereignty?

"The divine sovereignty appearing, that grace might be shown to the worthless; and the divine justice appearing in justifying the ungodly," it is very readily acknowledged,

leaves a man entirely at the mercy of God for his salvation. Here no man's pride is flattered; "no man can find any ground to presume that the Deity regards him more than others. And the relief a man finds by this discovery is, that God can be just, and justify him as he at present stands, without more, or while he finds nothing about himself in the way of wish, desire, or otherwise, but what renders him obnoxious to the divine displeasure." The question that remains is, whether God has not intended a farther relief for such guilty helpless ones, even to assure them of their particular salvation in believing, trusting, and confiding in this sufficient righteousness, as given freely to them to be thus depended upon? whether there is not a word, promise, call, or testimony, to this purpose? and whether Christian obedience is not influenced by an assurance thus obtained? At the same time, we can also readily agree, that "no man can warrantably be assured that he is already a Christian, a believer in Christ, or that he is an object of the peculiar favour of God, but by being also conscious, on good grounds, that his practice, in obedience to the peculiar precepts of Christianity, is influenced by that same truth which influenced the lives of the apostles."

Now, if there is such a *word, promise, call,* or *testimony,* as above mentioned, it is very distinct from, though not contrary to, the declarations concerning the *purpose* and *election* of God; and affords a visible ground for our confident dependence on that righteousness, as sinners, without finding any reason about ourselves why God should regard us more than others; whereas the doctrine of election, in the nature of it, is not of itself capable of affording us this relief.

It is true, "this word, promise, call, or testimony, leaves it as much a secret what particular person shall be saved, as the doctrine of the divine purpose or election does;" but does not leave the sinner so much without a warrant to appropriate. Notwithstanding the doctrine of election, Palæmon will allow, that "by him all that believe are justified." So also it is said, "He that cometh to him shall in no wise be cast out;" "He that believeth on him shall never be confounded."

In this view of things, we are fully warranted "to represent the Deity as keeping secret his gracious intentions" to beget this or that particular person by the word of truth; and, at the same time, "revealing his gracious intentions" to save all those, or any, whosoever they be, that without seeing any difference at all between themselves and others, shall, upon the bare invitation and divine promise to the guilty, live, trust, or depend on his Son and his righteousness, graciously provided as a refuge unto such. And while we "are busy in prompting our hearers to live thus by Christ alone, as given freely and indefinitely to the guilty, we have reason to show no small concern, lest Satan tempt them" to think, that because God's people are chosen to salvation, they are not allowed to feed upon the bread of life, till they know themselves to be distinguished from other sinners as God's chosen. Hereby salvation to the absolutely guilty is denied; and the people are taught to hope for eternal life, only by that which distinguishes them from the rest of mankind. This is building wood, hay, and stubble, on the precious foundation Christ, the Saviour of the lost.

"They tell us, that God hath made a grant, or deed of gift of Christ, and all his benefits, to sinners of mankind. But when we inquire into this again, we find it turns out to be a gift of benefits to multitudes who are never benefited thereby."

And what of all that? Could there be no such thing as manna given to, or rained daily around the camp of Israel, because some despised it, and longed for the fleshpots of Egypt? Must it follow, that there is no such gift, because multitudes neglect and slight it; or because, like Palæmon, they will not be persuaded there is such a gift? Shall our unbelief make the gift, the faith, or faithfulness of God, of none effect? It remaineth nevertheless a truth, that whosoever believeth on him, or receiveth the gift, shall not perish, but have eternal life. And why may not they miss of the benefit of this gift, who thus reject it, as the word preached never profited, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it?

"It might with equal propriety be said, that there is a grant of life made in the law, and that the divine willingness to bless men is therein expressed, Keep the commandments, and thou shalt live."

It might so; the difference lies here: The grant of life in the law requires conditions to be previously performed, before we may presume to account the blessing ours. The gospel bestows life in Christ without any condition, or as a free gift to be immediately enjoyed.

Several instances of the faith of those who were healed by Christ are adduced, to evidence that they only believed Christ's ability to cure them. To this I answer, that in those instances they waited for a proper ground or declaration to proceed upon, in believing that he would; and for that purpose, they made application to him. And where they had ground for concluding the event, they were as certain of that as of his ability. And faith in those cases includes that certainty. 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "If I had all faith, so that I could remove moun-

tains ;" compare with Matt. xvii. 20. "When he saw he had faith to be healed," Acts xiv. 9, and in Luke v. 19. 29, they neither doubted his ability or willingness. In our case, the grant of a Saviour to the guilty is declared, as well as the sufficiency of his righteousness ; hence we make God a liar, if we do not proceed on the truth of both.

"The leper, like the two blind men, was fully persuaded that Christ was able to relieve him. Yet, as he had no claim upon him, he referred his request entirely to his sovereign pleasure. In the full assurance of faith, he was at Christ's mercy, who was no wise obliged to apply his healing power to him."

But this is no argument against that appropriation which proceeds entirely upon the gracious declaration and grant of that sovereign good pleasure. If the sovereign good pleasure has declared the guilty, as such, so welcome to what is already done, that "whosoever believeth on him shall have eternal life," he hath no other application to make, or to wait for. We may be without any claim upon God to do for us any thing that he has not already done, or to give us any right unto what is already done ; but as far as he is pleased to declare himself, it is our business assuredly to believe, trust in him, or hope in his mercy. And that appropriation which proceeds wholly upon his gracious declaration, is consistent with the utmost submission to sovereign grace.

"Sovereign grace interposed, providing a righteousness for the guilty world."

Palæmon should say, to ascertain his meaning, "providing a righteousness for some of the guilty world."

"When once the gift of righteousness is made known to a man."

Can the gift properly be said to be made known to a man, unless he knows to whom it is given? A gift to nobody, is no gift. A gift to the elect, or to the qualified, is not a gift to the guilty world, but to them that are chosen out of it, and distinguished from it.

"He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the record in himself,—the record that God gave of his Son."

Palæmon slips over the record here treated of, viz. "That God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." This the apostle points unto, as what is to be particularly regarded, "And this is the record," &c. Nor should the testimony, that he is well pleased in him, be understood in any sense exclusive of it.

"In like manner, all his children in the faith believe the divine word for righteousness, without perceiving any shadow or symptom of it about themselves ; without feeling, or being conscious of any thing about themselves, to concur with the divine word, to make out their righteousness."

This description suits Aspasio much better than Palæmon, who waits for a discovery of his faith, love, and self-denied obedience.

"If we look into the Scripture, must we not say, that all the good works which shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, are produced by the influence of the divine Spirit dwelling in the hearts of those who believe? Yet such is the connexion betwixt every good work and its reward, that, according to the Scripture, the justice of God, not to say his grace, is concerned to make it good. Heb. vi. 10. 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.' 'Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, verily, I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.' Justice as well as grace will appear in the last judgment ; then due regard will be had to every man's works. But in the justification of sinners, God has no respect to any man, as better than another. He considers men, when he commends his love to them, as ungodly, and without strength, that is, without any will to be better. And all who find mercy, are brought to view themselves in that same point of light wherein God beheld men, when he gave his Son to die for them. They do not find themselves prepared, or made fitter than others for mercy, by any work of the divine Spirit upon their minds ; but they find their first taste of comfort by hearing of him, 'who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.'"

Then they find their first taste of comfort independent of any previous discovery or discernment of their faith, love, or self-denied obedience. And their first taste of comfort is, not that there is a sufficient righteousness provided for the elect, or the qualified, but that there is a sufficient righteousness provided for the guilty to live by, without waiting for any farther discovery.

"The popular doctrine supposes that unbelievers may be seriously engaged in praying for the Holy Spirit to help them to faith, and exhorts them accordingly ; which is as absurd as to suppose, that a man may be desirous of being influenced by the Spirit of a truth, which at present he neither believes nor loves. For I reckon it must be granted, that no man loves the gospel before he believes it."

If we only understood by the gospel that we were welcome to do something, or to wait and pray for something, to denominate us Christ's people, then we might be complaining for want of this power, praying for it, and perhaps falsely comforted with the supposed will for the deed ; and all the while there is no willingness to live entire-

ly by what Christ has done. But this is not the case; when Aspasio considered appropriation as essential to faith, and pressed it accordingly, he understood by appropriation, a living entirely by Christ's righteousness alone, without waiting for any other.

"When our systems describe faith to us, as a saving grace bestowed on us, by which we make use of Christ for salvation; are we not led to think of some grace necessary to our salvation, beside what appeared when Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for the sins of men?"

But inasmuch as Aspasio's whole plea is to live immediately by that grace alone, without waiting for any other, he stands clear of this mistake.

"They seem to forget that Christ is in heaven, and we on earth; that the only way wherein we can receive benefit from Christ, is by the report concerning him conveyed to our ears."

If the report in this particular case invites and authorizes us to live by him, and the righteousness which he performed, who is gone to heaven; we may, notwithstanding he is gone to heaven, receive the report for true, and also lay hold of, or live by, the righteousness it thus reveals and conveys to us.

"When he comes to know that he may be justified, he finds immediately a covert from the storm."

But, according to Palæmon, he does not find this to be a covert for him, till he discovers distinguishing qualifications; whereas Aspasio finds a covert for the guilty sinner without any such distinction.

"If now we understand by the storm, the wrath that is to come, the believer, knowing that Christ hath done enough to deliver from it, loves him, takes hold of him, or flies to him."

How?

"In obeying his commands, and frequenting every mean of correspondence with him."

He that loves him, takes hold of him, or flies to him, obeys his commands, and is inclined to frequent every means of correspondence with him; but to give us this as the meaning and import of those scriptural phrases and representations, more becomes Mr. Locke or Archbishop Tillotson, than the evangelical Palæmon. He may be assured, if he abides by this doctrine, the offence of the cross will soon cease. The primitive Christians were taught to obey, because "Jesus had delivered them from the wrath to come." 1 Thess. i. 10. They fled to him as the righteousness provided for the guilty and destitute; and by the enjoyment of him under this character, they were disposed to all other obedience.

"Accordingly, we find Barnabas exhorted those at Antioch, in whom he saw the grace of God, that with purpose of heart they would 'cleave unto the Lord.' The consequence of which was, they assembled together in the appointed church order, and denied themselves in sending relief to their brethren in Judea."

Did they not assemble as members of Christ, and partakers of his righteousness? Did they not cleave to him as the Lord their righteousness? Or did they only fall into the appointed church-order, in order to escape the wrath to come? If so, what is now become of the sufficient righteousness; or, in short, of all the apostolic exhortations, which constantly proceed upon the certainty of salvation by Christ, as the principle of all the obedience they call for?

See what effect the knowledge of Christ had on Paul, and what was his steady purpose: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Paul says, "My Lord," the thing we plead for; and counts himself "apprehended of Christ Jesus." So that it is plain, he "ran not as uncertainly, he fought not as one that beateth the air." And as his assurance did not allow him, or lead him to trifle, or slacken his diligence in pressing forward to the desired end: so, on the other hand, his pressing forward was far from being the result of his uncertainty; far from being animated with a view to know, by his performances, whether the divine sovereignty had interposed in his behalf.

Palæmon does not approve of Aspasio saying, "You must endeavour, diligently endeavour, to believe." But we may plead in his excuse, that Aspasio is not here pressing to receive a report as true without evidence, but to appropriate and live by the revealed righteousness; to obtain and maintain thereby that certainty of acceptance with God, which was necessary to animate and incline to all evangelical obedience, and is included in every apostolic exhortation. "Wherefore, as ye have always obeyed—as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him. Work out your own salvation. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life," &c. And thus understood, we may allow, with Palæmon, that "by such arguments God worketh in them that believe, both to will and to do, not any thing in order to justification, but all those things wherein their salvation is evidenced."

"If a friend of mine should see me cheerful on hearing something new, and I should tell him I was comforted by an act of faith; would he not say I trifled with him, and readily ask what good news I had heard, that he might partake in my satisfaction?"

But this representation does not reach those who plead for an immediate and con-

stant living upon the complete and perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. They are comforted by his acts, and their own has no other concern in it.

"Faith, with its effects, is in Scripture often signified by one expression, and accordingly connected with salvation; as when it is said, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Now, though we cannot say that a believer is saved on account of his prayers, yet we may say that he is saved on account of what he believes, and by which he is encouraged to pray. It is easy to see love and hope expressed in all the prayers of faith recorded in the Scripture; yet it would be absurd to infer from thence, that prayer, love, and faith, are requisites in order to justification, for if we agree with the apostles, we must still maintain, that justification comes by faith, and not by works—not by any thing we do in obedience to any law whatsoever."

And at the same time it must be acknowledged, that faith is duty and obedience to the divine law, and in this sense a work; for, as our author has observed, "Will not that law which Christ came to fulfil, the law which requires love to God with all the heart, condemn all who by their unbelief make God a liar? Does not the Spirit of God convince all whom he brings to the knowledge of the truth, of sin, because they believe not on Christ? In fine, is there any thing contrary to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God not condemned by the divine law?" How can these be reconciled, unless we admit that faith is so far a work, duty, or obedience, as has been above mentioned? Yet, as Palæmon maintains, we are justified only by what we believe. We are justified by faith, as we are pleased with a sight, that is, with what we see. And God justifies us by faith when he gives us this sight of faith, whereby we are thus justified. And thus to be justified by Christ's blood, and to be justified by faith, is the same thing.

If Palæmon will abide by what he says, that the Scriptures point forth the freedom of divine grace to the setting aside all human distinctions, in such language as this, "If any man will come after me,—Let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely"—we are then agreed; this is the foundation of all we plead for, that sinners, as such, are made welcome to take of the water of life freely.

"If the Scriptures describe believers as pilgrims and strangers on earth, as running the Christian race, denying themselves for the sake of the heavenly inheritance, and accordingly 'flying for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before them;' our preachers, ever mindful of their acts of faith, are ready to exhort us to put forth the acts of flying to Christ, and laying hold on him."

The passage alluded to is Heb. vi. 18, 19. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," &c. *Who have fled*, is an act passed, and bears a manifest reference to flying from the revenger of blood to the cities of refuge, Numb. xxxv. 27; to which city the manslayer being fled, was, while there, secure: not in his act, but in the privilege of the city wherein he now dwelt; and waited unto the death of the high-priest, as the hope set before him. The hope set before us, the apostle tells us, we yet see not, "but with patience wait for it," Rom. viii. 25. But how can we with patience wait for it, if it is not at present the "anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast?" Or, as the apostle says in another place, "I so run, not as uncertainly." Yet as his security lay in that righteousness of Christ alone, he kept his body (all his temporal concerns) under subjection thereto, even as the manslayer abode in the city of refuge, knowing there was no safety for him elsewhere. When a man performs his acts of obedience, that he may thereby gain himself a conscious title, possession, or enjoyment of the favour of God, it is but of little moment whether he styles it the favour of God by Christ, or by any other name. His way to come at it is still the same—by his own obedience. Nor can this be flying for refuge to Christ, but rather choosing my own performances as my security, and betaking myself to them.

"If Barnabas exhorts those in whom he saw the grace of God, with purpose of heart to 'cleave unto the Lord,' after the example of the believers who were said to be added unto the Lord when they were added to the society of the disciples, keeping his commands, then we are told, that justifying faith is a cleaving to Christ."

It will answer our purpose, and convey our whole meaning to say, the faith which justifies cleaves to Christ; and in exhorting to cleave to Christ, we exhort to continue in the faith. The phrase, "Believers were the more added to the Lord," is, very evidently, neither more nor less, than that many more were begotten to the faith.

"But Aspasio tells us, that it is the office of faith 'to take and use the inestimable gift.' If in this or any other part of the New Testament, more be meant, by receiving Christ, than knowing him or believing on him, then I am ready to shew, that more than faith is meant, namely, faith with its fruits and effects."

By *receiving Christ* more may be meant than *knowing him*, but not more than *believing on him*. We may be said to *know* a thing, when its evidence forces itself upon the mind; but to *believe on Christ* is, in the Scripture sense, the subject of exhortation. If Palæmon will confine himself to mean, by faith, no more than a passive conviction of truth, it shall be allowed him, that by *believing on Christ* more than he means by faith is intended. The same may be said of the phrases *laying hold, leaning*, &c. more is allowed to be meant by these expressions than Palæmon means by faith. At the same time it may be affirmed, that these expressions of activity "do not contribute their quota" to our justification, since we are justified by the righteousness received, trusted, or leaned upon, and not by our act. We are justified by *what we receive*, even as Palæmon will allow we are justified by *what we believe*.

"The faith of the Gospel is indeed the basis of trust."

If so, we are agreed again; for this *trust* we call *believing on Christ*. If the faith of the gospel is the *basis of trust*, it is of appropriation; for how can I trust in that wherein I am not allowed to take any share? If we are not allowed to trust in the Redeemer's righteousness when absolutely guilty, the faith of the gospel is not the basis of trust. In Palæmon's view, the gospel only shows us the possibility of the salvation of the elect, and cannot therefore be the basis of trust to a sinner; but the discovery of his obedience, as giving him hopes that he is one of the elect, is, in fact, the matter wherein his trust is founded.

"If one approaching to a frozen lake or river over which he has occasion to pass, tells me, that he has been assured by good information, that the ice was sufficiently strong to support him; and yet after all proves timorous, and averse to make the trial by venturing his person freely upon it, I plainly perceive he has no faith in the report he heard, because he does not trust in it; or, which is the same thing, he cannot trust, rely, confide in, or venture himself upon the ice."

There cannot be a more apt illustration of what we plead for. And he that ventures his eternal concerns on the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ, with the same confidence that he that believes the ice will bear him ventures his body upon that, will not be averse to run the risk of his interest and reputation also for the sake of it. We can therefore have no objection to Palæmon, when he says,

"If one tells me that he believes the gospel, and yet proves averse to risk his interest or reputation in the world for the sake of it, I immediately perceive that, whatever he speaks with his mouth, he does not in his heart believe the gospel, because he puts no trust in it."

"Perhaps it will now be inquired, are no rules to be observed, no means to be used, no works to be exerted by the human mind or body, in order to justification? The answer is ready: Yes, very many. And they may be thus shortly summed up: Be perfect, keep the commandments, and thou shalt live. The obligation of the law is eternal, and cannot be loosed. But perhaps another state of the question will be demanded, and that faith should be more directly respected therein. Well, then, let it stand thus: Ought not a man to be at pains to attain the persuasion, that all the pains he takes are good for nothing, except to enhance his guilt? Here, methinks, we are landed at downright absurdity; for who will labour in hopes of being convinced that all his labour is to no purpose, unless to his hurt?"

This we may allow to be very well stated, with respect to the persons whom it concerns. But the question between our author and Aspasio really stands thus: Are no rules to be observed, no means to be used, no acts to be exerted, by the human mind or body, to arrive at the certainty of our own particular justification? Palæmon says, Yes, a great many; as many as will serve to demonstrate that we are elected: Aspasio says, Only thankfully to receive or accept the blessings as freely given. And all the direction given by Aspasio respects this question, and not the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ to justify the most guilty.

"The design of the passage, Rom. x. 19, 20, 21, is plainly to show, that faith comes not by any human endeavours, or the use of any means, even under the greatest advantages that men can enjoy, but of that same sovereign good pleasure which provided the grand thing believed."

Here is, then, notwithstanding all Palæmon's exactness, a something more than the finished work of Christ, a something called faith, which he tells us comes "of that same sovereign good pleasure which provided the grand thing believed." Palæmon will reply, he means no more than believing that which is provided is sufficient; nor do we mean any more by appropriation, than receiving that which is sufficient, as believing it to be freely given to us for that purpose.

"I would here subjoin, by way of postcript to this, some reflections on the assurance or appropriation said to be essential to saving faith.

"While various terms and distinctions are coined by popular preachers on this subject, great neglect is shown to a very plain and obvious distinction, which Paul makes

betwixt the assurance of faith and the assurance of hope."

Upon a review of the Scriptures, to see what foundation there was for this remark, I gathered the following:

1. In regard to *faith*. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. v. 1; "All joy and peace in believing," Rom. xv. 13; and not by what Palæmon styles assurance of hope, gathered from a discovery of our faith, love, and self-denied obedience.

The language of faith is not barely concerning others, the elect, &c.; "But we believe, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved," Acts xv. 11.

Faith is described, Heb. xi. 25, 26, to be so far the assurance of eternal life by Christ, as to be, on that very account, "the victory that overcomes the world."

They that died in faith, "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of and embraced them, and (therefore) confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," Heb. xi. 23,—did they not appropriate these promises? or did they only consider them as belonging to the elect, and themselves uncertain whether they were of the number, till they could discover it by the discovery of their faith, love, and self-denied obedience?

The assurance of faith proceeds upon "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a way consecrated for us, and having a High-priest over the house of God," Heb. x. 19, 22. And can all this be in a fixed uncertainty, or without appropriation? Can I draw near, as having a way consecrated, or as having a High-priest over the house of God; and, at the same time, do not know whether I have or no?

If we are condemned for asking doubtingly, James i. 6, 7, and for little faith in Providence, Matth. vi. 30, does not the opposite character imply a certainty of divine favour and regard by sovereign grace, independent of a discovery of our previous obedience?

Rom. xiv. 23. "Whatsoever is not of faith," *i. e.* whatsoever action is not of confidence of acceptance with God, "is sin." Does not this Scripture make confidence essential to faith?

Rom. iv. 5. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly," &c. Is not this inconsistent with waiting to be godly, before I dare put my trust in him?

We cannot "call on him in whom we have not believed," Rom. x. 14; that is, we cannot "call in faith, nothing doubting," as above, James i. 6.

It is the divine commandment to "believe in his name," 1 John iii. 23; and it is the strength of "faith against hope," of what we see or feel, "to believe in hope" of what God hath freely given and promised.

Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the *faith* of him." Can this be where there is no appropriation?

Gal. v. 5. "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by *faith*." Can this be said in an uncertainty? or in a conditional certainty depending on our performance?

Can the dead live by "believing on him," according to John xi. 25, if they are to wait till they feel life first?

2. In regard to *hope*. We are told, that not our performances, but God's promise and oath, are the "strong consolation of them who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the *hope* set before them; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both *sure* and *steadfast*, and which entereth into that within the vail." Heb. vi. 18, 19.

We are told to "hold fast the beginning of our confidence, the confidence and rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." Heb. iii. 6.

As we "have not seen, and yet have believed," so we are said to "hope for that we see not, and patiently wait for it." Rom. viii. 25. "We are saved through faith." Eph. ii. 8. "We are saved by hope." Rom. viii. 23. We are said to "purify ourselves by this hope." 1 John iii. 3; to have our "hearts purified by faith," Acts xv. 9; to "purify our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto the unfeigned love of the brethren." 1 Peter i. 22. We are said to be all "the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," Gal. iii. 29; to be "begotten again to a lively hope," not through a discovery of our obedience, but "by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." 1 Pet. i. 3. And "the God of hope fills us with all joy and peace in believing." Rom. xv. 13. "And being justified by faith, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 2.

When we are exhorted, 1 Pet. iii. 15, to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us," I apprehend our faith, or that truth we believe, is that reason, and not our own righteousness or qualifications. Upon this review of these Scriptures, it appears to me, that Palæmon's refinement upon the Scripture phrases, to the excluding appropriation or certainty of salvation from faith, and ascribing it wholly to a discovery of our inherent qualifications, under the name of assurance of hope, is not so scripturally founded as he has imagined.

"The assurance of hope is enjoyed only

by those who give all diligence to obtain it."

That they are exhorted to show "the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end," is true. We are also to "hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

"The first of these (the assurance of faith) was called for in a man's first profession of the faith, upon his first hearing the gospel, in order to his being acknowledged for a Christian."

Hope is also called the "hope of our calling by the gospel," Eph. i. 18, not the hope of our obedience, or hope arising from our qualifications. And upon a man's first hearing the gospel, when he was first begotten again by the word of truth, he is said to be "begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." 1 Pet. i. 3. Christ is said to "dwell in our hearts by *faith*," Eph. iii. 17, and Col. i. 27, as our "*hope* of glory." And if he is not thus in us, we are said to be not young professors, or young Christians, but reprobates.

"The assurance of faith is likewise necessary to the drawing near to God in his worship."

We are likewise said to "draw near to God by the better hope," Heb. vii. 19, "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both *sure* and *steadfast*."

"The assurance of hope, again, is an enjoyment proposed to them who believed."

A steadfast continuance, full assurance, and increase in the faith, is proposed to them also.

"The assurance of hope, then, holds pace, first and last, with the work and labour of love."

The apostolic hope held pace, first and last, with the apostolic faith; and love or charity followed both. The apostles do not teach the order to be faith, love, and hope, because I love; but faith, in the revealed righteousness, is the spring of hope; and love flowing from both. "Now abideth faith, hope, and charity; these three" as the root, and not the fruit of our obedience.

"There was no Christian, however eminent, in the days of the apostles, but needed the exhortation to give all diligence for maintaining and confirming the assurance of hope."

Nor was any Christian so far advanced, but he might be exhorted to be "strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and continue in the faith grounded and settled."

"They often called on men to examine themselves."

They declared remission of sin immediately in Christ's name, as the truth whereby we pass "from death to life." They did not teach people to find remission of sin by the way of their inherent dispositions or works; but when the apostle Paul was called upon for a proof of Christ speaking in him, he bid the Corinthians examine themselves for that proof; for if they had not received Christ, they were reprobates; and if they had, they were his epistle of commendation, agreeable to what he had said, chap. iii.—xiii. 5.

"No man, then, can be charged with the sin of disbelieving the gospel, for doubting if he be a good Christian."

But he may, for doubting whether Christ is given to him in the divine declarations to sinners; or, whether he may trust to those declarations; or, for doubting whether he may venture his eternal concerns upon Jesus Christ alone, without and before any discovery of his excellency above other men.

"Yea, we find the apostles ready to quash the confidence of those who were ready to conclude their state was changed, by such awful sentences as this: 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'"

They who professed the faith and hope of Christians, and were evidently not influenced by the Christian love to observe the commandments of him in whom they professed to believe, were undoubtedly the subjects of this censure; which may well be admitted, without any contradiction to the hope of a guilty sinner by Christ alone.

"The apostles frequently declare their assurance of faith and hope in the same passage. While they express their faith in Christ, they are at the same time confident of their interest in him."

This proves, that either the apostle's Christian hope stood in a nearer connexion with their faith, and sprung more immediately from their doctrine than Palæmon will admit of; or else, that he is more accurate than they in describing it.

"This joint assurance they sometimes express in fellowship with all that follow their footsteps, and often in language plainly distinguishing the apostles themselves from other professors of the faith."

The 1 John v. 11, is not of this sort: "This is the record which he that believeth hath in himself; he that believeth it not maketh God a liar, because he believeth not the record which he gave of his Son." And *this is the record* that God hath given, not to us apostles, exclusive of others: not to us who can say, "God, I thank thee I am not as other men;" but to us, guilty sinners, lost, &c.; to us, as numbered with them who, in not believing it, make God a liar. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son:" so given him, that "he that hath the Son hath life, and he

that hath not the Son of God hath not life;" it being only to be received, posessed, or enjoyed, in receiving, possessing, and enjoying of him.

"The same Spirit, acting as the Comforter, is given only to those who are already the friends of Christ. To this purpose Paul says, Gal. iv. 6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'"

That is, and because ye, while enemies, have received, through the gospel, "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." Eph. i. 5. Because, also, according to the fulness of time, ye are sons, the church being come out of her non-age. As a proof of this it is evident, God hath not given you "the spirit of bondage again to fear, but he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts," whereby ye obtain such a discovery of salvation to the guilty, as enables you to cry "Abba, Father."

"The Holy Spirit then acts a twofold part, as he breathes in the gospel. He reconciles enemies, and he comforts friends."

He reconciles and comforts enemies in the same instant, and by the same truth; so the distinction is not properly founded. Besides, the consolation we have by Christ to the end, is of the same nature with the beginning—the grace that is manifest in Christ Jesus to the guilty. Not but that we have also the additional consolation of those sayings which relate to our witnessing and suffering for the truth.

"What, then, shall we say of those pretenders to the apostolic consolation, whose very profession of Christianity, instead of being any loss to them, spreads their reputation for piety, and procures them esteem and reverence from the world?"

We will say, their consolation is not apostolic, that the offence of the cross has ceased with them, or that they are of the world. But it is very plain Aspasio's appropriation, or that trust wherein he is comforted, has not had this effect, however he may have been honoured on other accounts.

"In latter times, not a few have, from the hand of church authority, supported by secular power, endured the same sufferings which the apostles met with from the Jews and Romans, and accordingly enjoyed the same consolation. It was very natural for such of them as were writers to commend the faith which thus wrought by love."

They suffered as maintaining the certainty of salvation by Christ alone, and did not ground their certainty upon their sufferings, although they were far from being discouraged thereby, but endured them with additional consolation. Their assurance gave the offence, and caused their sufferings.

"Shall we say that these friends of Christ would have approved of that assurance of an interest in him, which men now pretend to acquire by some heart work, in a full consistency with their worldly ease and reputation?"

Nor does Aspasio plead for such an assurance: what he pleads for is founded only upon the divine declarations to guilty sinners; and is far from having the approbation of the devout and honourable of the world, however they may profess to esteem his writings on account of the elegancy of the style, or some particulars foreign to his main intention in them.

"The modern assurance proceeds on the principle, that the simple truth believed affords no joy nor comfort."

This cannot be our case, who plead for the joy and comfort of the sufficient righteousness, as given freely to the guilty in those evangelical declarations.

"Will the news of a plentiful importation of corn, in the time of famine, give joy to many ready to perish, and revive even the poorest with the hope that they may be fed?"

Will the joy and comfort of this news be set aside by understanding, that the corn is freely given for us to live upon without money or price? Will not this rather enhance the joy? Does not the poorest receive comfort from such tidings, because they expect either to be able to buy some, or to have some given them?

"Yet no man knows certainly but his present day may be his last."

But the joy created by the news abovementioned proceeds on a contrary supposition, viz. That he shall live, and be sustained by it. Besides, the bread of life concerns a day that will never have an end; therefore this uncertainty is foreign to the purpose.

"And however diffident the convert (that is, the convert of Aspasio's stamp) be, he is still supposed to be possessed of some degree of assurance, provided he blame himself for the want of it."

He is supposed to live by Christ alone, as his sufficient righteousness, who condemns every word, work, or thought to the contrary, or who fights this fight of faith against all oppositions and trials, inward or outward. But though we may make such an allowance, this is not our point. The question is not so much about whether I believe; let that make itself evident; the proper question to be always considered and rested in, is this, Does God give to guilty me eternal life in his Son? Is this the spring of my hope, and the source of my love and obedience? Do I live not by my notion that I am a believer, but do I live by this?

"They (the devils) believe, they hate, and

yet they tremble at that truth which Christ's people believe, love, and find salvation in. With them are ranked all those of mankind who know as much of the truth as inclines them to hate and pervert it."

Yet it cannot be said of the devils, they have the same confidence. It cannot be said of the devils, that they receive or appropriate the divine righteousness as freely given to them, or that they see any foundation for it.

"In this view, the same truth is the savour of life unto life unto some, and of death unto death unto others. In this view, the same truth is the object of contempt and chagrin to some, and of love and joy to others."

True, it is so; but not by both believing it alike for themselves.

LETTER VI.—"WE are now, then, to consider faith as a principle of life and action."

Palæmon is here obliged to admit of a different consideration of faith. If he considered it in justification as a principle of life and action, he would have been involved in the mistakes he has been opposing. If, on the other hand, he denied faith to be a principle of life and action, he would overthrow the principle of the Christian obedience he pleads for. Now, since he is thus obliged to take up this distinction for himself, why should he not allow it to Aspasio? Why should he not allow that appropriation, although it is an act or work exerted by the human mind, in consequence of the belief of the gospel, and as a principle of all other Christian obedience? Yet we are not justified by our appropriating persuasion, but by the righteousness we appropriate; even as Palæmon says, we are justified by what we believe, and not by faith, as a principle of life and action.

"And here we must carefully distinguish betwixt all works by which men would pretend to acquire faith, and those which faith produces; for, if we will contend that justification comes by faith without works, and that there is no acceptable working but what follows upon this, and yet maintain that faith is acquired by works, we undoubtedly reason in a circle. And however seriously and devoutly we may be occupied in this kind of reasoning, it is evident we are employed in nothing else but solemn trick and dissimulation; unless it may be pled in our behalf, that we are imposing on ourselves by the same means by which we impose upon others.

"Men are justified by the knowledge of a righteousness finished in the days of Tiberius; and this knowledge operates upon them, and leads them to work righteousness. 'If ye know,' says the apostle John, 'that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him.' Faith is not acquired, but is obtained, as Peter says, (τοις λαχουσι), 'To them who have obtained by lot like precious faith with us.' Of two criminals justly condemned to die, if one escapes by a favourable throw of the dice, and the other dies for his crime, we see mercy in the deliverance of the former, and no injustice in the death of the latter. Two men may be employed with equal diligence in studying the Scripture, and with equal seriousness in praying for divine assistance; the one may come to know the truth, and the other may grope in the dark all his lifetime. He who comes to know it, plainly perceives that he has found what he was not seeking after; he plainly sees that his most serious devotion was pointed in direct opposition to what now comforts him."

Nevertheless, the truth being declared, they may, like the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures, "whether these things are so."

"Thus the word of life is held forth in the world—serving as a mean of divine appointment to lead some to the faith, and render others inexcusable."

This is a proper reply to Palæmon's own objection: "That the grant of the gospel is a gift of benefits to multitudes who are never benefited thereby. It serves as a means of divine appointment to lead some to faith, and leave others inexcusable."

"The change made upon a man by the belief of the gospel, may be thus illustrated: When Lazarus was revived to the enjoyment of this mortal life, neither his will nor his power were concerned in the obtaining of life. Yet his life could no otherwise be continued and enjoyed, but in his voluntary exercise of it. As soon as he revived, the principle of self-preservation, with all its hopes and fears, behoved immediately to be set in motion. No sooner was he possessed of life, than the active love of it behoved to take place. Accordingly, no sooner does a man begin to know the grace of God in truth, than love to it takes place in his heart. Love is the activity of that life which a man obtains by faith; for faith worketh by love."

But what is all this to the doctrine of working in painful desire and fear, till we come to the enjoyment of life, or the knowledge that we have life. Lazarus had no principle of self-preservation before he was conscious that he had a self to preserve; nor had he any love of life before he enjoyed it. In like manner, we can have no love to that grace of God we know not, nor desire to preserve that life we never enjoyed.

"If a man of low condition is by a royal patent ennobled, and entitled to a place in the politest assemblies, he cannot enjoy the pleasures of his promotion but in as far as

he loves and studies to learn the manners suitable to his rank and company."

And his motive to this improvement of these manners is, that he is promoted to a station he desires to enjoy more perfectly. So we, being called to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, toil no more in the way of painful desire and fear to attain to a consciousness of the privilege, but as partakers of it are influenced thereby.

"The apostle John, speaking of obedience to the new commandment of love, says, 'Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God;' that is, if, notwithstanding our natural bias against the gospel, with its remaining effects, giving us daily disquiet, our heart condemn us not as destitute of love to that truth which the world hates, then we have confidence towards God; even as much confidence as the testimony of our own conscience can give us."

This is plainly not the confidence which the truth itself affords a guilty sinner, but confidence "that we are not destitute of love to that truth the world hates." The former is our life, the latter is only an additional corroborating comfort.

"Yet this is but one witness, and needs to be supported; for in this case one may be liable to doubts, lest even his own conscience should be partial in his favour."

If we have confidence in Christ by the truth itself as we are guilty sinners; if I am conscious that the truth, or, which is the same thing, my faith, and confidence in it, works by love; if our hearts condemn us not in this matter, then have we confidence towards God: *First*, because we are conscious we proceed on divine authority: *Secondly*, we prove the blessed effect of the truth. These, then, are two witnesses inseparably united. The first a divine truth, the testimony of the divine Spirit, than which there cannot be a greater ground of certainty: the latter is the consciousness of the effect of that truth.

"Here, then, the Spirit of truth, who never fails to bear witness to the genuine effects thereof, gives his testimony as a second witness supporting the former. Thus Paul, after he had said, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,' adds, 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.'"

The apostle Paul, after he had said, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," adds, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received (*i. e.* by the gospel truth) the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." And then follow the words, "The Spirit itself (which ye received in the hearing of the gospel, imboldening us guilty sinners to cry "Abba, Father," through the divine righteousness freely given to us: this Spirit received in the gospel) beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," and not of them who deceive themselves with vain thoughts.

It is already granted, that "the Spirit of truth never speaks one word or sentence to any person beyond what is written in the Scripture." And what is written in the Scripture, is either the declarations of free salvation to sinners in Jesus Christ, or divine assurances of no disappointment to them that believe on Christ, or an account of the genuine effects of faith. In the first we are taught to apply what is said to ourselves as sinners: In the second, we are encouraged to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, in assurance of salvation by him, without disappointment: In the last, we are informed of the genuine effects of this truth, or faith, corresponding to what we find and feel to be true, when we believe according to that which is written.

"And this he (*i. e.* the Spirit) does, by shedding abroad in the heart such an abundant sense of the divine love, as leaves no room for, so casts out, the anxious fear of coming short of life everlasting."

The love shed abroad in the heart, is that manifested in Christ dying for the ungodly when enemies, and without strength; not love manifested to the qualified: for "if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, (given freely unto us,) much more being reconciled," as is apparent to us in what we believe, and in its genuine effects, we have a hope (that maketh not ashamed) that "we shall be saved by his life;" that he who gave us righteousness while enemies, will save us for ever who are thus reconciled to him.

"Thus that love to the truth, which formerly wrought in a way of painful desire, attended with many fears, is perfected by being crowned with the highest enjoyment it is capable of in this mortal state."

I do not read in the Scripture of any love to the truth of the gospel so described. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, (and he crowned us with enjoyment,) but that he loved us, and sent his Son, his only begotten Son, into the world, that we might live through him;" sent his Son "to be a propitiation for our sins. If we who are of this truth love one another, his love is already perfected in us; and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Herein is our love made perfect. He that feareth," and is not imboldened by the truth to venture his everlasting concerns upon Christ Jesus alone, "is not made perfect in love. We love him because he first loved us, purifying our souls by obeying the

truth through the Spirit unto the unfeigned love of the brethren," as its proper and genuine effect.

"Jesus Christ, who loved his Father with a perfect heart, even while sorrowful unto death, received the highest proof of his being the beloved Son of God, when, being exalted at the Father's right hand, and being made most blessed with a sense of his love, he experienced fulness of joy in his presence."

But he knew he was the Son of God before he had this highest proof: he, though sorrowful unto death, had none of the anxious fear of coming short of his glory, but was animated by that glory. "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame." He received the word in its accomplishment, as the highest confirmation of the veracity of what his Father had spoken. But surely he shewed himself entirely satisfied with the bare testimony, when he answered the tempter, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

"The report of this draws them who believe it to love him, and suffer for his sake. To such, Jesus Christ promised fellowship with him in the fulness of joy."

That *fulness of joy* must be in the life to come, according to Psalm xvi. 11. For in this life we walk by faith and not by sight; and hope which is seen is not hope. And it is also acknowledged, that Jesus himself did not enter into this joy till he ceased from this world.

John xv. 10, 11. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

The commandments here spoken of are, to believe, and love, for the truth's sake. The love and joy is that which is manifested by the word in this life, and which neither "life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers," nor any kind of suffering or affliction, shall be able to separate us from. Nevertheless, we yet but hope for the fulness of joy that Jesus is now arrived at, with "hope that maketh not ashamed," but animates us to be followers of Jesus, "enduring the cross, despising the shame."

"When the saving truth first shines in the hearts of men, the effect is suitable to the divine promise, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' This fear, dwelling in their hearts, checks and recalls them when ready to be utterly led away by their former evil inclinations. They are preserved from falling away, by the fear of falling away."

This is no more that a fear of caution, consistent with the utmost confidence of the sufficiency of Christ, and the veracity and faithfulness of God; consistent with a firm persuasion, that nothing shall "be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The slavish fear which ariseth from uncertainty, and is seeking after a differencing something to remove our torment, is so far from preserving us from falling, that it is rather a proof we are not satisfied with the sufficient righteousness, with the sufficient ground of faith and hope, and have at present no part or lot in the matter.

"It is evident, that to have the Holy Spirit as the Comforter and earnest of the heavenly inheritance, is an attainment far beyond any influences of the Spirit that are common to those who believe for a time, and those who believe to the saving of the soul; yea, beyond the regenerating work of the Spirit, by which men are at first brought to the knowledge of the truth, and taught to love it."

"To find by experience (in the effects of the report on our minds) the truth of what they formerly believed on testimony," (which is what Palæmon declares himself to mean,) is certainly an attainment of another kind than the joy and comfort of the truth itself. But that a conscious certainty, that "I depend on the promise of Christ, and run all hazards for his sake," is what the Scripture means by the *Comforter* and *earnest* of the heavenly inheritance, does not so evidently appear: because, 1. This is not taking of things of Christ, but taking of our things, and shewing them to us: 2. It is not the Spirit's bearing witness itself with our spirits, but bearing witness by the medium of our obedience: 3. It would be speaking more to us than what is written in the Scripture: 4. This consciousness, and the joy accompanying it, was an attainment of the people of God before the resurrection of Christ, as really as it has been since: whereas the Comforter promised was to be the consequence of Christ's ascension to his Father, and was first performed on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 33: Lastly, To wait for an attainment far beyond the knowledge of the truth, or which is the same thing, of the power of Christ's resurrection, serves, in fact, to set aside that resurrection as insufficient, so to deny the one thing needful. More especially, as according to Palæmon,

"It (this supposed attainment) must be distinguished from any joy or spiritual delight which necessarily attends the obtaining of faith, or is beginning to work by love." And "that it is vain and absurd to call men to be assured of their being children of God, when they are not enjoying it. That it cannot further appear that any man has known the grace of God in truth, than he

gives all diligence to the end, in order to obtain it." Now the grand arcanum in Palæmon's doctrine is, How a man can live entirely by the *one thing needful*, and yet be so diligently employed in labouring for so important a *something more?*

"It is also plain, that the promise of the Spirit, as the Comforter, is common to all those who follow the faith and practice of the apostles."

It is plain they were comforted by the Spirit of God, in the joy of the truth concerning Jesus the Saviour of sinners; and had also the additional comfort of those confirming declarations concerning the children of God and their blessings, which are recorded for that purpose. But that we are taught to wait for any other attainment, under the name of the Spirit as the Comforter, does not appear.

"Their (the Jews) appropriation was the great spring of all their pride, of all their disaffection to the true gospel, and all their ruin."

The Jews' appropriation was upon the ground of the difference between themselves and others; which we readily agree has this effect, That the more men excelled in this way, they proved the more hardened enemies to the true God, and the eternal happiness of mankind. But what is this for an objection to that appropriation which proceeds entirely on the free grant of heaven to the guilty, excluding all such difference? Aspasio is still left to affirm of his appropriation, That nothing will be so powerful to produce holy love and willing obedience, to exalt our desires, and enable us to overcome the world.

Who stands nighest to the Jewish appropriation, Aspasio or Palæmon? Aspasio, who in Dialogue 16 compares "those who advise us to prove our title to comfort by genuine marks of conversion, and teach us on this column to fix the capital of assurance, unto those who would fix the dome of a cathedral upon the stalk of a tulip?" or Palæmon, who judges this "talking profanely?" Neither do I see how this is talking profanely, until it is first proved, that the marks whereby we suppose ourselves entitled to comfort rather than others, are the Deity in which we are to put our trust. Aspasio rightly judges, that this is placing a most weighty affair upon that most slight and uncertain foundation, what we feel or do, instead of the Rock Christ, given to guilty sinners. Does not the Holy Ghost prove a Comforter, by manifesting to us guilty sinners "the things that are freely given of God; taking of the things of Christ, and shewing them to us?" And must not every genuine mark of conversion have its foundation here?

"'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life.' John v. 24. Here we see how men pass from death to life."

The word that Jesus hath spoken, and the declaration the Father hath made, is the first and surest ground of undeceivable certainty. The dependence hereon proceeds entirely on the truth and faithfulness of God; and that dependence is the assurance we have pleaded for; and they who thus depend, our Lord declares, *have everlasting life*, are already *passed from death to life*.

"Here we see how men pass from death to life. John declares how they come to know this, while plainly pointing at the words of Jesus, he says, 'We know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.'"

There is no foundation for the distinction here made by Palæmon, viz. "That our Lord only declares how men pass from death to life," and John "only declares how they come to know this." It is plain, that our Lord's declaration runs in the same strain with that of his disciple. Our Lord says, He that heareth my word "is passed from death unto life." John says, He that loveth the brethren "is passed from death unto life." Where is the difference? Both are declarations of who are passed from death to life, therefore both alike in that respect. Our Lord intimates the life-giving *word*, the matter believed by all who are passed from death to life; his disciple intimates the proper and genuine *effect* of that word on all who believe. "We know," says John, we have an additional proof, that the word of Jesus is true, "that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." It is plain that they abide still in death who abide in the hating, murdering spirit of the world; and more especially, who cannot love them who are of the *truth* for the *truth's sake*. On the other hand, the uniting, life-giving tendency of the *truth* appears to us, who are of it, since it causeth us thus to love one another for the *truth's sake*; and proves what Jesus said, that "he that heareth his word, and believeth on him that sent him, is passed from death to life."

Jesus saith, He is passed from death to life "that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me." John saith, "We know he has passed from death to life who loves the brethren." The only difference is, Jesus declares the privilege by that whereby we enjoy it; John gives proof in the love of the brethren, as a demonstrative effect that Jesus' words are true.

"By this proof men come to know that the joy they had upon their first believing was not the joy of the hypocrite."

The joy true believers have on their first

believing, is the joy of the truth. If that we rejoice in is found to be true, our joy is proved genuine.

"And so their joy is made full."

Our *joy* is not made full by a discovery of itself, but by farther confirmations of that truth which begat and supports it. The believer gives an account of his *faith* and *joy*, when he gives an account of what he believes and rejoices in. And it is made full by a farther supply or confirmation of the truth and faithfulness of God, on which he depends.

"By this they come to know it was the genuine truth of God, and not any human counterfeit and corruption of it, which they at first believed."

The genuine truth of God makes itself manifest to be such at our first believing, 1 Thess. ii. 13, 1 John i. 10, and thereby begets faith, joy, and every other effect. He that waits for such effect, to know whether he has the genuine truth or no, may finish his inquiry by reminding himself, that he is in this inquiry very evidently but upon the search, and therefore has not found truth as yet. He may also be convinced that his search is wrong and preposterous, as if a man that should make an inquiry after what was proper food, should, instead thereof, be waiting to know, by certain effects, whether he had ate any or no. The noble Bereans inquired after truth, by searching the Scripture, to see whether "these things were so; therefore (it is added) many of them believed." The truth was made manifest unto them as the truth of God. And when this was the case, they did not wait for the joy of it, with its effects, to know whether it was so or no.

"Thus they receive an additional knowledge and certainty about the truth, in the way of experience, by perceiving that it works effectually in them, producing its genuine effects."

If the experience of the effects of the genuine gospel produces only an additional knowledge and certainty from experience, as the first knowledge and certainty came by divine evidence of the truth itself; this is all we plead for, then we are again agreed.

"As often as the apostles speak of their interest in Christ, and life eternal, or use any language to that effect, we shall find that they either speak of themselves separately, or in conjunction with those only who are possessed of the same unfeigned faith and love with them."

That the apostles wrote their epistles to professed believers, may be very readily admitted. As, on the other hand, that the apostles did not live by Christ alone, under the notion and view of themselves as guilty sinners, but only through a medium of discovery of their own faith, love, &c. will be very difficult to be proved, however confidently asserted.

"'Hereby we,' who love the brethren, 'perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.' We, who are conscious of the effects, and enjoy the fruits of the atonement, know that God first loved us, and had a particular regard to us in providing the atonement."

The effects and fruits of the atonement are, sinners' *peace with God*, their *access to the holiest of all* thereby; if it is allowed that we enjoy and are conscious of these, we are again agreed. But if Palæmon means only being conscious of "working in the way of painful desire and fear, till we are crowned with enjoyment," there cannot be a plainer deviation from the intent of the apostle. The apostle says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Palæmon says, Hereby perceive we the love of God, because we are conscious of the effects, and enjoy the fruits of the atonement. The apostles lead us to think he laid down his life for us, who were justly doomed to eternal death. Palæmon leads us to think he laid down his life for us who can say, God, I thank thee I am not as other men; "who can find some reason about themselves, why all the great things spoken and done by Jesus should bear its peculiar direction towards them."

Besides, how does it appear we love the brethren, when those we call so are seeking the reason of their hope, certainty, and assurance of eternal life, wholly in their own love and obedience; consequently are not in this respect the despised few, but of the same mind and judgment with every natural man?

"He who, perceiving the divine love to sinners of all sorts without distinction, manifested in the atonement, is thereby led to love the atonement, and the divine character appearing there; and so to enjoy the promised comfort resulting thence to the obedient."

If the promised comfort is suspended for want of obedience, or depends on obedience as its condition, the divine love is far from being manifested to sinners of all sorts without distinction.

"And thus, by happily experiencing the truth of the gospel."

He does not experience the truth of the gospel, but only the effect of that doctrine that tells him, if he is willing and obedient he shall eat the good of the land: Whereas, the truth of the gospel, relieving the guilty without condition, animates thereby to all the obedience it calls for.

"So he labours neither first nor last to acquire any requisite to justification; but all his labour proceeds on the persuasion

that the atonement itself is the sole and sufficient requisite to justification."

All his labour proceeds on the persuasion, that however sufficient the atonement may be for the elect, yet he is not allowed to account it of any use to him a sinner, or to trust or depend upon it, but to be at an entire uncertainty about it, until he discovers his works of obedience to such a degree as to conceive himself to be an elect person.

"So he knows that all his holiness, as well as all his happiness, comes entirely of that grace which provided the atonement."

Far from it; all his holiness, as well as all his happiness, according to Palæmon's representation, comes entirely of the painful desire and fear, lest he should have no part in that grace which provided the atonement.

"The merchant who, being encouraged by some credible intelligence Providence has favoured him with from an unexpected quarter, sets out at all hazards on some new branch of traffic, will be greatly animated to proceed when he finds his labours crowned with success."

But our obtaining salvation is not like a trading merchant setting out at all hazards on a new branch of traffic. This is salvation by works indeed! Matt. xiii. 45 describes the merchant as finding one pearl of great price, which puts an end to all future merchandising.

"He who so knows the bare report thereof, as to love it, and to run all risks upon it, shall in nowise lose his reward."

True; but Palæmon's Christian rather runs all risks in order to know his part in the atonement, than on the account of the bare report of salvation to the guilty.

"The passages in the Dialogues which appear to me to deserve the greatest censure, are those two which in a very confident manner deny, the one, the comfort attending the simple report of the gospel, and the other, the additional comfort attending the self-denied obedience to it."

These passages have been considered, and it appears that neither are denied, but confirmed by Aspasio's doctrine. We proceed on the report in appropriation; so it is the very basis of our comfort. We are confirmed by the effect of the enjoyment, that our enjoyment, or the foundation of it, is not a fancy.

"And all this is done, in order to rest, I cannot say our comfort, but a good opinion of our state, on what is neither faith nor obedience."

Not so; but to rest our souls on Christ alone, and neither on our faith, obedience, nor good opinion of our state.

"For, according to the popular doctrine, men living for a course of years together in unbelief, consequently neither loving the gospel nor enjoying the comfort of it, are allowed to consider themselves all the while as regenerate, provided they have once in their lifetime exerted a certain act."

It may be so according to the popular doctrine; but according to the unpopular doctrine, which Palæmon excepts against, we depend upon no acts but the perfect obedience of Christ.

"I shall now take some notice of a treatise highly esteemed by the votaries of the popular doctrine; I mean, The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification."

This book was so far from being highly esteemed by the votaries of the popular doctrine in England, it was hardly known till Aspasio recommended it, and since that disapproved of by many devout people, because, 1. It proves that the most earnest desires and endeavours after obedience to the law, may be in the natural state of man: 2. That the new life, new state, or new creation, is inseparably in Christ; so that we have no such privilege, but in enjoying Christ himself through the report of the gospel: 3. That there is no furniture for the obedience of love, but in partaking of this reconciliation or new state in Christ: 4. That no conditions or performances are to be placed between the sinner and the Saviour; but the first step of practical religion is to trust on Christ alone, as given to us for the sure enjoyment of himself and his salvation.

"This author supposes his unconverted reader, when beginning to be concerned about religion, to propose for this end such an obedience to the divine law as may be acceptable to God."

He rightly supposes, that men who are yet in their natural state, may attain with great zeal to great heights of legal obedience, and, as Paul and others, be very earnest after it, counting it their truest gain; and, like Paul, at the same time totally unacquainted with, yea, enemies unto, real Christianity, and the obedience of love to the truth, and to God manifested thereby.

"According to this author, then, Christ is not the end of the law for righteousness, but the best means one can make use of for enabling him to perform that righteousness which is the end of the law."

He, as the apostle does, directs unto that love which is the fulfilling of the law, by the enjoyment of that righteousness which is the end of it, by enjoying that new state of peace and reconciliation with God which is inseparably in Christ: or, in fact, his view is to recommend the gospel of our Lord Jesus as a principle of obedience, in opposition to that preliminary grace, which, as Palæmon well says, "However much it has been Christianized, is at bottom the same thing with that divine *afflatus*, influence, or energy, by which it was supposed

philosophers and heroes of old became good and great men."

"Accordingly the well-disposed reader is led forward to his desired end, in consequence of the same good dispositions that led him to use the means."

Not so; however fair the directions may seem to promise, at first, to him that is naturally desirous to keep the law that he may live; yet no man is made a disciple to these directions, but by being converted from this false hope to the hope of the gospel. No man is disposed to use the means of reconciliation with God by Christ alone as a principle of obedience, but he that is converted from the false hope of obtaining life by any obedience he can render, to live alone by what Christ hath already done, as the spring of his hope, and the source of his future obedience.

"But why all this roundabout course? Why should we seek to repress any man's impetuosity to fulfil the law? Why should we retard his course, by entangling him in a labyrinth about the use of means?"

Men, naturally desirous to keep the law that they may live, may, and do, as Mr. Marshall observes, "rush blindly upon immediate practice, making more haste than good speed, crying with Israel of old, All that the Lord saith, we will do. At the same time there is no such heart in them." But through a natural propensity to things which are contrary to the divine law, they continually fail in the obedience they have so strongly purposed. "And some of these, when they have mispent many years in striving against the stream of their lusts, without any success, do at last fall miserably into despair, and turn to wallow in the mire of their lusts, or are fearfully swallowed up with horror of conscience." As all their religion, or impetuosity to fulfil the law, is founded on a miserable mistaken hope to live by their own obedience, so Mr. Marshall's aim is to throw down that "false hope," by proving that there can be no obedience acceptable to God, till we are first made "accepted in the Beloved;" or, in other words, till we first live by Christ's obedience alone, and are influenced thereby. His hope to live by his own obedience is criminal; it is therefore no matter how soon we repress his impetuosity, and retard his course; and when he understands his reconciliation with God by Christ alone to be the principle or means of gospel obedience, he will not be entangled in a labyrinth, but made free by the Son of God.

"As for the gospel, it was only intended to relieve those ill-disposed people who despair of ever doing any thing to render them acceptable to God, by any assistance whatsoever."

And Mr. Marshall's design is to shew that those *well-disposed* people who hope to live by their own obedience, are, in fact, at the same time, those *ill-disposed* people, who will never be really obedient till they despair of ever doing any thing to render them acceptable to God, by any assistance whatsoever; and in that despair of themselves, live alone by what Christ has already done.

"It (the gospel) was never intended to be an auxiliary to those good people who are desirous to give acceptable obedience to the divine law."

But it was intended to remove their mistake, that they may be obedient from a more divine principle; that is, reconciliation with God by Christ alone. And this, it is evident, is the main design of Mr. Marshall.

"All such, who are desirous to give acceptable obedience to the divine law, wheresoever they are, shall undoubtedly be happy without having any occasion to trouble their heads about the gospel."

All such who are of this character uniformly, and without contradiction. But it must be allowed, that there are many, even every natural man has a propensity to live by his own obedience, or to do, that he may live. At the same time, he is desirous of those things which are contrary to that obedience, whereby he forfeits the character and becomes guilty before God.

"Let us now observe the use of means to which our author directs:—Endeavour *diligently* to perform the great work of *believing* on Christ."

That is, in Mr. Marshall's sense, endeavour diligently to live by Christ alone, to be satisfied with him, to assure your soul of salvation by him, by what he has done and suffered; that you may in this way have a personal conscious enjoyment of him and his fulness, in which fulness we enjoy reconciliation with God, and every blessing tending to the obedience of love. Was Palæmon to direct to personal conscious enjoyment of Christ, he would tell us about working diligently, working in the way of painful desire and fear, till we were crowned with enjoyment in a conviction that we were distinguished from others, by having faith, love, and self-denied obedience. Where lies the difference between the two, but that the latter says, Do that you may live, that you may be crowned with enjoyment: The other says, Live by Christ, that you may do: Enjoy as sinners, that you live as saints.

"It is necessary that we should endeavour it, (*i. e.* to believe on Christ,) and that before we find the Spirit of God working faith effectually in us, or giving strength to believe."

Mr. Marshall here considers faith as a duty required by the law, which Palæmon also asserts. At the same time, he so explains himself, as it is evident faith neither justifies nor sanctifies as a duty but by

Christ alone believed in: And it is also evident he means not the divine passive conviction, but an obedience to the apostolic exhortation, a "trusting on a Saviour, as discovered by a testimony, which (as he says) is properly *believing on him.*"

He opposes, at the same time, the popular notion, that we must wait for God to give us something called faith, before we are to attempt to believe, or to live by his righteousness; whereas, in whomsoever faith is wrought, they immediately live by Christ alone; they wait for nothing, they see nothing to be waited for; but they see Christ's sufficient work, and the grant of it to the guilty, a sufficient ground for immediate trust and confidence.

"Only (says Mr. Marshall) I shall prove that we are bound by the command of God thus to assure ourselves; and the Scripture does sufficiently warrant us, that we shall not deceive ourselves in believing a lie; but according to our faith, so shall it be to us. Matt. ix. 29. Here (says Palæmon) is the great whirlpool of the popular doctrine."

A very great mistake to call this the popular doctrine; whereas Mr. W——d, Mr. W——y, and numbers more, such as have been named, are full as great adversaries to it as himself. Nor is any point more universally opposed, than that of assuring ourselves of salvation only from the grant of a sufficient righteousness in Jesus Christ to the guilty.

"When we have thus, according to our author, wrought ourselves into a new state."

This representation is not just: would it be proper, when a man receives a present, or gift, to say that he works himself into it? It is true, he may meet with some opposition in the enjoyment of that which is freely given him. And in this case the Scripture prevents Palæmon's reflection, by exhorting us to work out our own salvation, &c.

"According to him, there is no practice of holiness, but what proceeds from the persuasion of our state being changed."

Rather from our persuasion of our reconciliation with God by Christ alone, arising, not from the conceit of our being better than others, or having done something towards it, but as given freely in Christ Jesus.

"This persuasion (of his state being changed) is his faith."

No such matter. Mr. Marshall's doctrine, or the truth believed in, his faith is, that there is a new state prepared in Christ for the guilty, which we are divinely authorized to enter into and enjoy, without any works at all; as, on the other hand, Palæmon's doctrine leaves him working in painful desire and fear, till he be crowned with enjoyment.

"If we hearken to this author, we must set out in the service of God, from the confidence of our being in a better state than other men."

Is it not highly consistent that we should set out in the service of God, with the furniture God hath provided us? If God hath given to us eternal life in his Son, is not our first obedience to receive and enjoy the eternal life that is in him? This does not consist in any persuasion that we are better than other people, that there is any new state in Christ for us rather than for others; but it consists purely in what is inseparably in Christ Jesus, given to us in him, and only to be enjoyed in enjoying him. So that the whole is, we must set out as followers of our Lord, from the confidence of the eternal life given freely to us in Christ Jesus.

"He makes no account of the grand things testified of Christ, as any way sufficient to lead us to holiness, without a good opinion of our own state."

Palæmon should say, if he would give a just representation, that Mr. Marshall makes no account of all that holiness which is not influenced by the reception and enjoyment of that new state, and eternal life, which is freely given to the guilty in Christ Jesus. Meanwhile, the opinion we have of our own state is, that it is stark naught, and cannot be mended. This is far from having a good opinion of it.

"Thus the ancient gospel, which, from the beginning, turned many from idols to serve the living God, is now set aside."

The ancient gospel held forth the new state, and eternal life given in Christ, which we plead for.

I have nothing to say in defence of myself from the charge of patronizing my creed by the names of fallible men. I acknowledge my fault. If I have not the doctrine of the apostles, what signifies having all the world on my side? And if I have them to keep me in countenance, it ought to be little concern though the whole world are against me.

"The use these people (*i. e.* the people in fellowship with W. C.) have for Christ is, to give them strength to do something toward their justification."

Our appropriation stands in no opposition to free justification by Christ alone, but rather to Palæmon's coming to the knowledge of it only in a way of painful desire and fear.

But Palæmon's main objection to this reception or appropriation of Christ, and eternal life in him, is, that "this is doing something toward our justification." To what has been already said, I would only add the following illustration:—A man has a large estate fallen to him by inheritance or legacy; he is now informed that he need do nothing

toward his maintenance at all, for he has a sufficiency to live upon, and that it would dishonour his benefactor, and be a disgrace to him to think of it. The man believes this, and accordingly sits down to a plentiful table provided, under a notion that all things being ready, he has nothing to do but to *eat* or *enjoy*. Upon this, a virtuoso in criticism, like Palæmon, informs him, that to eat is to do something towards his maintenance; that the victuals, and in short every thing is his, without any act of his at all. So that, if he imagines himself under any necessity of eating, he dishonours his benefactor, and denies the estate his benefactor has given to him, as though it was not in itself enough to maintain him, without doing something toward his own maintenance. What answer would this person in all likelihood return? Very probably he would say, You speak extremely absurd; for if I eat not, all my right and title to it will be of no service to me: I starve, I die in the midst of plenty: Besides, I love to eat. The case is as parallel as possible: Our Lord says, He is "the bread of God come down from heaven, to give life to the world; and that except we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us."

This objection of Palæmon's is such a fine-spun cobweb of criticism, that he seems to have catched himself in it, while he was endeavouring to entangle us. "Is it possible (says he,) after what we have seen, for any one to maintain, that these people look for acceptance with God, only through the sacrifice of Christ once offered for the sins of many?"

Now, to *look for* acceptance with God only through the sacrifice of Christ, is the very thing we plead for, and he has been opposing. His argument has been, "The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient of itself. To appropriate, or to look for acceptance with God on that account, is evidently to do something towards our justification; this is to set up in its stead another sacrifice of their own preparing and offering.

"He who maintains that we are justified only by faith, and at the same time affirms with Aspasio, that faith is a work exerted by the human mind, undoubtly maintains, if he has any meaning to his words, that we are justified by a work exerted by the human mind."

May not Aspasio as readily retort, He who maintains that we are justified only by faith, and at the same time affirms with Palæmon, "That faith is a principle of life and action," undoubtedly maintains, if he has any meaning to his words, that we are justified by a principle of life and action? The answer that retreives him out of this difficulty, will also serve us.

I have now considered all that I apprehend we are concerned with in Mr. Sandeman's performance, not with a design to manifest his blemishes, or to defend Aspasio's, but to preserve the important truth he contended for from the objections arising through evident mistakes and misrepresentations. Not pleading for a manner of believing, either active or passive, but pleading against the private interpretation of those divine declarations, which are the sinner's only ground of immediate trust and confidence in that sufficient righteousness. It is no pleasure to me to find a people to whom my heart inclines on account of their appearing attachment to this sufficiency of Christ, at the same time so inclined to explain away those divine declarations, and tell us, that "God may, if he pleases, have mercy upon me," is all the conclusion that the guilty and destitute can draw from what God has revealed. Now, in this case, are we not to take heed, lest, under the notion of purer faith, "we depart from trusting in the living God," (to a labouring in painful desire and fear) "through an evil heart of unbelief?" And as there is a natural propensity in man to self-dependence, is there not a proportionate averseness in him to trust on the bare declarations of the divine word? And may not this be the source of those Pharisaic attempts Mr. Sandeman has so justly detected, of the objections that stand between us; and also of those laboured inventions of others, to make out that men are saved by Christ in a way of natural necessary connexion; hereby at once setting aside the divine sovereignty, declarations, promises, or trust therein. I shall only add, that if what we have pleaded for is (without misrepresentation) proved a contradiction to the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ, then, and not till then, I shall see a necessity for understanding the Scriptures on this subject in another light than I do at present, and shall make my public acknowledgment accordingly

DIRECTIONS

To the Readers of THERON *and* ASPASIO, *with respect to the Amendments which were intended by* MR. HERVEY, *had he survived another Edition.—Taken from* MR. CUDWORTH'S *Defence.*

Page 315. c. 1. l. 44. read, "This, he says, as it was wrought in the name and stead of the guilty, enemies and rebellious, was wrought out in my name, and in my stead; and is in a name and character that undoubtedly belongs to me, and, according to the declarations of divine grace, sufficiently authorizes me to draw near to God thereby."

P. 416. c. 2. l. 54. "Not one among all the numberless productions which tread the ground, or stand rooted on the soil, wants any convenience that is proper for its respective state. And the same heavenly Father has provided, for the most guilty, the righteousness which is absolutely necessary to his present comfort, and his final happiness."

P. 417. c. 1. l. 17. "Consider those stately poppies, &c. observe the young ravens, &c. He accommodates the former, though incapable of asking; he attends to the latter, though insensible of their Benefactor. He also regards our pressing wants; he has also superseded our earnest petitions by such free and unmerited gifts, as it is both his delight and his honour to bestow."

P. 417. c. 2. l. 35. "So that nothing is required in order to our participation of Christ and his benefits. We receive them as the freest gifts; as matter of mere grace."

P. 418. c. 1. l. 31. "The man without a wedding garment, &c. Your former mistakes, and present objections, tend to place you in the state of this unhappy creature. The returning prodigal came with no recommendation either of dress, of person, or of character: None but his nakedness and misery; his acknowledgment and vileness, which had every aggravating, not one extenuating circumstance."

P. 418. c. 2. l. 27. "If there be any qualification, I think it is our extreme indigence; and this, I presume, you are not without."

P. 418. c. 2. l. 50. "Sanctification, heavenly-mindedness, and a victory over our lusts, are not the qualities he requires, but the blessings which he confers."

P. 419. c. 2. l. 40. "The greatest unworthiness is no objection in Christ's account; it is as much disavowed by the gospel, as equivocal generation is exploded by the discoveries of our improved philosophy."

P. 420. c. 2. l. 30. "From the King, *whose name is the Lord of Hosts*, let us expect (if he vouchsafe to show us any mercy) not barely what corresponds with our low models of generosity—much less what we suppose proportioned to our fancied deserts, but what is suitable to the unknown magnificence of his name, and the unbounded benevolence of his heart. Then we shall no longer be afraid assuredly to trust to the gracious declaration, 'that Christ Jesus is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:' That he hath given himself for us, hath given himself to us, with all the blessings of his purchase, of his Spirit, and of eternal life."

P. 421. c. 1. l. 36. "That we all deserve this misery, is beyond dispute. We are also told, that the Lord Jesus has satisfied divine justice."

P. 421. c. 2. l. 17. "You are still corrupt; does this exclude you from being the very person for whom the Saviour's righteousness is intended, and to whom it is promised?"

P. 421. c. 2. l. 43. "And sure it cannot be a fanciful persuasion of our health which renders us proper objects of his recovering grace."

P. 422. c. 2. l. 8. "I behold it (Theron's title) perfectly clear, not because you long or pray for it, but because the all-sufficient righteousness is granted to you a sinner in the record of the gospel."

P. 422. c. 2. l. 31. "If any man, however unworthy his person, or obnoxious his character, thirst; thirst for something to make him happy—let him not seek to that which satisfieth not; but let him come to me, the fountain of living waters, and drink his fill.

"The clergyman," &c.

P. 423. c. 1. l. 23. "They are to be enjoyed by every one. No exception is made."

P. 423. c. 1. l. 55. "To us (says the prophet) a child is born."

P. 423. c. 2. l. 20. "Since the Lord Jehovah has given us his Son, and all his unutterable merits; and also seals this grant unto us, in every sacramental ordinance; why should we not confide in it, as firmer than the firmest deed, and far more invaluable than any royal patent?"

"*Ther.* My servant never," &c.

P. 427. c. 2. l. 17. "It seems to be quite out of my reach."

"*Asp.* That is, because you still imagine something to be done by you, to entitle to this immaculate and perfect righteousness. You give no credit to those declarations of

Heaven, which bring it near to your view, and home to your condition. Remember rather the words of our Lord, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

P. 427. c. 2. l. 54. "Nothing short of these mercies can afford any satisfaction to the guilty conscience, or true satisfaction to the restless soul.

"Say not, then, my dear friend, that Christ and the blessings of his purchase, are beyond your reach. They are now, even now, at your door."

P. 428. c. 1. l. 60. "If you heard his voice, you would believe on him agreeable thereto. You then open the door, and he sups with you, makes his abode with you, manifests his salvation, and communicates his blessings. If you believed his promising word, you would no longer hesitate to believe on him accordingly. You then sup with him. This will be refreshing to your distressed soul, as the most sumptuous banquet to the famished stomach and craving appetite." *Expunge all from here to the words,*

"*Ther.* This I believe——That I am a lost sinner," &c.

P. 428. c. 2. l. 38. "He that believes on the Son, hath—a chimerical? far from it—a real substantial happiness; even everlasting life."

P. 428. c. 2. l. 56. "Can you doubt of his willingness to save the chief of sinners? or his sincerity in his declarations? Then go to Mount Calvary."

P. 429. c. 1. l. 13. "What a stranger was I then to the blindness of my understanding, and the hardness of my heart! to my bondage under unbelief, and my natural averseness to the way of salvation by grace, through faith!

"*Asp.* Are you sure this is not now your case? This sentiment, though ever so just, will not palliate your present infidelity. Since the great Jehovah has declared the grant of his Son to you a sinner; since he has thus given to you eternal life in him; since he has warranted your immediate reception and enjoyment, by his commands, invitations, and promises; you make him a liar in all, you reject his word as not to be depended on, every moment, you thus unbelievingly hesitate." *Expunge from here to*

"*Ther.* But is not faith the work of God's Spirit? How, or in what manner," &c.

P. 429. c. 2. l. 10. "I very much question whether I shall ever be able to attain it.

"*Asp.* The true belief, Theron, has no existence without its proper object, Christ, and is never to be considered in the light you speak of; that is, as a most refined and exalted virtue. When, upon the divine grant in the word, you behold Christ as your given righteousness and strength, then you truly believe; you believe God's truth, which can never deceive; you receive the gift which enriches you with grace and glory. But permit me to ask," &c.

P. 436. c. 2. l. 16. "If you rely on the all-sufficiency of his gracious declarations, as the foundation of immediate trust or confidence, as well as the all-sufficiency of his power."

P. 436. c. 2. l. 23. "Let the most wretched sinner, and most afflicted soul, trust in the name of the Lord."

In note, p. 439. "We only affirm, that an appropriating persuasion of salvation by Christ alone, is that confidence which properly answers to the divine report and grant of a Saviour to be believed on for everlasting life."

P. 442. c. 2. l. 33. "*Asp.* The *if* is what I greatly question; but of this I am certain, that you are still inclined to spare *Agag.*"

P. 442. c. 2. l. 56. "You ask, Whether the state of these persons is safe, and their faith real? I answer, What evidence is there of their safety, or their faith, while Christ, the only security, is neglected, and the free grant of him to sinners thus disbelieved? Besides, why should," &c.

P. 443. c. 1. l. 43. "God has freely loved me, so as to give his Son unto me; Christ has graciously died for me, to take share in his death as my own; and the Holy Ghost sanctifies me, in the belief and appropriating confidence arising from these precious truths."

P. 443. c. 2. l. 59. "When the divine Spirit, speaking in the gracious declarations of the gospel, manifests the grant of Christ to me a sinner, then am I enabled to receive and appropriate his death as the desert of my sins, and his obedience as the matter of my justification."

P. 445. c. 1. l. 33. "May I firmly believe on Christ for everlasting life? May I firmly believe, that in this infinitely meritorious Redeemer I have granted unto me pardon and acceptance?" &c.

P. 445. c. 1. l. 42. "I do more than pardon my dear Theron: I feel for him, and I sympathize with him; not because he has not sufficient evidence from God's word for trusting in Christ for everlasting life, but because I have also felt that perverse tendency in my own heart, to mistrust the infallible word of my God, as though he was less to be depended on than fallible man."

In like manner were to be corrected, all other passages in his writings which might be understood as making thirstings, awakenings, earnest prayers, sorrows, tears, good desires, or sense of unworthiness, as the encouragement for confidence. This Mr. Hervey acknowledged was inconsistent with his main design, which was to come to God

by Him only who was able to save, to save to the uttermost: but he had been drawn sometimes into this way of expressing himself by too great a regard for the current customs; and not considering, that, till the divine relieving truth appear in view, the wishes and desires of the distressed are as much pointed against the salvation of the guilty, as the carelessness of the profane. He was sensible, that "the gospel history gives us no instance of an unbeliever diligent to obtain faith;" and therefore intended to expunge every thing that tended to encourage such mistakes.

When he took notice of "a speculative assent to all the principles of religion," he intended by it such agreeing with the current opinions as will stand consistent with sentiments quite subversive of the saving truth: Not such a knowledge of the truth as the apostle speaks of, when he says, "Ye know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth." He well knew, that there was no man, but he that is taught of God, could be satisfied with the apostolic account of salvation; and would have informed Theron, had he another opportunity, "that if he attempted to do any thing, easy or difficult, under the notion of an act of believing, or any other act, in order to his acceptance with God, he only thereby heaped up more wrath against himself."

He was also sensible, that a man may be very useful and amiable amongst men, and at the same time an utter enemy to the grace of God's kingdom;—that he had been too forward in commendations of those who were no friends to apostolic Christianity. His design was only to commend what was amiable in every one, passing over their blemishes. In this design, he acknowledged, he was carried to an extreme. When he says of Erasmus and Locke, that they sat at the feet of Jesus, he only meant to express, in an elegant way, that they betook themselves to the reading of the Scriptures, and not to vindicate their notions.

And he counted it an observation well worthy regard that "it may be maintained by some, that conversion is carried on by grace assisting nature; and by others, that this matter is wholly conducted by irresistible grace; and yet both sides may be equally disaffected to that doctrine which maintains the work finished by Christ on the cross, to be the only requisite to justification. And that while many Christian teachers maintain, that no man can be eminently virtuous without divine energy, they say no more than Heathen philosophers have said before them."

These remarks and observations may be sufficient to direct the intelligent reader of Theron and Aspasio to avoid needless objections, and also to improve that performance more agreeably to the Scriptures and the author's own mind.

It appears by the Letters prefixed to this Defence, that an improvement of Mr. Marshall's book was intended, to obviate as much as possible all objections; which through the pressing importunities of the printer, and Mr. Hervey's hopes of accomplishing a fourth volume of Theron and Aspasio, was not executed. The following is a plan of such improvement, where, by changing the fourteen directions into the form of Assertions or Propositions, the strongest objections are enervated.

Assertion I.—That practice and manner of life which the Scripture calls holiness, righteousness, or godliness, obedience, true religion, is not attained by our most resolved endeavours, but is given through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue.

Assert. II.—No man can love God till he knows him, nor till he knows him to be his everlasting friend. Therefore, the spring of true holiness is a well-grounded persuasion of our reconciliation with God, and of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness, and of sufficient strength given in him for all he calls us unto.

Assert. III.—These endowments, so necessary to the obedience of love, are contained in the fulness of Christ, and are enjoyed only by union and fellowship with him.

Assert. IV.—The mean or instrument whereby the Spirit of God accomplisheth our union with Christ, and our fellowship with him in all holiness, is the gospel, whereby Christ entereth into our hearts, begetting us to the faith whereby we actually receive Christ himself, with all his fulness, unto the hope of eternal life by him. And thus by the influence of the Spirit of truth, we unfeignedly believe the gospel, and also believe on Christ as he is revealed and freely promised to us therein, for all his salvation.

Assert. V.—The practice of true holiness is not attained by any endeavours of our natural state, but is a blessing of that new state given in Jesus Christ, and partaken of by union and fellowship with Christ through faith.

Assert. VI.—Those that endeavour to perform sincere obedience to all the commands of Christ, as the condition whereby they are to procure for themselves a right

and title to salvation, and a good ground to trust on him for the same, do seek their salvation by the works of the law, and not by the faith of Christ as he is revealed in the gospel; and they shall never be able to perform sincerely any true holy obedience by all such endeavours.

Assert. VII.—We are not to imagine, that our hearts and lives must be changed from sin to holiness, in any measure, before we may safely venture to trust on Christ for the sure enjoyment of himself and his salvation.

Assert. VIII.—True holiness of heart and life hath its due order where God hath placed it, that is, after union with Christ, justification, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is not therefore to be expected but in that order, as what accompanies salvation.

Assert. IX.—It is only by the comforts of the gospel, revealing a just God and a Saviour, that God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Assert. X.—The comforts of the gospel necessary to Christian obedience, contain sufficient grounds of assurance of our salvation, not because we believe, but in a way of immediate trust and confidence. Therefore, instead of seeking other methods of peace and holiness, we must endeavour to believe or trust on Christ confidently; persuading and assuring ourselves, according to the divine declarations, that God freely gives to us an interest in Christ and his salvation, according to his gracious promise.

Assert. XI.—It is therefore belonging to the practical part of the Christian life, to maintain the same immediate trust and confidence in dependence on the divine faithfulness, not to suffer us to be confounded, that so our enjoyment of Christ, union and fellowship with him, and all holiness by him, may be continued and increased in us.

Assert. XII.—The Scripture calls upon Christians to walk no longer according to the principles or means of practice that belong unto the natural or original state of man, but only according to that new state given in Christ which we receive by faith, and the principles and means of practice that properly belong thereunto; and to strive to continue and increase in such a manner of practice.

Assert. XIII.—All ordinances of divine appointment, for the establishment and increase of our faith and love, are to be considered only in this way of believing in Christ, and walking in him according to this new state given in him.

Assert. XIV.—That we may be confirmed in holiness only by believing in Christ, and walking in him by faith, according to the former assertions, we may take encouragement from the great advantages of this way, and excellent properties of it.

A RECOMMENDATORY LETTER from Mr. HERVEY, to the Publisher of a New Edition of MARSHALL on Sanctification.

Sir,—It gives me no small pleasure to hear, that you are going to republish Mr. Marshall's Gospel Mystery of Sanctification.* The instruction, consolation, and spiritual improvement, which I myself have received from that solid and judicious treatise, excite in me a pleasing hope, that it may be equally instructive and advantageous to others.

The recommendation of it in Theron and Aspasio, with which you propose to introduce the new edition, is at your service. To this proposal I consent the more readily, because Mr. Marshall's book may be looked upon as no improper supplement to those Dialogues and Letters, the author of which intended to have closed his plan with a dissertation on practical holiness, or evangelical obedience. But this design was dropped, partly on account of his very declining health, partly because the work swelled under his hands far beyond his expectation.

He has been advised once more to resume the pen, and treat that grand subject with some degree of copiousness and particularity. If he should be enabled to execute what he acknowledges to be expedient, the doctrines already discussed, and the privileges already displayed, will furnish the principal materials for his essay. Justification, free justification, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is the sacred fleece from which he would spin his thread, and weave his garment; agreeably to that important text, "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God," 1 Cor. vi. 20. If providence, in all things wise, and in all things gracious, should see fit to withhold either time or ability for the accomplishment of

* It is said, by the very best judge of propriety in sacred writing, "Great is the mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16. This passage, I presume, Mr. Marshall had in his view, when he pitched upon a title for his book. And this passage will render it superior to all censure, unexceptionably just and proper.

my purpose, I do, by these presents, nominate and depute Mr. Marshall to supply my lack of service.

Mr. Marshall expresses my thoughts; he prosecutes my scheme; and not only pursues the same end, but proceeds in the same way. I shall therefore rejoice in the prospect of having the Gospel Mystery of Sanctification stand as a fourth volume to Theron and Aspasio. Might I be allowed, without the charge of irreverence, to use the beautiful images of an inspired writer, I could with great satisfaction say, "If *this* be a wall, *that* will build upon it a palace of ivory; if *this* be a door, *that* will enclose it with boards of cedar." Cant. viii. 9.

Mr. Marshall represents true holiness as consisting in the love of God, and the love of man; that unforced, unfeigned, and most rational love of God, which arises from a discovery of his unspeakable mercy and infinite kindness to us; that cordial, disinterested, and universal love of man, which flows from the possession of a satisfactory and delightful portion in the Lord Jehovah. These duties of love to our Creator and our fellow-creatures, are regarded as the sum and substance of the moral law; as the root from which all other branches of pure and undefiled religion spring. Holiness, thus stated, is considered, not as the means, but as a part, a distinguished part, of our salvation; or rather as the very central point, in which all the means of grace, and all the ordinances of religion, terminate.

Man, in a natural state, is absolutely incapable of practising this holiness, or enjoying this happiness. If you ask, What is meant by *a natural state?* It is that state in which we are under the guilt of sin and the curse of the law, are subject to the power of Satan, and influenced by evil propensities. From this state none are released, but by being united to Christ; or, as the apostle speaks, by "Christ dwelling in the heart through faith." Eph. iii. 17.

Faith, according to Mr. Marshall, is a real persuasion that God is pleased to give Christ and his salvation; to give him freely, without any recommending qualifications, or preparatory conditions; to give him, not to some sinners only, but to *me* a sinner in particular. It is likewise an actual receiving of Christ, with all the benefits, privileges, and promises of the gospel; in pursuance of the divine gift, and on no other warrant than the divine grant. This last office is particularly insisted on, as an essential part, or as the principal act of faith; to perform which there is no rational, no possible way, unless, as our author declares, we do in some measure persuade and assure ourselves* that Christ and his salvation are ours.

As faith is such a persuasion of the heart, and such a reception of Christ, it assures the soul of salvation by its own act, antecedent to all reflection on its fruits or effects, on marks or evidences. It assures the soul of acquittance from guilt, and reconciliation to God; of a title to the everlasting inheritance; and of grace sufficient for every case of need. By the exercise of this faith, and the enjoyment of these blessings, we are sanctified; conscience is pacified, and the heart purified; we are delivered from the dominion of sin, disposed to holy tempers, and furnished for an holy practice.

Here, I apprehend, our author will appear singular; this is the place in which he seems to go quite out of the common road. The generality of serious people look upon these unspeakable blessings as the reward of holiness, to be received after we have sincerely practised universal holiness; not as necessary, previously necessary, to perform any act of true holiness. This is the stumbling-block which our legal minds, dim with prejudice, and swollen with pride, will hardly get over. However, these endowments of our new state are, in our author's opinion, the effectual, and the only effectual expedient, to produce sanctification. They are the very method which the eternal Spirit has ordained, for our bringing forth those "fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God," Phil. i. 11. Whereas, if there be any appearances of virtue, or any efforts of obedience, which spring not from these motives and means of practice, Mr. Marshall treats them as "reprobate silver;" he cannot allow them the character of gospel holiness.

This is the plan, and these are the leading sentiments of the ensuing treatise. To establish or defend them, is not my aim. This is attempted, and I think executed, in the work itself. My aim is, only to exhibit the most distinguishing principles in one sketch and clear point of view, that the reader may the more easily remember them,

* It is not by this expression affirmed or insinuated, that we are able to produce faith in ourselves by any power of our own. This self-sufficiency the author has professedly and frequently disclaimed, asserting, that "the Spirit of God habitually disposes and inclines our hearts to a right performance of this most important act."—This manner of speaking is used, I imagine, for two reasons: To point out the first and chief work which we are to be doing, incessantly and assiduously, till our Lord come: To remind us, that we must not expect to have faith wrought in us by some fatality of supernatural operation, without any application or endeavour of our own; but that we must make it our diligent endeavour, and our daily business, to believe in Christ. We must "labour to enter into this rest, and show all diligence to the full assurance of hope."

and by this key enter the more perfectly into the writer's meaning. Let him that is *spiritual* (1 Cor. ii. 15,) judge, and reject or admit, as each tenet shall appear to correspond or disagree with the infallible word. Only let candour, not rigour, fill the chair; and interpret an unguarded expression, or a seemingly inconsistent sentence, by the general tenor of the discourse.

We are not to expect much pathos of address, or any delicacy of composition. Here the gospel diamond is set, not in gold, but in steel—not where it may display the most sprightly beam, or pour a flood of brilliancy, but where it may do the most signal service, and afford a fund of usefulness. Neither is this book so particularly calculated for careless insensible sinners, as for those who are awakened into a solicitous attention to their everlasting interests, who are earnestly inquiring, with the Philippian jailor, "What shall I do to be saved?" Rom. viii. 24; or passionately crying, in the language of the apostle, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24. If there be any such, as no doubt there are many in the Christian world, I would say, with regard to them, as the Israelitish captive said concerning her illustrious but afflicted master, "Would God my master were with the prophet in Samaria; for he would recover him of his leprosy," 2 Kings v. 3. O that such persons were acquainted with the doctrines, and influenced by the directions, contained in this treatise! They would, under the divine blessing, recover them from their distress, and restore them to tranquillity; they would "comfort their hearts, and thereby establish them in every good word and work." 2 Thess. ii. 17.

But I am going to anticipate what the following extract speaks.* I shall therefore only add my hearty wishes, that you may meet with encouragement and success in the publication of this truly valuable piece. Since there is, in this instance, an evident connexion between your private interest and the general good, I think you may promise yourself the approbation and acceptance of the public, as you will assuredly have all the support and assistance that can be given by, Sir, your humble servant,

J. HERVEY.

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* This extract, or the recommendation given of this excellent book, entitled, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, is to be found in our author's works, p. 440, note.

Weston-Favel, near Northampton,
Nov. 5, 1756.

END OF THERON AND ASPASIO.

SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

PREFACE

The following two Sermons have been judged too excellent to be suppressed. They were preached, according to the best information, at Biddeford, in the year 1743.

As to their authenticity, they carry in themselves the strongest internal evidences of their being genuine. Whoever reads them, will know who wrote them. "Celebrated writers," as this excellent author observes elsewhere, "have a style peculiar to themselves." This was eminently true of himself. His performances (some of his letters excepted, written in the younger part of his life) are indeed "as apples of gold in pictures of silver;" transmitting the most precious truths through the channel of the most elegant, correct expression, and adorning the doctrines of God our Saviour with all the heightening graces of exquisite composition. When Hervey's pencil gives the drapery, truth is sure never to suffer by appearing in an ill dress. His prose is, in general more lovely and harmonious, more chastely refined, and more delicately beautiful, than half the real poems in the world. With Hervey in their hands, his delighted readers will nigh find themselves at a loss which they shall most admire—the sublimity and sweetness of the blessed truths he conveys, or the charming felicity of their conveyance. There is, if the term may be allowed, a sort of family likeness discernible in all this author's pieces. You discover the lively signatures of the parent in every one of his offspring. They not only carry the superscription of his name, but likewise bear the image of his genius, and are himself at second-hand. Among others, the ensuing performance may be considered as a transparent medium, a screen of crystal, through which the original writer is distinctly seen, and known from every other: a circumstance which, with me, has more convincing weight than the extrinsic attestation of a thousand witnesses.

The copy, from which these sermons are printed, was lately transmitted to me for publication, by a most valued friend of Exeter. I deem it a particular happiness that so choice a treasure should pass, through my unworthy hands, to the church of God. And I rejoice the rather, as I have, by this means, an opportunity of doing myself the honour to bear the most open and public testimony to that grand, fundamental, inestimable doctrine of a sinner's "full, free, and final justification, by the alone obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ the righteous."

I shall not detain the evangelical reader from this feast any longer than just to assure him, that neither my excellent friend, who communicated the copy to me, nor myself, who communicate it to the world, propose to ourselves any sort of pecuniary advantage from this publication; nor will we accept of any, should the sale be ever so great.

Respect for the memory of that holy man of God who preached these sermons, and a hope of their being made useful to such as read them, were the motives which induced us to send them abroad. One would wish to gather up the very fragments that remain of so distinguished a writer, and that nothing so apparently calculated for general benefit might be lost.

I thought it necessary to add two or three occasional notes, of whose propriety the reader will judge for himself.

Augustus Toplady.

Westminster, July 8, 1769.

SERMON I.

MANY MADE RIGHTEOUS BY THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE.

Two Sermons Preached at Biddeford, 1743.

ROM. v. 19.—"By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."

"By the works of the law shall no man living be justified," was not long ago the subject of a public discourse; and, I hope, has frequently been the subject of our private consideration. O that the important truth may be written most intelligibly upon our hearts, and beget in us a sound humility and an evangelical poverty of spirit! We then pulled up the wrong foundation; and now permit me to establish the right. We then warned you of the sandy foundation; and now permit me to lead you to the Rock of ages, where you may safely repose all your confidences, and build with the utmost security for a blissful eternity. This is pointed out in the scripture before us; which, though concise in its expressions, is rich and copious in its meanings, and breathes the very spirit of the gospel.

"By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." The *One* mentioned in the text, is the man *Christ Jesus.* The obedience, spoken of, includes both his active and passive obedience; the labours of his life, and the agonies of his death: all which he exercised and suffered in conformity to his Father's will, for the sake of fallen men; that they, by *his* righteousness, might be made righteous; that, having these credentials, they may be admitted into the court of heaven; and carrying this passport, may be admitted into "the everlasting habitations."

This doctrine I take to be the most sweet and precious part of our Christian faith; that which gives the most pure and undivided honour to God; which yields the most reviving and solid comfort to the sinner; and in the most endearing and effectual manner promotes every interest of holiness. But as much as it is little understood by some, entirely exploded by others, and scarce ever thought upon by more; let us crave your impartial attention while I clear up and confirm it: and not only crave your attention, brethren, but implore the renewing and enlightening influence of divine grace; without which, I am aware, my words will be unintelligible to some, and appear, perhaps, ridiculous to others; for "the natural man discerneth not the things which are of the Spirit of God;" on the contrary, "they are foolishness unto him." Depending, therefore, on divine grace, let us examine,

I. How the obedience of *another* can make *us* righteous.

II. How *sufficient* Christ's obedience is for this purpose.

III. How *worthy* this method of becoming righteous is *of all acceptation;* and then,

IV. Give some few directions, that may dispose us to rely on, and prepare us to receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

I. Let us examine how the obedience of *another* can make *us* righteous. This point may be proved and illustrated,

1. From the nature of a *surety.*

2. From Christ's dying *as a sinner* for *us.*

3. From Adam's sin being *imputed* to *us.*

1. The doctrine of our being made righteous through the obedience of Christ, may be proved and illustrated from the nature of a surety, who is one that undertakes and engages for another. Let us suppose the par-

ties were Paul and Onesimus. Onesimus was Philemon's slave. The slave disobeyed his master, ran away from him and his service. Not only deserted his service, but stole his goods; turned fugitive and thief at once. For the first of these crimes he deserves stripes and a rod; for the last, death and the gallows. St. Paul meeting with Onesimus, learns the state of his condition; and, having been the means of his conversion to Christianity by his preaching, and of his reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ, offers to become his mediator with his offended master. In order to execute which office more effectually, he puts himself in the criminal's stead, becomes answerable for his villany, and takes upon him to make full reparation for the injuries he had done to his master: "If he hath wronged thee ought," says the beneficent apostle, "or oweth thee ought, put that to thy account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it." By this means, the renegade slave is discharged, and Paul the innocent apostle becomes debtor. But how? Not actually but imputatively; for neither has Onesimus repaid, nor Paul stolen ought; but, by virtue of the undertaken suretyship, Onesimus's debt lies upon Paul, and Paul's freedom turns to the acquittance of Onesimus.

Thus it is in the matter of justification. We had all sinned in Adam; forfeited the favour of God. In order to our reconcilement, God required a full satisfaction to his justice, and a perfect obedience to his laws. These we could not possibly render in our own persons; therefore, Christ graciously presented *himself*, and undertook to perform both in our stead. Upon *me*, says the compassionate Redeemer, upon *me* be their offences laid. If they have transgressed, let vengeance make its demands on me; I will repay to the very utmost farthing; and forasmuch as through the weakness of their mortal nature, they are not able to yield an exact conformity to the divine laws, I am willing to "fulfil all righteousness," in their stead and behalf. "Lo! I come to do thy will, O my God!" I do it, not for myself, but for them, that the merit of my obedience may redound to my people, and that they, through my righteousness, may be made righteous.

2. The doctrine of our being made righteous through Christ, may be inferred from his dying as a sinner for us. It is a very remarkable passage, and full to our purpose, where the apostle declares, that the Almighty Father made his Son, "who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in him*."

How you may be affected at present with such a scripture, brethren, I cannot determine; but if ever you come to the knowledge of yourselves, and the heinousness of your sins, and the worthlessness of your duties, such a text will be sweeter to you than the honey or the honey-comb to your taste, and more refreshing than the richest cordial to your souls. However, from St. Paul's declaration, we gather this precious truth, that we are made righteous before God, in such a manner as Christ was made a sinner for us: not by any personal demerit; for he had done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; but "the Lord laid on *him* the iniquities of us all."

In like manner, how are the greatest saints made righteous before God? Not by any personal merit. They have done nothing that can deserve God's love, or that is worthy of a reward; but God looks upon them as interested in his dear Son's obedience, and so rewards them purely for their Saviour's sake. God visited our sins upon *him*; and God rewards his merits upon us: God accounted our transgressions to be his; and, on this footing, he was punished as a malefactor: and God esteems his righteousness as ours; and by virtue of this imputation, we are accepted as complete.

3. Once again, the doctrine of our being made righteous through the obedience of Christ, may receive stronger proofs and fuller illustrations from Adam's sin being imputed unto us. This is an undoubted truth, written, as it were, with a sunbeam in almost every page of Scripture. St. Paul assures us that "in Adam all die." And if so, it is certain, that in Adam all sinned. Tell me now, how came that personal sin of Adam to be charged upon us? how can his having eaten the forbidden fruit, render us liable to death and damnation? How, but by imputation? Adam was a public person; he represented the whole race of mankind; his act was imputed to his whole posterity. Such a communion there is between Christ and his elect: he, too, was a public person; he was a representative of all his chosen ones; and his obedience is looked upon as theirs. Thus believers are made righteous by the obedience of their everlasting head, Christ Jesus, even as they were made sinners by the transgression of their mortal father, Adam; because of the analogy and similitude there is between his righteousness to justify, and Adam's iniquity to condemn.*

* Mr. Hervey seems here to have had an eye to 1 Cor. xv. 22. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The πάντες, or *all*, affirmed by the apostle to have died in Adam, are the same πάντες, or *all*, that shall be made alive in Christ; namely, all the members of Christ's mystic body; all that church which he loved, and for which he gave himself to death. There are two reasons, in particular, which determine the meaning of the word *all*, in this passage, to the elect, and to them only: 1. Throughout the whole context St. Paul treats solely of the first resurrection; the resurrection of the just,

Let us now make a pause, and review our attempt. We have endeavoured to render the doctrine of the text somewhat clearer, by considering the nature of a surety, from Christ's being made "sin for us," and from the "imputation of Adam's offence" to us. But these, alas! are points little known to the world. Corrupt nature is prejudiced against them, and Satan is studious to hide them from our eyes. Let us beseech "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" to reveal the "mystery of godliness" in our hearts, that we may believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and only Saviour of the world; "and that believing, we may have life," not through any fancied goodness of our own, but entirely "through his name."

II. Let us now just take notice, how sufficient Christ's obedience is for the purpose of justification. It is a most incomparably excellent obedience: it exceeds not only the righteousness of innocent and upright Adam, but the righteousness of angels, principalities, and powers. Extol this righteousness as high as words can reach, or ideas soar! for it is the righteousness of incarnate Divinity; wrought out by *him* who was *God* and *man* in one *Christ*; whose divine nature gave an infinity, both of efficacy and of dignity, to all he did. "To you that believe" the Godhead of *Jesus*, his righteousness must needs be inconceivably precious: you will not, you cannot think it strange, that a whole world of believers should be accepted through it, and owe all their salvation to it. The prophet, in the most express terms, sets his seal to this truth when he affirms, that the *Lord*, the supreme and incomprehensible *Jehovah*, is "our righteousness:" and who would forsake the "everlasting *Rock*," in order to lean on a bruised reed? who would quit an illustrious *robe*, for scanty covering and filthy rags? St. Paul accounted "all things but loss," in comparison of his Saviour's righteousness. Yea, his own eminent holiness, and transcendent usefulness, he regarded no more than dross and dung, that he might "win Christ and be found in *Him*." This is the righteousness, whose influences extend to the earliest days, and will reach to the most distant ages. By this the holy men of old enjoyed the favour of God; by this alone the generations yet unborn will enter into their master's joy. In a word, this is the "hope, the sure and sole hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea:" for in every nation under heaven, and through all the revolutions of time, God is well pleased with sinners only in his beloved Son. Let me draw one remark from the whole, and I have done. Let me observe the difference between the law of *nature*, and the law of *Moses*, and the law of *faith*. The law of nature says, "Live up to the duties of thy reason, and the conviction of thy own mind, and thou shalt be safe." The law of Moses saith, "Keep the commandments, and execute all the statutes, and thy salvation shall be sure." But faith saith, "Thou needest not attempt these impossibilities. Christ hath done both, hath done all, in thy stead. He hath improved the light of nature, and fulfilled the whole law of God; and this in the capacity of thy Surety." Go then to thy Redeemer; lay hold on his righteousness. Believe truly in Christ Jesus, and what he hath done shall be accounted thine. Thy eternal felicity is already procured. Thou hast nothing else to do, but to look upon it as thy certain portion, and inalienable inheritance, through Christ; and to live in humble and cheerful expectation of that great day, when thy free title shall be changed into actual possession. And, in the mean time, love that divine Benefactor with all thy heart, and study to please him in all holy conversation and godliness.

SERMON II.

Rom. v. 19.—"By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."

In the book of Job, iv. 13—17, we have a very awakening lesson of humiliation, most admirably calculated to impress the thought, and to bring down the conceited mind. Eliphaz relates a vision.* When midnight drew her black curtains over the

the resurrection to life eternal. He says not one word in this chapter concerning the resurrection of the ungodly; but confines himself singly to that of true believers. 2. He, in the very next verse, expressly points out the persons of whose resurrection he here speaks: these, he tells us, are "those that belong to Christ, and are his own peculiar property; who were given to him, by the Father, in the covenant of redemption; and in whom he has a special inamissible interest."

* In the present sermon, the description of Eliphaz's vision resembles the primary sketch, the naked, imperfect outlines of a masterly picture; but, in the Contemplations on the Night, we behold the picture completely finished; and touched, I had almost said, into the very perfection of grandeur and beauty.

world, when darkness and deep silence reigned through the whole universe, in these solemn moments a spirit passed before his face. Fearfulness and astonishment seized the beholder; his bones shivered within him; his flesh trembled all over him; and the hairs of his head stood erect with horror. In the midst of these tremendous circumstances, a voice broke forth from the fiery phantom—a voice, for its importance, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance; and, for its awfulness, enough to alarm a heart of stone. It spake to this effect, "Shall mortal man be just before God? shall a man be pure in the sight of his Maker?" The words thus translated breathe a wonderful dignity of sentiment; and lead our minds into the most exalted notions of God Almighty, immaculate and inconceivable. Certainly they comprise one of the most powerful antidotes against the pride and haughtiness natural to fallen man, that can possibly be imagined. They are a token, in this sense, truly worthy of the awful Being who uttered them, and that air of vast importance with which they were introduced. Our translation sinks the idea exceedingly. It tells us no more than what all the world must acknowledge at the very first reflection; and so scarce deserves to be ushered in with so great solemnity. It seems also to oppose what no one can deny, or have insolence enough to maintain: for none, I should imagine, even Lucifer himself, could ever presume to think himself more just, more pure, than the *original* and *standard* of all perfections. No: let a person be esteemed ever so just, in comparison of his fellow-sinners; let him be accounted most eminently holy, by those that are polluted clay like himself; yet, before infinite and uncreated purity, O let him be greatly abased; let him put his mouth in the dust, take shame to himself, and cry out, "Unclean! unclean!" According to this translation of the words, you see the doctrine of man's universal depravity is as ancient as the times of Job; and that there is no possibility of being justified by any personal accomplishments or acquirements, was expressly taught in those early ages.

O that it may be as unfeignedly believed in these latter days? "But if this be the case," says an inquisitive hearer; "if all men are become abominable; if their best deeds are stained, and there are none that are righteous before God, no not one; how shall they be accepted when they are judged?" Why, by a method that lies vastly beyond the reach of human wisdom or device. By a method, that was but dimly hinted at in the generations of old, but is clearly revealed by the apostles and preachers of the gospel; even by the obedience of Jesus Christ · by a righteousness not wrought *by* us, but imputed *to* us. The nature of which imputation we have already illustrated, and shown the sufficiency of our Redeemer's obedience for this purpose. Which two points being despatched,

III. I am to show you how "worthy of all acceptation" this method of becoming righteous is; and that, as it is perfectly consonant to the ancient prophecies; as it gives the highest glory to God; and as it yields the richest consolation to man.

1. This method of becoming righteous through the obedience of Christ, is perfectly consonant to the tenor of ancient prophecies. In the patriarchal age, God promised to Abraham, and renewed the gracious assurances to Isaac, "that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed." Now, what was this but a discovery of this evangelical doctrine? It was, indeed, somewhat obscure then; but it is clear as the day now. The seed of Abraham is doubtless our glorious Mediator, who, in the fulness of time, took flesh, and was born of a descendant from Abraham. In *him* all the elect under heaven shall be blessed. Observe, not in themselves, not for any excellency that is in them; but *in him* they shall inherit all heavenly blessings. He is the Alpha and Omega of our happiness; the beginning and the end, the cause and the consummation of all our joy. He is the only spring and fountain of all blessedness, as much as yonder sun is the only fountain of this light that now shines around us. Every ray of light that falls upon our eyes, proceeds altogether from that bright luminary; we do nothing towards enkindling it; we only use its beams, and rejoice in its splendour. So fallen man can do nothing towards procuring the favour of his almighty Maker; but can only, by faith in Jesus Christ, receive it, already procured; and testify his gratitude for it, by a cheerful obedience.

In the prophet Isaiah, we find the following passages. God the Father, speaking of his obedient and beloved Son, has this remarkable expression: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Here infinite Wisdom informs the whole world, how they must expect justification and final acceptance. It is entirely through his dear Son, our divine Mediator: His holy life and propitiatory death are the only procuring causes of our forgiveness, the only conditions of our salvation; and a true knowledge of him, a right belief in him, make the merit of both our own.*

* From a saving knowledge of Christ, and by faith in him, we are manifestatively interested in what he has done and suffered. Our interest in his righteousness must, in the very nature of things, have been prior to our sense of interest in it; otherwise all sense of it would be delusive, and conversant with a nonentity.

God says not, he shall make them capable of reconciliation; he shall in part justify; he shall fill up their deficiency, and perfect what is wanting in their duties. No! but he shall accomplish the whole work; he shall execute the great office without a rival; without a partner, he will justify the faithful, and not they themselves.

2. This method of becoming righteous, through the obedience of Christ, is worthy of all acceptation, because it gives the highest glory to God. Nothing can be so effectually calculated to abase the sinner, and exalt the Saviour, as this way of obtaining salvation. This will bring down the lofty look of man; this will lay every assuming thought in the very dust, and leave the Lord alone glorious and exalted. This thoroughly secures to God his great prerogative, and utterly excludes human boasting, and brings unmingled honour and glory to the Surety of men. Whereas, was life eternal the reward of their own works, there would be some pretension for self-admiration. Men would arrogate some of the merit to themselves, and say in their hearts, "My power, and the might of my hands hath gotten me this wealth." If they were to expect the blessing of the eternal state as wages which they have earned, O what a damp would this strike on their thankfulness! how little would they think themselves obliged, and, indeed, how little would they be obliged, to God their Saviour on this footing! But, when saints in light view their heavenly inheritance; when they survey that great, exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, and remember that they did nothing to deserve all this ineffable felicity; that if it had not been procured entirely by their dying and obedient Saviour, they had been everlastingly banished from the realms of blessedness; O what pure and fervent gratitude must this inspire them with! what an emphasis and ardour, while they utter that devout acknowledgment, "Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy dear and adorable name be the praise! We were enemies in our minds, and by our wicked works; but thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood: all our choicest actions were polluted and unclean; but thou hast worked out for us a perfect and everlasting righteousness."

Thus will adoration and love be given to the Lamb that was slain; every crown will be cast low before the throne, and wear this humbling motto, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." O the depths both of the wisdom and goodness of God! Goodness, in establishing such a method of salvation for us, in all things so well ordered and sure! Wisdom, in cutting off all occasion of self-glorying, and bringing man to the deepest humiliation, even while it exalts him to the heaven of heavens!

3. This method of becoming righteous through the obedience of Christ, is worthy of all acceptation, because it administers the richest consolation to man! it is an inexhaustible spring of satisfaction and repose.

Luther, that renowned reformer, and great champion for the Protestant cause, when he broke away from the mists of Popery, and began to understand this most noble peculiarity of Christianity, declared, that "the gate of Paradise seemed to fly open to his view; that he had a glimpse of its beauty in contemplating this sacred truth, and a taste of its delights in believing it; so sweet a composure and such a charming tranquillity did it diffuse through his mind." Nor do I wonder at his saying, "for, while we are ignorant of this doctrine, there is nothing but horror and dread around us." If we strike this text from our Bible, or this article from our creed, all is dismal and distressing. Turn which way you will, the prospect is uncomfortable. If we look to ourselves, we shall find misery and guilt; if to God, nothing but indignation and displeasure. But this brightens up the whole scene. Let us observe, in the character of a feeble Christian, and of an awakened profligate, what glad tidings the gospel is by virtue of this doctrine, and what a miserable comforter it would be without it. The language of the former, in his private meditations, must proceed in some such manner as this: "Wherewithal shall I come before the most high God? Shall I offer him my pious services? Alas! they are miserably deficient; they issue from a corrupt stock, and cannot but be corrupt shoots. I have done nothing that is worthy of his acceptance; how then shall I stand in his sacred presence! I strive to be perfect and entire, and wanting nothing; but I feel myself to be poor and indigent, and wretchedly defective. O whither shall I go, but to him who is appointed for this very purpose—that the bones which are broken by misery and guilt, may rejoice; that the hands which hang down through self-condemnation and despondency may be lifted up? Thither then will I turn, frail and dispirited as I am, and cast all my burden upon the Lord Jesus Christ: in his unspotted righteousness, and in nothing else, can the sole of my foot find any rest. When doubts arise, and fear, like a gloomy cloud, thickens around me, this Sun of righteousness shall dissipate the gloom in all my pilgrimage: this shall be my constant song; in all my anxieties this shall be my only cordial: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in Jesus Christ!"

His merits, and not thine own works, are the horn of thy salvation: "whosoever believeth in him, shall not be confounded." And as for the poor sinner brought to a sense of his enormous crimes, methinks I hear him bewailing his condition in some such disconsolate manner: "O wretched man that I am! how shall I attain the favour of God? My sins are multiplied above number, and aggravated beyond expression. I cannot make any satisfaction for what is past, much less can I win the divine goodwill for the future. I am polluted, root and branch; what can I do?" Truly, sinner, I know not what thou canst do, unless thou comest to Jesus Christ; there is not a gleam of hope, or a grain of comfort, in all the universe besides. If thou lamentest thy folly, and seest thy undone state, "with the Lord there is mercy," abundant mercy, and with the Lord Jesus Christ there is "plenteous redemption." If thou canst rely on Christ, thy iniquities shall be done away like a morning cloud; if thou canst believe in Him, thy debts are cancelled through his blood; and that which thou art unable to perform, he hath fulfilled for thee. See how consonant this doctrine is to the whole series of scripture, and the voice of ancient prophecies! See what an unshared revenue of glory and thanksgiving it brings unto the blessed God; both supporting the feeble Christian amidst all his infirmities, and opening a door of hope to the awakened sinner, notwithstanding all his impieties! Surely, then, this precious doctrine is worthy of all acceptation: surely we have reason to receive it with all imaginable thankfulness! But lest it should, after all, seem to us an idle tale, rather than glad tidings of great joy, let me,

IV. Give some directions that may dispose us to rely on, and prepare us to receive, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

First, Bring a child-like mind to the consideration of it. Lay aside prepossessions, and meekly receive the ingrafted word with a teachable simplicity. Let us sit at the feet of Jesus, and, like very little children, learn heavenly wisdom from his gospel. If we are conceited of our abilities, and lean to our own understanding, God may punish our pride by leaving us in the dark; for he "hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes." You must acknowledge your natural ignorance, and implore the teachings of his blessed Spirit; for this is his peculiar office, to "convince the world of righteousness;" that is, to convince the world of the fulness of the Redeemer's righteousness, of its unsearchable riches, and of its absolute sufficiency to justify his people.

Secondly, If you would not be offended at this doctrine, get a deep sense of "your own unrighteousness." It is the want of this conviction that indisposes men for a reliance on Christ: so long as they fancy themselves "rich and increased in goods," they will never be concerned to seek the fine gold of their Saviour's obedience. "And, indeed, he came not to call the righteous;" his gospel is of such a nature, that the self-justiciary will discern no comeliness in it; it will feed the hungry and "poor in spirit" with good things; but the rich, and those that are "righteous in their own eyes," it will send empty away.

Labour therefore to see your own vileness, and then the merits of a Saviour will be precious. Be sensible of your own nakedness, and then the robe of a Redeemer's righteousness will be prized indeed. Consider yourselves as "insolvent wretched bankrupts," who *have* nothing, who can do nothing that is spiritually good; and then the perfect obedience, the full satisfaction of your divine Surety, will be "as health to your soul, and as marrow to your bones."

Thirdly, Pray for faith. It is faith that unites to Jesus Christ. By faith you are implanted into him. Faith is the hand that lays hold on the Saviour's merits: "By faith ye are saved," says the apostle. This appears to the soul, the great salvation purchased by our dear Redeemer; therefore, beseech God to beget in you this lovely, and lively faith, whereby you may lay hold on Christ, cleave most inseparably to Christ, and, renouncing every other refuge, lay the whole stress of your souls solely on Christ, as a shipwrecked mariner relinquishes all his sinking cargo, and clings only to the planks that may float him safe to shore. Seek this blessing to yourselves, brethren; and if ever I forget to join my best supplication to yours, "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." My "heart's desire and prayer to God," shall always be, that you may "believe to the saving of your souls." And a holy conversation will be a sign unto you that your faith is real. A life of sincere holiness can spring from nothing but from this divine head, *Christ Jesus*. "By this shall all men know that ye are his disciples, if ye live by his Spirit, and walk as he walked." By this, likewise, your own consciences may be assured, that God hath given you an interest in his dear Son, and sent him to bless you—if he has "turned you from your iniquities, and created you anew unto good works."

Give me leave, at the close of all, to ask you with all simplicity, Have you understood these things? do you believe this report? or am I as one that speaketh a parable?

If any be of this opinion I shall address

them in the words of St. Paul to the Galatians, and commit them to enlightening grace. The apostle, inculcating this very point, and persuading them to this self-same belief, says, "Brethren, be as I am, for I was as ye are," Gal. iv. 12. Thus the words I would translate; and then they are very pertinent to the purpose, and applicable to you and me; and, when paraphrased, will run thus: "I do not wonder, brethren, that ye are prejudiced against this doctrine. I myself was strongly possessed with such prejudices. I verily thought that my own righteousness would, at least, bear a part in procuring my acceptance with the eternal Majesty. Determined I was, in some measure, 'to stand on my own bottom;' and advance my plea for life everlasting from my own holy endeavours. But now these arrogant resolutions and vain confidences are dropt. I now disavow all such pretensions. God hath brought me to a sounder mind. And as ye have been partakers with me in my mistake, be partakers also of my righter judgment. I trusted to I knew not what: but 'now I know in whom I have believed.' I put myself, and the whole of my salvation, in my adored Immanuel's hands; and doubt not of his sufficiency for my security. Henceforward I set my heart at rest, not because I have gone through such offices, or done such duties; but because my Redeemer is mighty and meritorious. 'It is God, the incarnate God, that justifies me? who is he that shall condemn me?' Never, never shall my heart cry to divine justice, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;' this were the language of gross ignorance, or great presumption. But in all my temptations, in every discouragement, this shall be my acknowledgment, this shall still be my earnest prayer, The righteousness of thy obedience, most blessed Jesus, is everlasting; O grant me an interest therein, and I shall live." Amen, amen; so let it be, O Lord.

SERMON III.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION,

Representing the benign tendency of the gospel; and that it is the friendly office of ministers, as the ambassadors of Christ, to press men with all imaginable tenderness, humility, and earnestness, to accept the treaty of reconciliation, as established in him, and urged by him, while on earth.

Preached at the Parish Church of All-Saints, in Northampton.

2 Cor. v. 18.—"All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

THE love of God, that supremely glorious and supremely gracious Being, is, of all other tempers, the most delightful and divine; a sacred flower, which in its early bud is happiness, and in its full bloom is heaven. To plant this noble principle in the breast, to cultivate its growth, and bring it to maturity, is the grand end of all religion, and the genuine fruit of faith unfeigned. Angels are happy, because the love of God triumphs eternally, and without a rival, in their exalted affections. True believers are happy, because the love of God, in a prevailing degree, is shed abroad in their hearts. The gospel is a dispensation of happiness, because it discovers the superabundant loving-kindness of God to man, and urges the most engaging motives for our ardent love to his almighty Majesty.

The gospel represents the great God, not only as bestowing upon his creatures all the good they enjoy, but as effecting their reconciliation to his own adorable self, effecting this most desirable of all blessings, not barely by vouchsafing a pardon, but a pardon procured by the death of his Son, and by this enriching circumstance, infinitely enhanced, arrayed in all the charms that heaven itself could give. To render the purposes of his love more effectual and extensive, he has instituted an order of men to publish these glad tidings; and to invite, yea, to beseech the world, to partake of the exceeding riches of his grace. All which the apostle has expressed in my text, with his usual energy and conciseness: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

From which words, permit me, with all that simplicity which becomes a minister of the humble Jesus,

I. To enlarge a little upon that glorious

and amiable representation of the blessed God, discoverable even by the light of nature, "All things are of him."

II. To remind you, how much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the Deity are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption; in that "he hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ."

III. To observe the benign import and beneficial tendency of the gospel ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, "He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

First, then, let me enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable representation of the blessed God, discoverable even by the light of nature, "All things are of him." Heaven and the heaven of heavens are his, with all their hosts. Thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, all the happy beings that sit at the fountain-head of felicity, were produced by his power, are supplied with blessings from his hand, and are filled with joy from his countenance. If we trace the various emanations of comfort and advantage that refresh our lower world, we shall find reason to acknowledge with the Psalmist, "All our fresh springs are in God." The day is thine, says the same sacred writer, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun. The magnificent luminaries in the sky are lamps of the Lord; hung up on high, to dispense the cheering gift of light amidst all the families of nature. The interchanges of night and day, with the vicissitudes of revolving seasons, are his ministers; all sent on errands of kindness, and bringing the most valuable presents in their hands. The innumerable variety of living creatures, and of nutrimental vegetables, are the portion, not which our own industry has procured, but which our heavenly Father's bounty has settled upon us.

Every great endowment, bestowed on the children of men; every noble achievement, accomplished by renowned personages; these derive their original from the uncreated Fountain of perfection and of power.—If Solomon is possessed of enlarged wisdom and kingly qualities; he expressly acknowledges, it is from the Lord, superintending human affairs, that such kings are advanced to reign; and by the Lord enlightening their minds, that such princes decree justice. If, at one period, Nebuchadnezzar pursues his conquests with irresistible impetuosity, it is to scourge the offending people of the Lord, and banish idolatry from their worship, as the driving wind swept the chaff from their floors. If, at another juncture, Cyrus is equally victorious, and "comes upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay;" it was the Lord of hosts that raised up this accomplished commander from the East, and bid him execute his designs of restoring love to his reformed nation. All those arts which meliorate, and sciences which embellish life, even these are from the Lord, "who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

The time would fail me to enumerate particulars. Whatever is beneficial to communities, or comfortable to individuals; whatever springs from the rain of heaven, or is produced by fruitful seasons; whatever administers to the improvement, or cheers the heart of man; all, all acknowledge God for their Author. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. The whole earth is filled with the profusion of his beneficence. And where, where is the creature that has not tasted, that does not subsist on, the inexhaustible stores of his bounty? And, though affliction also comes from the Father of our spirits, yet this is no derogation from his tender mercies; since he chastens not with an arbitrary severity but with a parental pity; he chastens only to amend; and these light, these transient tribulations, are preparatives for an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

And is not such a Being worthy of our highest admiration, and our devoutest love? Has he not, by such ineffable excellencies, such unmeasurable benignity—has he not an undoubted claim to the affections of our hearts, the praises of our tongues, and the unintermitted services of our lives? He is the source of all our good; should he not also be the centre of all our gratitude, and of our whole obedience? But our obligations will rise immensely higher, if we consider,

Secondly, How much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the Deity are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption; in that "he hath reconciled us to himself in Jesus Christ." Man was created upright, immaculate, and in the image of God. Heavenly wisdom shone bright in his understanding, and true holiness sat enthroned in his heart. But how soon, how fatally, did he fall! from what height of perfection, to what depth of degeneracy! Since that destructive transgression, all flesh has corrupted his way; every man is become brutish in his knowledge; and the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually. "Our iniquities separated between us and our God, and our sins hid his face from us," as from an abominable object. Nay, our sins accused us at his righteous tribunal, and, like the blood of Abel, cried to heaven for vengeance. Vengeance and fiery indignation was our expected doom, and eternal death the wages due to our offences. What rendered the misery of mankind still more excessively deplorable, and only not desperate, was, that they were

without strength; without any power to make satisfaction for their provocations, or extricate themselves from this abyss of wo. O wretched, wretched man, if left in this state of guilt and ruin! If abandoned by the God from whom thou hast ungratefully revolted, better had it been for thee never to have existed.

But behold the kindness and love of God our Saviour! Hearken to the sounding of his bowels and of his mercies toward us! "I have seen," said he, (as in the case of enslaved Israel), "I have seen the affliction of my fallen creatures. They have undone themselves, but in me (Hos. xiii. 9,) is their recovery. Satan has deceived, and, deceiving, has destroyed them; but I, even I, will deliver them." Wherewithal will the Lord accomplish this design? By his free unmerited goodness. By the blood of bulls, or of goats, or of all the cattle upon a thousand hills? Contemptible to the last degree are such beggarly oblations; only, so far they typify the all-glorious sacrifice. Was an angel charged with this important business, or the highest seraph bidden to interpose as the repairer of our breach? The angels were absolutely incapable of executing so great a work. It required a far abler agent to negotiate our reconciliation. It must cost incomparably more to redeem guilty souls. Therefore the God of our salvation "laid the help upon one that is mighty." He appointed, to the most momentous of all offices, the most illustrious of all beings: He appointed his own Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.

Behold then the Son of God taking our nature, that he may act as our mediator Admirable constitution! full of wonder and full of grace! How joyful to the sinner! The work must infallibly prosper in such hands. Such a surety cannot fail of succeeding in all he undertakes. How gracious in the Father! Could there be a stronger assurance, or a more emphatical demonstration of his boundless beneficence, than to send the Son of his bosom; the Son of his eternal delight; the Son dearer to him than all worlds! How condescending in the Saviour! Would Ahasuerus abdicate his imperial diadem, or the great ruler of Babylon forego the honours of his enlarged dominions, to attend on the welfare of some ignoble captive that grinds at a mill, or of some infamous malefactor that is chained in a dungeon? Yet the everlasting potentate of heaven and universal nature undertakes a more humbling office of friendship, for a race of abject creatures, that dwell in dust and were doomed to hell. Let every child of Adam look unto Christ by faith, as all the people of Israel looked unto Moses, when he went into the tabernacle of the congregation to intercede before the Lord. See Exodus xxxiii. 8.

We have seen the person reconciling, let us next contemplate the manner of reconciling: A subject equally astonishing and delightful! The Father reconciled us to himself, by laying upon his Son the iniquities of us all; by admitting him to stand in our stead, and by exacting from him the punishment which he had incurred. God reconciled us to himself, not only by the humiliation, but by the suffering of this Prince of heaven; and not by some slighter suffering, but by his suffering unto death; and not by his undergoing a common death, but the most ignominious and tormenting of all deaths, the death of the cross. "It pleased the Father," says the apostle, "to reconcile all things to himself; making peace by the blood of the cross." Because we deserved shame, the Lord of glory was numbered with malefactors, and loaded with infamy. Because we deserved the bitterness of death, the Lord of life endured the pangs of dissolution, in their unabated and most racking extremities. Because we were obnoxious to the curse of the law, therefore the ever-blessed "Jesus delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Glorious propitiation! and altogether as complete as glorious! What now shall terrify the true believer? What shall stand between him and his eternal hopes? Shall Satan muster up his accusations, and set them in frightful array? Yet, though there may be much guilt, there is no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ. Does the law take the guilty mortal by the throat, and, with its rigorous severity, say, "Pay me that thou owest?" It is paid, fully paid by the intervention and suretyship, not of a mean man, but of the mighty God made flesh. Does divine justice demand satisfaction for the wrongs received from sinners? It is not only satisfied, but most awfully glorified, by this wonderful oblation. In short, this is a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It vindicates the honour of God's holiness; it displays his unsearchable wisdom; it manifests his unutterable goodness; it gives the most magnificent and lovely lustre to all the divine perfections. May we not then, looking unto our bleeding Saviour, and pleading his inestimable propitiation, venture to adopt the apostle's challenge? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth," not imputing our trespasses unto us, but transferring them to his dear Son. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," and by his precious death hath made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

I have been the more copious upon this subject, because it is not only the grand point in my text, but is the very heart of the gospel; the fountain of all our comforts, and the foundation of all our hopes. But I proceed, and with greater brevity,

Thirdly, To observe the benign import and beneficial tendency of the gospel ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, "He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." Here I am not attempting to magnify my office, or to aggrandize the ministerial character; but only to render our services acceptable to our brethren. Some persons, whether through prejudice or mistake, are apprehensive of being terrified by our message, "or tormented before the time" by our doctrine. But can the news of reconciliation to the Lord God of hosts terrify, or the offer of remission of sins torment? How welcome should be the approach, or, to speak in the elegant language of a prophet, "how beautiful the feet of him who bringeth good tidings!" And can there be better tidings, more reviving, or more transporting, than those of the everlasting gospel? which saith unto Sion, "Thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged;" thy God is reconciled; and instead of abhorring thee as a rebel, is willing to embrace thee as a child. When our armies have been in the field, and some very important, some decisive engagement drawing near; with what eagerness have you expected, and with what delight have you received the account of complete victory gained! And is not our report equally worthy of all acceptation, which declares Satan vanquished, and sin destroyed; declares death abolished, hell deprived of its prey, and all the rich advantages of peace with heaven restored? When Peter lay bound in prison, was the angel an unwelcome minister, who struck away his fetters, opened the gates of iron, and transmitted him, free and unmolested, to the cordial salutations of his friends? As you are all, by nature, in bondage to sin, our business is, to take you by the hand, and lead you out of this ignominious slavery, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; while the Spirit of the Most High breaks off your shackles, and makes you free indeed. What manna can be more refreshing than such a message? what balm more healing than such a service? If at any time we arm our words with terror, and denounce the vengeance of God on every soul of man that doth evil; this is only to awaken you from that gay insensibility which would lull you into irretrievable ruin. It is like the gathering clouds, and the distant bursts of thunder, which might warn Noah to retire into the ark, before that infinitely more tremendous deluge came, which was to sweep the careless world away. Whether, therefore, we display the allurements of divine love, it is for your delight; or whether we bend the bow of divine indignation, it is for your benefit—to win you to happiness, to drive you from misery. So that in every respect, and by all our ministrations, we are to be "helpers of your faith, and furtherers of your joy."

And let not any one suspect, that a message of such free and rich grace has a tendency to soothe men into supineness, or serve the cause of licentiousness. It is, of all other expedients, most effectually calculated to reconcile us to God, in another sense of the word; to subdue our enmity, and captivate our perverse affections; to impress our alienated hearts with adoring gratitude, and engage our refractory wills to dutiful obedience. For, can we be cold and indifferent to such immense benignity? can we affront and grieve such unspeakably tender kindness? What effect had David's clemency in sparing Saul's life, when it was in the power of his hand to have despatched that implacable enemy? It overcame, for a while, even malice itself; it fetched tears of sorrow from the persecutor's eyes, and expressions of the most endeared affections from his lips. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. And when God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, not only spares us guilty wretches, but punishes his immaculate Son in our stead; when he bids the sword of justice pass by our devoted heads, and sheathe itself in the heart of his beloved Son; can we resist such heavenly goodness; can we spurn such bowels of mercy? Must not love so divine and infinite melt even the most obdurate heart? make us fling down, with abhorrence, the weapons of rebellion, and constrain us, sweetly constrain us, to obedience?*

Let me now, conformably to my sacred commission, beseech you all to be reconciled. Especially let me beseech the humble penitent, and the haughty self-righteous moralist. Ye humble penitents, that are convinced of sin, and mourn for sin, be of good comfort: God has abounded in the riches of his grace towards you, and has given you a ransom to rely on, of higher dignity than all heavens, of more value than all worlds. The men of Tyre made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend, Acts xii. 20; the God of glory has constituted his dear Son your atoning sacrifice, your prevailing advocate. The men of Tyre desired conditions of peace; the Lord

* Mr. Hervey had added, by way of a note, the following words, in the copy which he transcribed, and from which this is printed. "When I preached this sermon, I recapitulated in this place, (as you, or any reader may do if he pleases,) the preceding heads; but I thought it unnecessary to transcribe such a recapitulation."

Jesus hath both obtained and fulfilled the conditions of your peace. Could there be a more glorious person chosen to act as your reconciler, than the Prince of heaven, and heir of all things? Could there be a more effectual method of reconciliation, than his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross? Fly then to this all-sufficient Redeemer. Rely on his most meritorious and satisfactory sufferings. Be your sins ever so numerous, ever so enormous, these need be no bar to your acceptance. For God has received an atonement; an infinite atonement God has received. So that he can admit you to his favour, unworthy as you are, without the least blemish to his avenging justice. He can, he will admit you as freely, as if you had never done amiss. Trust, therefore, in your reconciling Saviour. Place a cheerful confidence in his propitiating merits. Only let the grace of God, which has appeared with such transcendent loveliness in the bleeding Jesus, let this grace teach you, with a prevailing efficacy, "to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

As to those of a contrary character, who are righteous in their own eyes, what shall I say? Shall I decry the exercise of morality, or disparage the duties of holiness? God forbid. The gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, and true holiness is the health, is the happiness of the soul. These duties, issuing from faith, and recommended by the intercession of Christ, are acceptable to the divine Majesty. But these are not your Saviour. God has not reconciled the world to himself by their own pious practices, but by his Son Jesus Christ. Can your charitable deeds expiate your innumerable offences? As soon may a single drop of pure water correct and sweeten the unfathomable brine of the ocean. Can your defective performances satisfy the demands of a perfect law, or your wandering devotions screen you from the displeasure of an injured God? As well may your uplifted hand eclipse the sun, or intercept the lightning when it darts through the bursting cloud. There is no other name given under heaven, whereby you may be reconciled to God, and saved from wrath, but only the name, only the name, remember, of Jesus Christ. Here fix your hopes, and you shall never be disappointed. Fix them on any other object, and everlasting confusion will ensue. We beseech you therefore, in God's stead, we beseech you for your own soul's sake, reject not this abundant mercy, neglect not this great salvation.

Now unto Him who has reconciled us to himself, and washed us from our sins in his Son's blood, be glory and thanksgiving, love and obedience, henceforth and for ever.

A DEFENCE, by R. Y. of the foregoing Sermon, from the groundless objections raised against it by some inconsiderate readers.

IT is scarcely credible that any one should assert, that Mr. Hervey's posthumous sermon on the "Ministry of Reconciliation is contradictory to the Dialogues in Theron and Aspasio, and affirm, that it has done injury to the work." But such an assertion is easily refuted. This complaint is either lodged by the friends or foes of the deceased: If by his friends, then I suppose it is because the doctrine of imputed righteousness, which makes so great a figure in those Dialogues, is not mentioned in the sermon. These people would do well to consider, that if it is not mentioned, it is strongly implied; and what is strongly implied in this place, cannot be contradictory to what is expressed in others. In that sermon, do we not read in the strongest terms, "That our iniquities are imputed to Christ, by the Father's admitting him to stand in our stead, and exacting from him the punishment which we had incurred?" Do we not here find "God reconciling us to himself, not only by the humiliation, but by the sufferings of the Prince of heaven, and not by some slighter sufferings, but by his sufferings unto death; and not by his undergoing a common death, but the most ignominious and tormenting of all deaths, the death upon the cross?"

And as we find the imputation of our sins so plainly asserted here, so we find in the Dialogues, that "this part of our Lord's meritorious humiliation is, by a very usual figure, put for the whole. The death of Christ includes, not only his sufferings, but his obedience. The shedding of his precious blood, was at once the grand instance of his sufferings, and the finishing act of his obedience. In this view it is considered, and thus it is interpreted by his own ambassador, who, speaking of his divine Master, says, 'He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' When the Scripture ascribes our justification to the death of Christ, we are not to think that it would set aside, but imply his obedience." Now, if we are not to think this of the Scripture, in Mr. Hervey's opinion, how then can we think it of him? And,

without thinking it, where lies the inconsistence between the sermon and the Dialogues?

But I rather imagine, that the charge is brought by Mr. Hervey's enemies. Some of these people, to avoid being thought Socinians, seem willing to allow the satisfaction of Christ, while they declare against the doctrine of justification by the imputation of his righteousness; and such are extremely willing to interpret Mr. Hervey's silence into a consent to their own pernicious sentiments. Theron and Aspasio is a dead weight upon them; they have not, nor can they answer it; willingly, therefore, would they come off by saying the author had contradicted himself. But false is their pretence, and as false is their profession. That they allow the satisfaction of Christ for imputation, is as reasonable, and as justifiable, in the one case as in the other: they both stand upon one and the same footing, so he that throws down one throws down both; whoever rejects the doctrine of our Saviour's righteousness being imputed unto man, rejects, by so doing, the doctrine of man's sins being imputed to our Saviour, and all the consequences of it; or, in other words, he who rejects the doctrine of free justification, rejects, by so doing, the doctrine of Christ.

As the main design in writing Theron and Aspasio, was to prove the fundamental doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; and as it appears that the sermon does not contradict it in this most important article; I suppose it will be allowed, that the charge of contradiction, as to what is most material, is entirely got over. But, perhaps, in a matter of less consequence, it may still be objected, that Mr. Hervey, in the Dialogues, appears plainly to be Calvinistic in the doctrine of *particular* redemption; but in the sermon he says expressly, that "Christ's death is a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the *whole* world." The Church of England says this, as well as Mr. Hervey, in the office for the Communion; and yet no unprejudiced person will question but she is perfectly Calvinistical in her Articles and Homilies.

The truth is, there is no Calvinist but will allow, that the satisfaction of Christ is full, perfect, and sufficient for *all*; but then they distinguish between the sufficiency and efficiency of his sacrifice. With regard to the value of the oblation, it is sufficient for the redemption of every man; with regard to its efficacy, as every man is benefited by the death of Christ, so Christ died for him; but these benefits are not of one kind. Some are common to every man; all the earthly blessings which unbelievers enjoy, are the fruits of Christ's death; so far as they are benefited by him, so far he died for them; other benefits belong to the members of the visible church, and are common to all those who live under the gospel; many graces such may receive from Christ, which, through their own fault, are not saving; and, so far as they are benefited by Christ, so far Christ died for them; other benefits still, according to the will of God and the intention of the Mediator, are peculiar to those which he himself says are given unto him by the Father—his sheep, his elect—such as a true faith, regeneration, sanctification, adoption, &c. In this sense, say those Christians called Calvinists, Christ died for his people only, to bring them effectually to grace and to glory. This system only is consistent with Mr. Hervey's notion of free grace.

The Arminian scheme is, That Christ died with a purpose to make the salvation of every man in the world possible, without any manner of difference, whether they are believers or unbelievers: that he died, not to bring any man actually to salvation, and make him a partaker of righteousness and life, but to purchase a possibility of salvation and reconciliation, so far as that God might, consistent with his justice, receive men into favour upon condition of faith and repentance. This faith and repentance, say they, Christ merited not: for if he had, then God had been bound to give them unto every man, and so every man must have been saved. Thus, you see, according to these gentlemen, Christ died equally for all the world; and the reason why some are saved, lies wholly in themselves, in attaining to that faith and repentance, by the good use of their natural powers, which Christ did not purchase for them. This is the meaning of every Arminian,* let him

* That the reader may still more clearly apprehend the doctrine of Mr. Hervey, who was a Calvinist, and the difference between him and the Arminians, the following note is subjoined.

"The Arminians are supposed by some (who are not sufficiently acquainted with their tenets) to maintain that we are to do something for ourselves, and Christ to do the rest; or, in other words, that we have partly a righteousness of our own, and that Jesus Christ is to make up the deficiencies of that righteousness. This, however, is not the common divinity of the Arminians. They have no such notion of a patch-work justification, or that we are saved partly by the imputation of Christ's merits to make up the deficiencies of our own. But the principles of their scheme are briefly these: That Christ is the sole and only author of our salvation, not by imputing his righteousness to us, but by purchasing such favourable terms of reconciliation for us, and by restoring to us such abilities to fulfil them, by means of which we can only become capable of being justified in the sight of God. Therefore we say, that those in this life who have used well the grace that is given them, and conformed to the terms of the gospel, God doth justify. That is, were he to call them to the bar of judgment and try them, he would acquit, or pronounce them not guilty. Because Christ, by his meritorious death and sufferings, having purchased for them the law of repentance, as the law by which they are to be judged and tried; and they having through grace fulfilled the law, *i. e.* become true pe-

express himself however he will. And how far this is consistent with Mr. Hervey's exhortations to the self-righteous moralist, in the close of this sermon, I believe I need not tell you. Indeed, Mr. Hervey engages not here in the controversy at all; but (going upon what both sides are agreed in, viz. the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to save all that will believe) he invites all his hearers to fly unto him for salvation. Now, if he never enters into the merits of the cause, how can he be guilty of inconsistency?

Upon the whole, then, this is a most excellent sermon. As the Dialogues in Theron and Aspasio were, so is this, the true offspring of him who now rests from his labours, and his works do follow him; the offspring of him who always sought to exalt the Saviour, to humble the sinner, and to promote holiness.

SERMON IV.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORY.

Preached at the visitation of the Rev. John Brown, D. D. Archdeacon of Northampton, held at All-Saints Church in Northampton, on the 10th of May 1753.

Gal. vi. 14.—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE cross of Christ was the favourite topic of St. Paul's contemplation: The cross of Christ was the chosen subject of his sermons, and the grand theme of his writings. At all times, and in every capacity, he professed, he avowed, he gloried in the cross of Christ. Nay, what is very remarkable, he gloried in nothing else; and what is still more observable, he abhorred the thoughts of glorying in any thing else. He speaks of such a practice in the language of detestation and dread, accounting it a high degree both of folly and of wickedness: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It may therefore be an employ worthy of our present attention, to inquire into the nature, the reasonableness, and the wisdom of this resolution. All which, I hope, will appear, if we consider,

I. In what the apostle would *not* glory.

II. In what he *did* glory.

III. What *reason* he had to glory in the cross of Christ.

These points being briefly despatched, I shall beg leave to add a word of application, suggested by the tenor of the discourse, and adapted to the circumstances of my several hearers. And may that adorable Jesus, who has exchanged his cross for an heavenly crown, accompany all with his divine blessing!

Let us then inquire,

I. In what the apostle did *not* glory. Not in the greatness of his learning as a scholar. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; educated by the most famous tutor of the age. Nor was his genius or his industry inferior to the other advantages of his education. Yet all these advantages, with their correspondent acquisitions, he accounted no better than pompous ignorance, or refined folly.

Not in the strictness of his life as a Jew. In this respect he profited above his equals;

nitents, God therefore, for the above merits of Christ, admits of their qualifications, forgives them their offences, and rewards them as if they had never offended. Here then is no splitting of the imputation, no copartnership with Christ; but Christ's righteousness is represented as the sole procuring cause of our salvation, and ours as only the applying cause, by performing the requisite conditions: *i. e.* They both tend to different ends; one to procure the terms of justification, and the other to perform them. So that, in short, according to this scheme of the Arminians, our justification is not made up partly of Christ's righteousness, and partly of our own; for his righteousness is not partly imputed, but not at all imputed, in the Calvinistical sense of imputation. In order to make this difference of opinion still clearer, it must be observed, that the Calvinists (being accustomed to their ideas of imputative righteousness) imagine that when the Arminians affirm the necessity of inherent righteousness in order to justification, that they mean, a borrowing of Christ's imputative righteousness to make up the deficiencies of our own. Whereas, the Arminians, in fact, suppose, that Christ did not, in any degree, fulfil the terms of justification in our stead; but, on the contrary, having purchased them for us, and procured us sufficient powers and abilities of performing them, he left us to co-operate with those powers, and so to fulfil them ourselves." This is a fair, candid, and consistent state of the Arminian doctrine. No one can say it is misrepresented; for it is here given in the very words of an eminent divine, and dignitary of the Church of England, who is himself an Arminian. How much superior the Calvinistic (which was Mr. Hervey's) doctrine is, to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour, and to promote holiness, let every reader judge.

" was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, Acts xxii. 3; after the strictest sect of their religion he lived a Pharisee," Acts xxvi. 5; was zealous, exceedingly zealous, of the whole ceremonial law, and of all the traditional constitutions. Which accomplishments must finish his character among his countrymen; must open his way to some of the first honours of the nation; and give him a name among those worthies who were reputed the excellent of the earth. But what others counted gain, this he counted loss for Christ.

Not in the eminency of his gifts, nor in the extent of his usefulness as a Christian minister. He had been caught up into the third heaven; had heard the words of God, and seen the vision of the Almighty; had wrought all manner of wonders, and signs, and mighty deeds. What was still more valuable, he had planted churches, and converted souls. His labours were gone out into all lands, and his words into the ends of the earth. Yet all these acquirements, before the infinite God, were defective; all these performances, in point of justification, were insufficient. Therefore in none of these he gloried. Which reminds me of the second inquiry.

II. In what the apostle *did* glory. He gloried in a cross. Strange! What so scandalous as a cross? On a cross rebellious slaves were executed. The cross was execrable among men, and accursed even by God, Gal. iii. 13. Yet the apostle glories in the cross. Crucifixion not being used among us, the expression does not sound so harsh, neither is the idea so horrid. But to the ear of a Galatian it conveyed much the same meaning, as if the apostle had gloried in a halter, gloried in the gallows, gloried in a gibbet.*

" Stupid creature," perhaps some may reply, " to undervalue the most substantial endowments, and glory in infamy itself!" But stop a moment, and hear the apostle farther. He glories in the cross of Christ; that illustrious person, who was anointed to be the all-instructing Prophet, the all-atoning Priest, and the all-conquering King of the church. In the cross of Christ Jesus; who, by the discharge of all those important offices, should save his people from the dominion of sin, and from the damnation of hell. In the cross of Christ Jesus our Lord; and not ours only, but Lord of all; who doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, Dan. iv. 35; who hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords!* Rev. xix. 16.

And is it possible for any human heart to contemplate the cross of so divine a being, and not to glory? Is it possible to say, Angels, he rules over you; but he died, he died on a cross for me; and not exult in such transporting beneficence? This will be more evident, if we examine,

III. What *reason* the apostle had to glory in the cross of Christ. The cross, though in itself an ignominous tree, yet being the cross of Christ, is infinitely ennobled. It becomes the tree of life; it bears the divinest fruit; its clusters are all spiritual and heavenly blessings. Two or three of those clusters you will permit me to select; and may the God of all mercy make them better than a feast to every humble soul!

One blessing is the pardon of sin: the pardon of all sin, original and actual; sin that is remembered, and sin that is forgotten; sin however circumstanced, or however aggravated. The pardon of all was purchased by the death of Christ; completely purchased: so that, against the true believer, sin shall never rise up in judgment; " shall not so much as be mentioned unto him," Ezek. xviii. 22; shall be done away, as though it had never been. For thus saith the ambassador of the Prince of Peace, " Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things," Acts xiii. 38, 39. Oh, my soul! my guilty soul! what are all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, compared with this ineffable blessing! Yet this is but one among a multitude.

Another benefit accruing from the cross of Christ, is reconciliation with God. " When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," Rom. v. 10. Not pardoned only, but accepted; from a state of enmity, restored to a state of favour; even that " favour which is better than life," Psalm lxiii. 3: A privilege of such superlative excellency, that it was celebrated in the hymns of angels. When the heavenly host uttered a song, this was the subject of their harmonious joy; " Glory be to God in the highest; and on earth, peace, good will towards men," Luke ii. 14. By the birth of this wonderful child, and the

* Some persons, I am informed, were disgusted at these words, halter, gallows, gibbet; they are so horribly contemptible! To whom I would reply, that the cross, in point of ignominy and torment, included all this and more. Unless the English reader forms to himself some such image, he will never be able to apprehend the scandalous nature, and shocking circumstances, of his divine Master's death.

The words, I must confess, were diversified, and the sentiment was reiterated, on purpose to affect the mind with this astonishing truth. Neither can I prevail upon myself to expunge the expressions, unless I could substitute others of a more ignominious and execrable import. Only I would beg of the serious reader to spend a moment in the following reflection: " Is it so, that a polite and delicate ear can hardly endure so much as the sound of the words? How amazing then was the condescension! how charming and adorable the goodness of God's illustrious Son to bear all that is signified by these intolerably vile terms!—bear it willingly, bear it cheerfully, for us men, and our salvation!"

death he shall sustain, peace is made between heaven and earth; and not peace only, but a divine friendship commences. God regards the poor apostate race of men, not only without indignation, but with complacency and delight: "He rejoices over them to do them good." Deut. xxviii. 63.

Another benefit is holiness; or, if you please, the true, the Christian morality. Let none think the believer in Jesus disparages true morality. True morality is the image of the blessed God; it is most charmingly delineated throughout the whole Bible; it is the beginning of heaven in the human soul; and its proper origin is from the cross of our divine Master. For through the merits of his death, sinners are made partakers of the Holy Spirit; who writes upon their hearts, and makes legible in their conversation, what was anciently written upon the mitre of the high-priest, *Holiness to the Lord.* And, oh! what a motive is the cross of Christ to the exercise of every virtue! "He died—my Lord, my Judge, my King, died—to redeem me from all iniquity, and make me zealous of good works." How powerfully, far beyond any naked instructions or abstract reasonings, do such considerations invite us, urge us, constrain us, (2 Cor. v. 14,) to renounce all ungodliness, and adorn the gospel of God our Saviour!

Another blessing is victory over death. This also is the fruit of that once detested, but now ever-beloved tree. For thus it is written, "That, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14, 15. The devil is said to have the power of death; because, by tempting too successfully our first parents, he brought death into the world; because, by tempting their posterity to sin, and too often prevailing, he arrays death in horror; he arms death with its sting. But Christ, by expiating our guilt, has disarmed this last enemy; has taken away its sting; and made it not loss, but gain to die, Philip. i. 21. The gay, and the healthy, know not how to form an estimate of this deliverance; nor can any words of mine describe it with proper energy. Go to dying beds; there you will learn its true worth. Ask some agonized friend; he, and he alone, can tell you, what a blessing it is to have the king of terrors converted into a messenger of peace.

One blessing more I would mention, and earnestly wish it, in due time, to all my hearers—an entrance into heaven. This too is the produce of our Redeemer's cross. St. John saw a bright assembly of happy beings, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, rejoicing before the throne of God. "These," said one of the venerable elders, "are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Therefore "are they before the throne, Rev. vii. 9. 14, 15. They came out of great tribulation:" they suffered, it is probable, in the service of Christ: perhaps they laid down their lives for his sake. But this was not their passport into the regions of bliss. "They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb:" they had applied to their own souls the merits and atonement of the crucified Jesus. By this means, they were presented without spot, and blameless; on this account they were admitted to "see the King of heaven in his beauty," Isaiah xxxiii. 17, and to be ever, ever with the Lord.

Since then the cross of Christ was demonstrative of such stupendous love; since it is productive of benefits innumerable, invaluable, and eternal; was there not a cause for the apostle to glory on this behalf? Nay, might not the very stones have cried out, to reproach him with insensibility and ingratitude, if he had neglected to glory in the cross of Christ? And since this love was shewed, these benefits were procured, not for him only, but for us, and for all generations; does not this afford me an opportunity of applying the doctrine to each particular hearer?

1. Let me address, or rather let me congratulate, my brethren in the ministry. Though you cannot control the laws of nature, though you cannot see into the secrets of futurity, you have the same cause of glorying with the very chiefest of the apostles; a cause of glorying, which that holy man of God esteemed far above all such miraculous abilities. You have the cross of Christ,

For your *study*, as *men*;
For your *hope*, as *Christians*;
For your *preaching*, as *ministers*.

For your study, as men. Here the reasoning faculties may exert themselves with everlasting improvement and everlasting delight. Here we contemplate the wonders, the unparalleled wonders of a God made man; dying as a pattern of patience, as a martyr for truth, as an all-perfect sacrifice for sin. Here the Lord Jehovah hath fully granted, what his servant Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 18,) so earnestly requested—he hath made all his glory to pass before the astonished eyes of angels and of men. Here justice has set her most awful terrors in array; even while goodness appears, with inexpressible loveliness, and the most attractive beauty. Here truth, more unshaken than a rock, takes her immoveable stand; and mercy, tenderer than the mother's tear, yearns with bowels of everlasting pity. In a word, the cross of Christ is a conspicuous theatre, on

which all the divine perfections unite, and harmonize, and shine forth with transcendent lustre.

As Christians, we have, in the cross of Christ, the richest provision for our own spiritual wants. This is a foundation of the sublimest hope, and a fountain of the most exuberant joy: this affords matter for the deepest humility, and yields fuel for the most flaming love. Faith in our crucified Jesus is an ever-active principle of the most cheerful and exact obedience; is an ample and inexhaustible magazine, from which we may fetch arms to conquer, absolutely conquer, the allurements of the world, the solicitations of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil. By this a way is opened for us into the holy of holies: and what may we not venture to ask, what may we not expect to receive, who have the blood of the everlasting covenant to plead, in all our approaches to the throne of grace? Having therefore such an high-priest, having in his cross unsearchable riches, who shall make our glorying void? what shall hinder us from rejoicing and saying, "Blessed be God for these opening beauties of spring! Blessed be God for the expected fruits of autumn! Blessed be God for ten thousand thousand gifts of his indulgent providence! but, above all, blessed be God for the cross of Christ?"

As ministers of the gospel, we are not left to set before our hearers a system of refined heathenism; or to entertain them with cold, spiritless lectures of virtue. No; we have the infinitely tender love, the immensely free grace, of the bleeding, dying Immanuel, to display, to improve, to enforce. And is there a topic in the whole compass of oratory, is there an argument amidst all the stores of reason, so admirably calculated to touch the finest movements of the soul? to strike all the inmost springs of action with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy? Would we alarm the supine, or intimidate the presumptuous? we may call them to behold God's own Son weltering in blood, God's own Son transfixed with the arrows of justice: we may bid them consider, if judgment begins with the immaculate MEDIATOR, where shall the irreclaimable sinner appear? how will he escape the stroke? how bear the weight of God's everlasting vengeance? Would we comfort the distressed? we may point them to an atonement whose merits are infinite, and able to save to the very uttermost, Heb. vii. 25; we may lead them to a righteousness, whose efficacy is unbounded, and sufficient to justify the ungodly. And what balm can be so sovereign for a wounded conscience? Are we to support the weak, and animate the doubting? here w may show them promises, free promises, exceeding great and precious promises, ratified by the oath of Jehovah, and sealed by the blood of his Son. And what cordials can be so restorative to the drooping Christian?

In short, the doctrine of the cross is suited to answer all the great ends of our ministry, and promote all the truly valuable interests of our people. By this the Holy Spirit delights to work; and this, "O Satan, shall be thy plague;" this, O sin, "shall be thy destruction." Hosea xiii. 14. However, therefore, the cross might be to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; God forbid that we should glory in any thing else. Let this be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending of all our public ministrations. Let us leave a savour of this knowledge, which is far better than precious ointment, in every private company! Let it appear, from all our conversation, that the affections of our heart, and the labours of our life, are devoted, wholly devoted, to our adored Redeemer's cross. Happy the people who are under the care of such ministers! and blessed the ministers who walk according to this rule!

2. Let me exhort all true believers; those who are vile in their own eyes, and to whom Christ alone is precious. Remember, brethren, what is written in the prophet; it is a description of your state, it is a direction for your conduct: "In the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory." Isaiah xlv. 25.

Let none say, that religion is a gloomy or uncomfortable state; I call upon you this day to rejoice. Let none say, religion is a mean or despicable thing; I call upon you this day to glory; and have the divine authority for both.* You will dishonour the blessed Jesus, you will disparage his surpassing excellency, if you do not confide in him, and make your boast of him. Christ is King of heaven, Christ is Judge of the world, Christ is God over all. And of such a Saviour shall we not glory? Yes, verily; and in all circumstances, and on every occasion.

Amidst your manifold infirmities glory in Christ. For, though he was crucified in weakness, he hath all power in heaven and earth. And it is written before him, it is one of his immutable decrees, "sin shall not have dominion over you." Rom. vi. 14. Amidst your various failings, glory in Christ. For his righteousness covers all your imperfections, his righteousness secures you from wrath and condemnation; and, though deficient in yourselves, you are complete in him. Col. ii. 10. Under the pressure of tribulations, lift up your heads, and glory in the cross; because the Captain of your

* Καυχαμια, the word in our text, denotes the act of rejoicing, as well as of glorying. Thus it is translated, Rom. v. 11. And indeed this it always implies. See Psalm v. 11. Psalm cxlix. 5. Septuagint.

salvation was made perfect through sufferings. If you suffer with him, you shall also reign with him. And the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the happiness which Christ has purchased with his agonies, and will quickly bestow on his people. When death approaches—death that cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible among the kings of the earth—do you still glory in the cross. Adhering to this banner, you may boldly and triumphantly say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 55. When that great tremendous day shall come, which puts an end to time and terrestrial things; when that awful, that majestic voice is heard, which commands all the race of Adam to appear at the bar; then, my dear brethren in Christ, then also shall you glory in the cross. When others, in an agony of terror, call upon rocks to fall on them, and mountains to overwhelm them, this shall be your sedate appeal; rather, this shall be your heroic challenge: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Rom. viii. 33, 34. Then shall you enter the harbour of eternal rest; not like a shipwrecked mariner cleaving to some broken plank, and hardly escaping the raging waves; but like some stately vessel, with all her sails expanded, and riding before a prosperous gale.

3. Let me caution the self-righteous; those who more frequently think of their own piety than of Christ's obedience; are more apt to cry out with the Pharisee, "I am no extortioner, no adulterer," than to confess with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." What shall I say to these persons? Let me not be thought censorious, when my only aim is to be faithful. Beware, I beseech you, beware lest you build for eternity, not on a rock, but on the sand. However you may appear in your own sight, before the adorable majesty of the everlasting God, before the consummate perfection of his holy law, you are less than nothing, you are worse than nothing; you are, indeed you are, deficiency and sin. Renounce, therefore, renounce all dependence on self. Trust no longer in a refuge of lies; lest all your admired attainments, at the day of final retribution, be like straw, and hay, and stubble, in Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace. Imitate the blessed penman of my text. Are you blameless in your external carriage? so was he. Are you exemplary in many points? so was he. Yet all this righteousness he "accounted but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord." Phil. iii. 8. Be this your pattern. Write emptiness upon your own duties, emptiness upon your own works; and you shall be filled with all the fulness of God your Saviour. Every other cause of glorying will be like the morning cloud, or the early dew, which passeth away, Hos. vi. 4, but this cause of glorying will "stand fast for evermore as the moon, and as the faithful witness in heaven." Psalm lxxxix. 37.

Can I conclude without adding a word of admonition to the wicked? those, I mean, who are enemies to the cross of Christ; who mind earthly things, but neither hunger nor thirst after righteousness. My soul remembers the wormwood and the gall of such a state, and cannot but tenderly pity these unhappy people. Alas! my friends, what have you to glory in? The devil and his angels expect, ere long, to glory in your destruction. Those malignant fiends are eyeing you as their prey, and are impatient to begin your torment. Great, inexpressibly great, is your danger: the Lord Almighty open your eyes to discern it. Nevertheless, your case is not desperate. You may yet be delivered, "as a bird out of the snare of the fowler." Look unto the crucified Jesus. Why does he hang on that bloody tree? why are his hands pierced with iron? why is his body racked with pain? why his heart torn with anguish? It is for you sinners, for you. That blood is poured out, to cleanse you from guilt; those wounds are sustained, to heal your consciences; that anguish is endured, to obtain rest for your souls. In that mangled body "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead." Col. ii. 9. Great, beyond imagination great, is the merit of those sufferings. Why then, O why will you die! why will you perish for ever, who have an all-sufficient propitiation in the cross of Christ? Fly to this sanctuary: fly, before it be too late: fly without a moment's delay. It is an inviolable sanctuary. None ever perished that fled by faith to the compassionate and divinely compassionate Redeemer. His death shall be a full satisfaction for your iniquities. A sense of his immensely rich goodness shall win your affections; shall incline (what all the threatenings of damnation could never effect) shall incline you to loath your sins, and to love his service; shall smooth your path, and expedite your progress, to the regions of immortal honour and joy.

Having now, with great plainness of speech, addressed my brethren in the ministry; having exhorted believers, cautioned the self-righteous, and warned the wicked; let me commend the whole to your serious recollection, and to God's gracious benediction. And, "O Lord most holy! O God most mighty! O holy and merciful Saviour! by thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion," let not the word now spoken be in vain in the Lord! *Amen*, and *amen*.

THE

TIME OF DANGER,

THE MEANS OF SAFETY,

AND

THE WAY OF HOLINESS;

BEING

The substance of Three Sermons Preached on the Public Fast Days, in 1757.

PREFACE.

SHOULD any one ask, "Why does this author publish his sermons, when the fast is gone and forgotten?" For this very reason he publishes, that the fast, though gone, may not be forgotten; that we may remember the sins we confessed, and the miseries we deprecated; remember the vows of God, which are still upon us; and the snares of death, which are still around us.

Should it be further asked, "Why does he obtrude himself on the public, when so many eminent writers have already made their appearance? Does he bring with him any distinguished excellency of composition, any superior force of argument, or uncommon delicacy of sentiment?" No such thing. He pretends to nothing refined or extraordinary; he affects neither brilliant thought nor polished style: equally remote from nice criticism and profound learning, his discourses are studiously plain, and brought down to the level of the meanest capacity.

"What then is his motive?" This is the very truth. In several of the sermons published on this occasion, the one thing needful seems to be overlooked. Christ and his free grace, Christ and his great salvation, are either totally omitted, or but slightly touched. Where these are but slightly touched, the door of hope and the city of refuge are shown, as it were, through a mist, dimly and indistinctly. We have no more than a transient glimpse of the desirable objects; and only so much light as is sufficient to bewilder, rather than direct. Where they are totally omitted, the door of hope is barred, and the city of refuge withdrawn from our view. In this case, being without Christ, we are without consolation; and may justly complain, with the mourning prophet, "The Comforter, that should relieve our souls, is far off."

Through the following discourses, a constant regard is paid to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; to his all-atoning blood, and his everlasting righteousness; which are the grand means, both of comforting our hearts, and sanctifying our nature. Indeed, the principal aim of the whole is, to display the unsearchable riches of Christ, the matchless efficacy of his death, and that perfect freeness with which all his invaluable benefits are bestowed. "To those who believe, he is precious:" and to those who are convinced of sin, these salutary truths will be their own best recommendation. Such readers will excuse a multitude of blemishes, provided they find Jesus who was crucified; Jesus, who is the desire of all nations; Jesus, than whom no other foundation can be laid, either for present holiness or future happiness.

As these sermons were not preached to gratify a curious taste, neither are they published with any fond prospect of reforming a sinful nation. Sincerely as the author loves his country, and ardently as he desires the salvation of his countrymen, he is not so vainly sanguine in his expectations. But this he will venture to assert, that if ever a reformation is produced, it must, under the influences of the eternal Spirit, be produced by the doctrines of free grace, and justification through a *Redeemer's* righteousness. Till these doctrines are generally inculcated, the most eloquent harangues from the pulpit, or the most correct dissertations from the press, will be no better than a pointless arrow and a broken bow.

This also he will venture to hope, that the discourses may here and there meet with some poor sinner, who is smitten with a sense of guilt, and alarmed with apprehensions of danger; who desires nothing so much as to find a resting-place, where he may be free from the terrors of conscience, and safe in the day of trouble. This freedom and this safety are to be found only, are to be found infallibly, in the blessed Jesus and the blood of sprinkling. If such a reader, by the following pages, is conducted to this divine sanctuary, the writer is satisfied, is rewarded, enjoys the utmost of his wishes.

Then, instead of soliciting the voice of fame, or coveting the wreath of honour; instead of giving himself any concern about the officious critic; he will thankfully adore that Almighty hand "which confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers." Isa. xliv. 26. For, oh! how insipid is the praise of men, compared with the exalted pleasure of glorifying God, and edifying an immortal soul! How harmless is defamation from a fellow-creature, when our great Creator smiles; and is pleased, by "weak things, and by things that are despised," 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, to accomplish the purposes of his infinite grace and everlasting love.

SERMON V.

THE TIME OF DANGER.

HEB. xi. 28.—"Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them."

IF we consult the history to which these words refer, we shall find the Israelites in a state of great affliction. The Egyptians oppressed them; very heavily laid the yoke upon them; and made their lives bitter with hard bondage. The misery of his people God pities, and is resolved to redress. Accordingly, he sends Moses, in the quality of his ambassador, to demand their release. The king of Egypt most insolently replies, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." God, to chastise his insolence and obstinacy, inflicts a variety of plagues on him and his subjects; in contempt of all which, Pharaoh hardens his heart, persists in his disobedience, and refuses to let the people go. At last, says the Lord, "I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt," Exod. xi. 1, which shall infallibly accomplish my purpose. Be their hearts hard as the nether-mill-stone, this shall make them feel: be their resolution stubborn as an iron sinew, this shall make it bend. "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die." Exod. xi. 4, 5.

But as the Israelites then dwelt in Egypt, how should they be safe amidst the general desolation? Will it be said, the Israelites, being the people of God, were not exposed to this punishment, had no reason to fear the infliction of this vengeance? None that remembers how all the world is become guilty before God, will affirm this; none that considers how rebellious and idolatrous the Israelites were, can suppose this. And every one who has read Ezek. xx. 8, must allow, that there was no difference in this respect. The one people were criminal as well as the other. All of them most righteously deserved the afflictive stroke. Grace, free and sovereign grace alone, must make the distinction.

Since this was the case, it may reasonably be asked, how shall the Israelites be safe? The Lord himself directs Moses to a method, which should effectually secure all the families of Israel, while death entered into every habitation of the Egyptians. The method, its execution, and success, are all specified in the text: "By faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them." Where we may observe,

I. A very dreadful danger; signified by *the destruction of the first-born.*

II. A method of security from this danger; effected by *keeping the passover, and the blood of sprinkling.*

III. The success of this method; denoted by the destroyer *not so much as touching them.*

The good Lord enable us to open and apply the words thus divided! Then we shall see their suitableness to the present occasion; and, I hope, feel their salutary influence on our souls.

I. A very dreadful danger; signified by the destruction of the first-born.—The Lord had already put his hand to the sword. It was even now drawn from the scabbard, and had received a commission to go forth; to go forth that very night; to walk through all the land of Egypt; and to be bathed before the morning light in the blood of the first-born, all the first-born, from the haughty king that sat on the throne, even to the slave that toiled at the mill, and the very sheep that yeaned in the field. Tremendous, as well as inevitable blow! O what an alarm will it create, and what affliction

will it spread: make every heart sad, and every house a scene of mourning! "There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more." Exod. xi. 6.

And is not the present time a time of imminent danger? are not the judgments of the Almighty now abroad in the world? have not earthquakes shaken kingdoms, and rent the foundations of nature? have they not spread terror through our own and distant nations; laid wealthy towns and magnificent cities in ruin; and swallowed up or destroyed unknown multitudes of our fellow-creatures?

Is not the sword of slaughter drawn? has not war hung out her bloody flag? are not the flames kindled in Europe and America; on the land and on the ocean? are they not gathering strength daily; spreading their rage continually; and threatening to overrun all?

If we were evidently superior to our enemies in number and power, in vigilance and unanimity, yet the events of military undertakings are very uncertain. "The battle is not always to the strong," Eccles. ix. 11. Success and victory depend upon a hand higher far than the arm of flesh. "Without me," saith the Lord, "they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain." Isaiah x. 4.

But are we not at war with one of the most potent, insidious, enterprising kingdoms in the world? Is there not great reason to suppose, that they will soon be joined by their neighbours the Spaniards? And if we have been worsted by one, how shall we contend with their united force? Considering the situation and behaviour of the ungrateful Austrians, have we not cause to suspect the junction of a third popish power against our religion and liberty? Will not the court of Rome, with all her bigotted adherents, urge and instigate them to be active in this confederacy?* will they not at this juncture, the most favourable for the prosecution of their purpose that any age has afforded, or their own sanguine zeal can desire—will they not exert their utmost ability to crush the Protestant cause, and extirpate the Protestant name?

Should the enemy make a descent upon our island, what can we expect, but that our island be turned into a field of blood? They who have always been jealous of our interest and influence, have now added rage to their jealousy. Their resentment, like the burning fiery furnace, is heated seven times hotter than usual. We should certainly find them, as the Scripture speaks, a bitter and hasty nation, Hab. i. 6, and, without the spirit of prophecy, may venture to declare, Wo be to England, if God should now deliver it into the hands of the French.

Some perhaps may cry, "These fears are all chimerical. There is no ground for such discouraging suggestions. We do not question but we shall be a match, and more than a match for our adversaries." To this confident boasting let not my tongue, but let the course of events, let the disposals of providence reply. Have we, then, been superior in the day of trial? Alas! have we not lost Minorca? is not Oswego gone? a general slain, and his army cut in pieces? an admiral condemned to be shot to death, and his fleet defeated by an inferior number of the enemy's ships? Are not ravages and depredations made almost continually upon our colonies in America; and horrible unheard-of cruelties committed by the savages on the persons of our fellow-subjects? What have we reaped from the late campaign, but disappointment, loss, and shame?

Are not all these things apparently against us? will they not dispirit our men, and imbolden our foes? will they not make our allies backward to come in with their succours, and render the powers that are unengaged afraid to declare themselves on our side?

All these circumstances considered, the present appears to be a time of uncommon danger; affairs, look wherever we will, wear a lowering aspect. "Our sky is black with clouds, and there is the sound of abundance of rain." 1 Kings xviii. 41. Judgments seem, more than seem, to be hovering all around us. How soon they may fall, God only knows!

"If God indeed were for us," we might trust, and not be afraid; we might look danger in the face, and boldly say, "Who shall be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. But is this the case? are we "a righteous nation, that keepeth the truth?" Isaiah xxvi. 2. Is there sufficient reason to believe, that the Holy One of Israel is our defence? Are we not, on the contrary, a sinful generation, a people laden with iniquity? is there not abundant reason to fear lest our God should say, in terrible indignation, "They are joined to idols, let them alone?" Hos. iv. 17. In order to determine this point, let us examine our ways. Nothing can be more proper for a day of humiliation. Are not we, like the Egyptians, in a state of great danger? if we consider,

* When the pope heard of the alliance lately established between the houses of Bourbon, and Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia, strengthened by the unexpected accession of Russia, he cried out with an air of triumph, *O admirabile commercium generis humani!* "Admirable association and intercourse of mankind!" Promising himself, I suppose, from this remarkable turn of affairs, such advantages to the cause and interests of popery as exceeded even all his hopes.

1. The *sins* of our nation.

2. The *judgments* of God denounced upon such sins.

3. The *certain execution* of those judgments, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

1. Consider the sins of our nation. Here I shall mention some, and only some of those abominations, which, wherever they are found, cannot fail to provoke the eyes of God's glory, and render either a person or a people ripe for his vengeance.

The Christian Sabbath is an inestimable privilege to the church of Christ; it is a happy means of building us up in knowledge, of establishing us in faith, and preparing us for our everlasting rest. Yet, is it not shamefully profaned in city and in country? What multitudes waste it in idleness, or squander it away in unedifying conversation; making it by far the most useless and contemptible day of the week? This they do even though God strictly charges, saying, "Remember ye the Sabbath day," not barely to abstain from your ordinary works, but to keep it holy," Exod. xx. 8, devoting it entirely to holy purposes, and religious exercises. This they do, even though God solemnly threatens, saying, "If ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." Jer. xvii. 27.

Is not the name of God great, wonderful, and holy? ought it not to be used with the deepest veneration, and magnified above all things? But is it not audaciously dishonoured, and impiously blasphemed? dishonoured by customary and wanton, blasphemed by false and perfidious swearing? Has not the most high God declared, that he will in no wise hold such daring wretches guiltless? Yet how do these daring wretches swarm, like the locusts of society, in our polluted land! O England, how is thy air tainted with this breath of the infernal pit! how do thy streets resound, most horribly resound, with this language of hell! And will not the Almighty Lord make thee know, know by bitter experience, what that meaneth which is spoken by his prophet, "Because of swearing, the land mourneth." Jer. xxiii. 10, mourneth under afflicting visitations, and desolating judgments?

Is not the Scripture a singular blessing? Yes, it is celebrated by the Psalmist as the sovereign blessing; that which crowns the other instances of divine goodness; "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel." It is also celebrated as a most distinguishing blessing, from which multitudes are excluded: "He hath not dealt so with all nations, neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws," Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. Should not then the Scripture be precious to our souls; more precious than fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the droppings of the honeycomb? Should we not exercise ourselves in it day and night, Psalm i. 2; reading it by day, meditating on it by night? Should we not make it the most delightful subject of our conversation; talk of it to our children, our domestics, our neighbours; when we lie down, and rise up; when we walk by the way, and sit in the house? Deut. vi. 7. But where are the persons who bear such a superlative esteem for the Bible? where is the company that delights to converse on those oracles of truth? where are the parents that diligently instruct their children, and feed them with the milk of the word? Diversion of every kind engages their attention, and the most trifling impertinence employs their tongue; but the Lord's word is insipid, if not irksome. His word is treated, even by Protestants, as the manna was treated by the Israelites, who had the ingratitude and impudence to say, "Our soul loatheth this light bread," Numb. xxi. 5. A plague from the Lord of hosts was the consequence of their contemptuous treatment of the meat that perisheth. Of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy, who contemn the food which endureth to everlasting life?

God hath reserved the unjust, saith the Scripture, unto the day of judgment, to be punished; "chiefly those who walk after the flesh in the lusts of uncleanness," 2 Pet. ii. 10. Is not this iniquity rampant among the inhabitants of England? What lewd pictures are exposed to view! what filthy writings are suffered to see the light! fuel for lust, and incentives to debauchery. What is wit, in our days, but either some lascivious hint, or some licentious abuse of Scripture? Are not the wanton entertainments of the stage, and other seminaries of lewdness, countenanced, supported, thronged? Can you acquit our cities and towns of drunkenness, revellings, and abominable excesses? Are not these, and all sorts of filthiness, found in our skirts? If so, hear the word of the Lord, and let it sink deep into every heart; "when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Jer. v. 7, 8, 9.

Is not religion, vital religion, very much upon the decline? Does it not, even

among the serious, wear a sickly dying aspect? What multitudes profess to know God, but in works deny him? and, quite destitute of the power of godliness, content themselves with the mere form? Whereas, if any, in imitation of the first believers and preachers, are fervent in spirit, serving the Lord with alacrity and zeal; these persons, instead of being encouraged, are opposed; instead of being esteemed, are reproached. Of such persons even the malignant spirit could bear witness, "These are the servants of the most high God, who shew unto us the way of salvation," Acts xvi. 17. But among us, who call ourselves Christians, who pique ourselves upon being the purest church in Christendom; among us, such persons are deemed the visionaries of the age, the disturbers of society, and the men that would "turn the world upside down," Acts xvii. 6. The ministers who are most faithful, and the people who are most exemplary, are a derision and a bye-word among their neighbours. Thus, in Israel, "they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets." But it was to the confusion of those scoffers, and the ruin of their country; "for the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary; and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 27,

Are we not abandoned to a spirit of carnal confidence? When do we discover any reliance on the Almighty, or ascribe any of our success to his gracious interposition? It is not God, but our sword that shall help us. Or, if any unseen power is acknowledged, it is not the Lord of Hosts, but good fortune. One would almost imagine, that we were ashamed of a heavenly ally; and thought it a disgrace to own ourselves dependent on Omnipotence. Is not such a temper a national infatuation, and the harbinger of national judgments? Zedekiah and the men of Judah forgot or neglected the Rock of their salvation, and made Pharaoh's army their confidence. But see what was the issue, or hear it from the mouth of him who fulfilled the word of his servants: "Though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire," Jer. xxxvii. 10.

Should you say, This is a false charge; have we not this very day publicly acknowledged, that, "without the divine aid, the wisest counsels of frail men, and the multitude of an host, and all the instruments of war, are but weak and vain?" Have we not likewise expressly declared; that, "not confiding in the splendour of any thing that is great, or the stability of any thing that is strong here below, we do most humbly flee to the Lord for succour, and put our trust under the shadow of his wings?"* I would to God we believed that acknowledgment, and acted conformably to this declaration. We should then be very diligent to propagate religion among our soldiers and sailors; we should seek for such officers and commanders as are men fearing God; we should be as desirous to establish our troops in godliness, as to train them up in military discipline. But is it thus with our army? is it thus with our navy?—Visit a man of war: You will think yourself, not in one of the bulwarks of our island, but in a little hell. Observe the gentlemen of the sword: Concerning the generality of them you will have reason to ask, Are these Christians? are they not incarnate devils?† And can we expect that the infinitely pure God will go forth with such hosts? will he not rather become "their enemy, and fight against them?" Isaiah lxiii. 10.

What ignorance prevails, especially among the lower ranks of people! The grossest ignorance of themselves and of God our Saviour; the grossest ignorance of grace and salvation by a Redeemer's righteousness; the grossest ignorance of the very first principles of our holy religion. To do evil they are wise; but to do good, to believe in Jesus Christ, to love and glorify him who bought sinners with his blood; to do all, to do any of this, they have no knowledge. And is it a small matter to be thus children of darkness? is not the soul alienated from the life of God through ignorance? Eph. iv. 18; does not this displease the most high God, and provoke the Holy One of Israel? Let his own word determine; "It is a people of no understanding; therefore, he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour," Isa. xxvii. 11. Are these impotent menaces made only to be contemned? then we may dismiss our fears. But if they are the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, then we have reason to cry, "What will become of England?"

In a word, religion, both as to knowledge and practice, was never at so low an ebb, since the Reformation took place; nor luxury, and immorality of every kind, at

* The form of prayer appointed for the fast.

† Does this sound harsh: or will any other part of the charge advanced in these discourses prove offensive? I am sorry there should be any occasion for such language: But I dare not retract it.

such an enormous height. Where now are our rulers? Are they zealous for God, and valiant for the truth? have they courage to stem the torrent, or to oppose the overflowings of ungodliness? Where are the grandees and magistrates? Warm with generous indignation, do they snatch the spear; and, like the gallant Phinehas, smite through the loins of iniquity? Alas! have not our great men "altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds?" Jer. v. 5. Are they not, generally speaking, the ringleaders in transgression; as eminent for their contempt of God, as for the affluence of their circumstances? "Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in the several trespasses," Ezra ix. 2. But will that dignity which they have abused; will that authority which was lent them for better purposes; will those distinctions be a security to them or their country in the day of visitation? Hear what the righteous Lord says, who is higher than the highest, and able to execute all his decrees: "It is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers. I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their hearts may faint, and their ruins be multiplied," Ezek. xxi. 14, 15. Gates, be they ever so strongly fortified, or ever so faithfully guarded, are no fence against the point of Jehovah's sword. And, if sin is suffered to enter, judgments will assuredly follow: judgments will follow even the most powerful and wealthy sinners; will pursue them like an eager blood-hound; will haunt them like a dismal ghost; will force a way into their palaces, nay, into their closest retirements; and never remit the chase, till fainting of heart ends in multiplied ruin—in the ruin of themselves, their families, their country.

Amidst all these crying evils, are we not presumptuously secure? is there not a deplorable spirit of stupidity, which blinds our eyes, and renders us insensible? Scarce any one lays these miseries and dangers to heart. Who mourneth for the abominations of the land? who stirreth up himself to call upon God, if so be he may yet be entreated, and have mercy upon Zion? Are we not too much like the intoxicated sinners of the old world? "They ate, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded." They gave themselves wholly up to sensual gratifications and inferior cares, disregarding all the admonitions of Noah, and all the tokens of impending vengeance; "till the divine long-suffering ceased; the universal flood came, and, with irresistible violence, swept them all away," Luke xvii. 27. Are we not in the condition of those supine, senseless people, spoken of by the prophet Zephaniah? "It shall come to pass at that day, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees; that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." And may we not justly expect their awful doom? "Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation. Their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath: but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy," Zeph. i. 12, &c.

As a farther aggravation of our crimes, have we not been incorrigible, amidst the most compulsive and the most winning motives to amendment? We have been visited with a contagious distemper among our cattle; which, we were apprehensive, might have introduced a plague among the human race. From this fear we have been delivered; but are we delivered from our evil works, and have we renounced all ungodliness? Rebellion broke out in our island; threatening to overthrow our Protestant government, and deprive us of our reformed religion; threatening to deprive us of our liberty and its privileges, of our peace and its comforts. This storm also was soon blown over, and tranquillity restored to our land. But did we return every one to the Lord our God, who dealt so graciously with us? Earthquakes have shattered other kingdoms, have destroyed other cities; while they only admonished, not injured, us and ours. Has this goodness, this distinguishing goodness of God, led us to repentance? Were we not lately preserved from the most calamitous of all temporal losses—from losing the precious fruits of the earth? When the corn was ripe, and ready for the sickle, who can forget the lowering sky, and the descending rains, which held back the husbandman's hand, and forbade the gathering. A few more days of such unseasonable weather had inevitably spoiled the produce of the ground, and destroyed the staff of life. But divine Providence, at the very hour of need, restrained the immoderate showers; bade the sun shine forth with peculiar brightness; and gave us the expected weeks of the harvest: thus rescuing us from famine, perhaps from pestilence, probably from mutiny, certainly from a train of evils, the particulars of which we cannot so much as imagine. But is there not too much ground for the complaint, so pathetically urged, and so frequently repeated, by the prophet, "Though I have done all this for you, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord?" Amos iv. 6. 8—11.

Behold, now, the state of our nation. Our sins abound, and are grown up to heaven; sins of every, even the most horrid kind; sins among all ranks, from the highest

to the lowest. In our sins we persist, though wooed, as it were, with the choicest mercies; though made to smart under various judgments; though threatened with far more afflictive visitations. And will the great, the mighty, the immortal God, always bear with such a people? will he receive the most horrible indignities, and still, still refrain himself? Surely he will awake, as one out of sleep! surely he will say, with a determined indignation, "Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies!" Isa. i. 24. Has he not shewed us evident tokens of his displeasure? is he not filling all his dispensations with marks of anger? And what, O what may be the end of these beginnings! how doleful, how destructive! unless sovereign grace interpose; bringing us, by faith in the Son of God, to unfeigned repentance and newness of life. Some notion we may form concerning the end of these things, by unfolding the second point——

2. The judgments of God denounced on such sins. Where such iniquities prevail, we might naturally conclude, that the divine indignation is awakened, and the divine vengeance lingereth not. Is there a God? does he behold the children of men? is his nature infinitely pure and holy? Surely then he cannot, he will not suffer the most outrageous violations of his sublime perfections to pass unpunished. Thus we might argue from the nature of God; this we might conjecture from the aspect of things. But we have a more sure word of prophecy: in this word, "the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," Rom. i. 18. And see! in what flaming colours, by what frightful images this wrath is represented, these judgments are described!

They are likened to a lion rending his prey. The Lord hath been "unto Ephraim as a moth, and unto the house of Judah as a worm." He hath dispensed milder corrections; afflicting them in measure, and withholding inferior comforts. His judgments were like a moth fretting the garment, or like a worm corroding the wood. In both which cases the consumption creeps, as it were; the wasting operates silently, and proceeds slowly. Thus the chastising Jehovah acted, giving the people space for recollection, and looking for repentance; but no repentance was produced; they continued irreclaimable, adding sin to sin. Then says the Lord, "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion;" which, all fierce and ravenous, rushes upon a lonely traveller. I will now come forth, as an incensed and irresistible adversary, and be "as a roaring lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, who am omnipotent, will tear, will destroy them with a mighty hand; and go away, satiated with slaughter and vengeance. I will take away both prince and people; I will take away their very place and nation; and none shall have power to effect, or courage to attempt a rescue." Hos. v. 12—14. If God do thus to perverse and incorrigible Judah, why should we imagine that he will deal otherwise with perverse and incorrigible England?

They are described by a flood. "Now therefore behold the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel!" Isa. viii. 7, 8. The king of Assyria and his army, determined to invade Judah, are signified by the waters of the river. These the Lord bringeth up; overruling the purposes of ambitious princes, and making even their wicked designs subservient to his holy will. They are, like the waters of an immense flood, strong and many; their multitude innumerable, and their force unconquerable. For they shall come with all their glory; with their choicest troops, their ablest commanders, and their whole warlike artillery. "He shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks;" from all parts of his vast dominions, his troops shall be assembled; each province shall be drained of its bravest inhabitants; and all unite to render this expedition one of the most formidable that ever was undertaken. "He shall pass through Judah;" not only make inroads upon the frontiers, but push his way through the country, and penetrate the very heart of the kingdom. He shall overflow; spread terror and desolation on every side, and in every quarter. He shall go over villages, towns, cities, tribes, and bear down all before him. He shall reach even to the neck; his ravages shall extend even to the royal city, to the very gates of the metropolis; threatening destruction to the palace of the king, and the walls of the temple. The stretching out of his wings, the several detachments and parties of his victorious army, shall fill the breadth of the land with havoc, slaughter, and ruin; even of thy land, O Immanuel. Their relation to thee shall procure no favour, shall afford no protection. They have dishonoured that goodly name wherewith they were called: therefore that goodly name shall no longer stand in the breach, but pour itself with the torrent, and render it irresistible. Such an inundation of judgments so terrible, so destructive, have not we deserved, may not we expect?

These judgments are compared to fire, and to the fiercest of fires, that which glows in a furnace. "The house of Israel is to me become dross; all they are brass, and tin, and iron and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather brass, and iron, and tin, and lead, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you, in mine anger and in my fury; and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof." Ezek. xxii. 18—21. Astonishing words! And they are doubled! they are redoubled! in order to alarm the insensible sinners: as the sword, by being brandished in many a dreadful circle over the criminal's head, strikes terror into his apprehensions, before it does the work of vengeance on his heart. This generation is become brass, impudent in their wickedness. They have a whore's forehead; they cannot blush at their iniquities; but glory in their shame. They are tin, a degenerate race, children that are corrupters. They have forsaken the good old way, and swerved from the example of their fathers. With regard to hardness of heart, they are as iron; impenitent amidst all their guilt; obstinately tenacious of their vices; and not to be wrought upon by any addresses, not to be reclaimed by any expedients. In another respect, they are as lead; stupid and sottish, pliable to evil, but for any good purpose unmeet, to every good work reprobate. Because they are so exceedingly sinful, they shall be overtaken by God's anger, and surrounded by his fury; as metals cast into the midst of a furnace are surrounded with the raging heat. The flame of this wrath shall be blown, as with a vehement wind, to its utmost height. In this furnace they shall be left, to this wrath they shall be abandoned; till, by a complication of afflictions, resembling the complication of their vices, they are overcome, subdued, and even melted; so melted, as to be either purged from the dross of their iniquities, or else blended together in one promiscuous ruin.

These judgments are described by the terrible representation of an end: An end of affluence and prosperity, of which we have gloried; an end of power and strength, in which we have trusted; an end of all national blessings, which we have not improved to God's honour, but turned into licentiousness. "Thus saith the Lord God, An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within: he that is in the field, shall die with the sword; and he that is in the city, pestilence and famine shall devour him." Ezek. vii. 2, 15. For this we have been ripening, by an unintermitted course of ungodliness and iniquity. And what can be expected by an impenitent people, hating to be reformed? What, but that judgments, which have long been suspended, should at last be inflicted? "An end is come: it is come upon the land." It is a national visitation, not confined to a part, but extending to the whole kingdom. "Upon the four corners of the land:" No place shall be exempt; nothing secure; neither that which seems to be most secret, nor that which lies most remote. The vengeance is universal and inevitable. The executioners of this vengeance take their stand, within and without, at home and abroad; so that to fly from one, is only to fall into the hands of another. "He that is in the field shall find no way to escape, but shall die with the sword. He that is in the city shall obtain no protection, but famine and pestilence shall devour him." Every city shall be a charnel-house, and every field a field of blood. In city and country sin has prodigiously abounded; therefore, in city and country, desolation shall be made, death shall be multiplied, miseries shall abound.

These are some of the images by which the judgments and the wrath of God are represented in the Scriptures. But when all images are used, when fancy itself is exhausted, we may truly cry out with the Psalmist, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" Psalm xc. 11. If God whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on judgment, what can withstand it, or who can sustain it? If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, "it shall consume the earth with her increase; it shall set on fire the foundation of the mountains, and burn to the lowest hell." Deut. xxxii. 22.

"When the lion has roared," says the prophet, "who will not fear?" When the most high God hath spoken, spoken such terrible things in righteousness, who will not lay them to heart? O how deep is that sleep, how deadly is that lethargy, which the voice of him who shakes the heavens does neither alarm nor awe!

Lest you should begin to say within yourselves, These threatenings are applicable only to the Jews, I proceed to show,

3. The certain execution of these, or some such judgments on us, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

God is an infinite speaker. In his word, he addresses himself to all generations of men, and to every individual of the human kind, where his holy revelation is made. It is therefore a certain rule, that when any people, enlightened by the glorious gospel, become like Jerusalem universally and in-

corrigibly corrupt, they do in Jerusalem's doom read their own.

God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He remembereth his threatenings as well as his promises, to a thousand generations. Whatsoever of either kind happened to our forefathers, "happened to them as ensamples to us. And whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning." Observe, it was written, not for our amusement, but "for our learning and admonition," 1 Cor. x. 11; that we may, as in a mirror, see our own picture; and, as from an oracle, learn our own destiny.

Is it not in a manner necessary, for the manifestation of God's inflexible justice and his unalterable hatred of sin, that judgments should take their course, when iniquity rears its head, and refuses to be controlled? At such a juncture, does not every one of the divine attributes cry aloud, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; thou God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself." And how can the justice of God, with regard to a wicked nation, be shewn, but by executing his vengeance upon them in temporal calamities?

Consider, sirs, the very essence of nations and political communities is temporal, purely temporal. They have no duration, no existence, but in this world. Hereafter sinners will be judged and punished singly, and in a personal capacity only. How then shall He, who is ruler among the nations, maintain the dignity of his government over the kingdoms of the earth, but by inflicting national punishments for national provocations; and for final impenitence, total destruction?

Besides, has not the Lord always acted in this manner? Go back to the generations of old. Contemplate Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them; well watered every where, even as the garden of the Lord. Yet "this fruitful land is made barren, those populous cities are turned into ashes, for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein," Psal. cvii. 34; for their pride and idleness, for their voluptuous and wanton indulgences. "For which thing's sake, the wrath of God" not only has come in former ages and in distant nations, but in every age cometh, and in every nation will come, "upon the children of disobedience." Col. iii. 6.

Pass over to Babylon, the grandest city that the sun ever beheld; which set calamity at defiance, saying in her heart, "I shall be a lady for ever," Isa. xlvii. 7; how is she fallen, "swept with the besom of destruction!" Isa xiv. 23. Not so much as a trace or footstep of her ancient glory left! And shall we be safe, when those very iniquities prevail among us, which razed the foundations of the Babylonian metropolis, and overthrew the magnificence of the Babylonian monarchy?

Take a view of Constantinople, once the most flourishing Christian city in the world; where the first Christian emperor filled the throne, and Chrysostom, that great Christian orator, the pulpit. Then it was gloriously enlightened with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Grace and truth dwelt in it, and the beauties of holiness adorned it. But now the candlestick is removed. It is now given up to infidelity and barbarity; is now full of darkness and cruel habitations.

Come hither, then, ye careless ones, and see what desolations sin has made in the earth. On account of sin, Sodom was consumed as in a moment; Babylon is totally destroyed;* Constantinople has lost her glory. And will the Lord, the Lord God, who is unchangeably just and holy; will he spare that in one people which he has so severely corrected in another? "He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall not he punish" us, when we do according to all their abominations?

Have we a license to sin with impunity? are our sins less heinous than those of other people? Quite the reverse. Considering the many blessings which we enjoy as a nation; the many deliverances we have enjoyed as a protestant nation; the numberless advantages for religious knowledge and religious practice, which we both have enjoyed, and do enjoy above all the nations on earth; considering these circumstances, our wickedness is highly aggravated; it is become exceeding sinful; it "overpasses the deeds" (Jer. v. 28,) of the most abandoned Heathens. What then can prevent our ruin?

Will you reply, "We fast and humble ourselves before the Lord!" I ask, Do we fast from sin? are our fast-days the beginning of a gospel reformation? When we abstain from our daily bread, do we turn by faith to Jesus Christ, that, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, we may live through him?" John vi. 57; live in holiness here, and live in glory hereafter, by applying his immaculate righteousness to our souls. If this is the case, we may entertain reviving hopes. The Scripture speaks good words, and comfortable words, to such people; be their condition ever so vile, or

* Will any, raised in their own conceit above the vulgar level, neglect these admonitions with a smile of disdain? Because they can assign the second causes of some such evils as have been described, will they therefore quiet their spirits, amidst the alarming prospect of judgments from heaven? Is not what we term the course of nature, the incessant administration of Providence? The poverty and ignominy of the lazy vagabond; the diseases of the debauchee, and the distresses of the spendthrift—are these less manifest signs of divine displeasure, because they are the immediate effects of an evil conduct? are they not as certainly the judicial, the penal, as they are the natural consequences of vice?

their guilt ever so great. But, alas! are we not just the same persons the day after our fast as we were before? as vain in our conversation and as forgetful of God? as fond of folly, and as negligent of divine grace; as mad upon our idols of carnal gratification, and worldly gain? If so, our fasts are not an acceptable, no, nor a reasonable service; but a mere mockery of the omniscient Majesty. May he not justly use that upbraiding expostulation, "Will ye steal, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and walk after other gods," serving not the Lord Jehovah, but diverse lusts and pleasures; and then, with hypocritical devotion, "stand before me in this house which is called by my name?" Jer. vii. 9, 10.

Perhaps you are ready to allege, "Our alms will deliver us." The son of Sirach exhorts us to "shut up alms in our storehouses;" and assures us, that "they shall fight for us against our enemies, better than a mighty shield and strong spear," Eccl'us xxix. 12, 13. And when was there a greater flow of beneficence observable in our own, or in any land? What sums have been given to the poor during this severe season of cold and scarcity! what hospitals of various sorts, and other charitable foundations, have been set on foot, and are supported through the kingdom! Let us beware, brethren, lest those very things, which we look upon as our recommendation, should prove an offence. If our alms proceed not from faith in Jesus Christ, and an unfeigned zeal for the glory of God; if they are not accompanied with a spirit of love to his name, and with a course of obedience to his commands; hear what the Lord himself says concerning such works: see what a figure they make in his sight; and then judge, whether they are likely to be a security to our land. "I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." Hymns of praise, you see, are no other than a noise in the Lord's ear; the most costly services of religion are no better than a smoke in his nostrils; unless judgment, and the love of God, run down as a river; unless righteousness, and the faith of Christ, abound as a mighty stream. Amos. v. 21—24.

Do you still conceit yourselves, that, because there are many righteous persons remaining, they will stand in the gap; they will turn away the anger of the Lord, and be as the chariots of Israel and the horsemen of Israel to our endangered state? Hear what a charge the supreme Jehovah gave to his prophet, when the provocations of Israel were risen to a very high pitch: "Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee." Jer. vii. 16. Amazing and awful prohibition! Yet it is repeated again and again. Jer. xi. 14, and xiv. 11. God's professing people may, by their excessive wickedness, become so insufferably loathsome, that were the greatest saints to make supplication in their behalf, they should not prevail. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, men mighty in prayer, and zealous for the welfare of their neighbours; though these three men (who had each, by his single intercession, procured blessings from heaven) were uniting their petitions in the midst of this profligate generation; "as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate." Ezek. xiv. 16.

The land shall be desolate. Doleful sound! dismal decree! And has it not long ago been carried into execution? was not Jerusalem ploughed as a field, and trodden down by the Gentiles? are not the inhabitants rooted out of their dwellings, and scattered to all the ends of the earth? while their country is given up for a prey and for a possession to strangers, to infidels, to Turks.

Perhaps you will say, "The Jews crucified the Lord of glory, and rejected his gospel; therefore wrath came upon them to the uttermost." And are we innocent in this respect? are not we verily, are not we greatly guilty concerning this thing? Is Christ received into the hearts of men, with deep adoration of his person, as Immanuel, God with us? do they glory and delight themselves in his complete redemption, as finished by the great God and our Saviour? do they confide in him alone for their justification, as an infinite Surety, and as Jehovah our righteousness? do they depend on him alone for their sanctification, as Jesus, who saves his people from their sins, and sanctifies them through his blood? do they count all things but dung, for the excellency of Christ, and his incomprehensible merit? Alas! is not his gospel, through the light of the world, disregarded and despised? is not his name, though a name above every name, derided and blasphemed? are not the influences of his eternal Spirit, though the very life of our souls, exploded and ridiculed? They who would exalt the Saviour, would make every sheaf bow down to the Redeemer's, representing him as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending in the salvation of sinners—those preachers, those writers, those believers, are treated as

"the foolish people that dwell in Sichem." Eccl'us l. 26.

What the Jews did through ignorance, we, who call ourselves Christians, Englishmen, Protestants; we do knowingly, wilfully, and of malicious wickedness. And if we thus trample upon the blood which alone can screen us; if we thus crucify afresh that Jesus who is our only hope; what can we look for, but vengeance and fiery indignation? If we ourselves, with our own hands, demolish the only barrier, what can ensue but an inundation of wrath, tribulation, and anguish?

Consider these things, brethren. The Lord enable you to discern the signs of the times! Then you will acknowledge, that we have reason to be alarmed, to tremble, to be horribly afraid. Are not these iniquities the Achans, that will assuredly bring distress and trouble, if not destruction, upon our country? are not these iniquities the Jonahs, that will awaken the divine displeasure, and deliver up our vessel to the tempest, if not to shipwreck?

Is any one disposed to say within himself, "Though others may be guilty of these flagrant iniquities, yet am not I?" Remember, my friend, the prophet Isaiah: He was, at least, as free from these flagrant iniquities as yourself; yet he laments, and with painful apprehensions, the guilt of his countrymen, as well as his own. Isaiah vi. 5. Remember King Josiah: Though a holy man and a just, he rent his clothes, and trembled at God's word denouncing vengeance against an irreligious people. 2 Kings xxii. 12, 13.

Consider also, whether you have not been an accessory, even where you was not the principal. Though you have not joined with the more profligate sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful; yet have you not connived at their impiety? do their affronts offered to the King of heaven rouse you into a becoming zeal to vindicate his injured honour? or, "because iniquity has abounded, is not your love, and the love of many, waxed cold?" Matt. xxiv. 12. Have not the disciples, even the disciples of Jesus, been cowards and traitors; while others have been professed enemies and rebels?

Besides, have not you, have not I, have not all contributed, in many, many instances, to swell the score of national provocations? Is not every sin a disobedience of God's most holy command? is not every sin a defiance of his uncontrollable authority? is not every sin an imitation of the devil? does it not create a kind of hell in the heart? must it not therefore be inconceivably odious to the holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth? If so, how guilty are the very best among us? Is not this accursed thing found in all our tents? Josh. vi. 18. Has not every one added to the load, that dreadful load, which is likely to sink the nation in ruin? Should not every one, therefore, smite upon his breast, and say with the penitent, "What have I done!" and cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

Will you still flatter yourself, "All these judgments may be delayed; they may not come in my time?" I answer, if there be any truth in God's word; if any conjecture is to be made from the appearance of things; these judgments are near; they are at the door. They are like the axe in the executioner's hand, which has been poised, has received its last elevation, and is now falling on the criminal's neck. Yet if these should be withheld for a season, will not sickness come upon you? are not many disasters lying in ambush to seize you? is not death sharpening his arrow; perhaps fitting it to the string; or even aiming at your life? Is not the day, the dreadful day approaching, when the shout of the archangel and the trump of God will be heard, when the dead shall arise, and heaven and earth flee away? will not the Lord, the Lord God omnipotent quickly come, "with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodlily committed; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him?" Jude 14, 15.

Take then, my dear hearers, take the advice of the greatest of preachers, and the wisest of men, "The prudent foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself." Prov. xxii. 3. Behold! the rains are descending, and the flood is coming; hasten, like Noah, hasten to your ark. See! the skies are kindling all around, and the shafts of vengeance are ready to fly. Make haste, oh, make haste and delay not the time, to get into a hiding-place. Let me sound in your ears the angel's admonition; and may the Lord of angels, may the Friend of sinners, convey it to your hearts! "Escape for your lives, lest ye be consumed;" lest the judgments of God, and the wrath of God, more to be feared than a deluge of waters, more to be feared than a torrent of flames, surround you suddenly, seize you unavoidably, and overwhelm you in ruin, temporal and eternal.

O that I might prevail! O that God would make you sensible of your peril! O that man, woman, and child would ask, "How shall I fly from the wrath to come? where shall I be safe in the day of visitation? Show me the ark! show me the refuge!" I should then, with great satisfaction, proceed to answer this inquiry; and point out Christ to your souls, as the only hiding-place, as the sure hiding-place, where

you may certainly find safety. But this must be the business, the pleasing business, of my next discourse.

Let me beseech you, in the mean time, to lay these alarming truths to heart; let them impress your consciences; let them penetrate your souls. And O thou gracious, thou almighty Lord God, do thou command them to sink deep into all our minds; that we may, with Ezra thy priest, sit down ashamed and astonished (Ezra ix. 3.) under a sense of our manifold iniquities: That we may, with thy servant Job, "abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes," Job xlii. 6: That we may, in the words, and with the compunction of thy prophet, every one cry out, "Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Isa. vi. 5.

SERMON VI.

THE MEANS OF SAFETY.

Heb. xi. 28.—"Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them."

We have been considering the danger of our nation, occasioned by the sin of its inhabitants; by the judgments of God denounced against such sinners; by the certain execution of his righteous threatenings, unless we fly to the appointed refuge. When such is the state of a nation, it is high time for the watchmen on her walls to lift up their voice; not indeed to spread vain terrors, but to give notice of the approaching evil; to warn the unwary; to call in the stragglers; and urge every one to retire into a place of safety.

Having, in the preceding discourse, attempted to discharge this office, I shall now, brethren, as in the presence of the all-seeing God, ask, Have we been attentive to these things? are we alarmed with a sense of our guilt and our peril? have we, with the prophet Isaiah, lamented our own, and the sins of our people? If so, we shall highly prize, we shall ardently desire, the same consolation, and the same relief, which the God of infinitely free goodness vouchsafed to his servant: "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth," Isa. vi. 7; an action which represents the very thing signified in the text by the sprinkling of blood.

The altar typified Christ; who is both the sacrifice that makes the atonement, and the altar that sanctifies the gift. The live coal seems to betoken the word of grace, and the word of life; which brings the glad tidings of the gospel, and testifies of the bleeding Jesus. Laying this upon the mouth, very significantly denotes the application of Christ and his great atonement. When this is done under the influence of the Spirit, and by means of faith, then "iniquity is taken away, and sin purged;" taken away from the sight of God, and purged from the sinner's conscience. Guilt is abolished; fear ceases. But this leads us to our second particular,

II. The method of security from danger, effected by "keeping the passover, and sprinkling the blood."

Moses was apprized of a dreadful vengeance to be inflicted on Egypt; the most dreadful that ever was known since the beginning of their nation; so dreadful, that it would make every ear tingle, and every heart bleed. The destroying angel was to pass through all the territories of Pharaoh, and smite every first-born both of man and beast; so that, before the morning, there should be heaps of slain in the cities, the villages, the fields; not a house exempt, not a family spared, not a herd nor a flock free from the fatal calamity.

Moses feared the blow. He feared, as the text intimates, the least touch of the divine executioner's sword; knowing that it would crush him and his people, as a moth is crushed by the falling millstone. He is therefore greatly solicitous to provide for their welfare. But what expedient shall he use? Shall he give them orders to close their windows, and bar their doors; to erect fortifications, and stand upon their defence? Alas! before an invisible hand, armed with the vengeance of Heaven, all such precautions would have been as a spark before the whirlwind. Shall he assemble the warriors, or detach parties of soldiers to patrole the streets and guard the houses? Vanity of vanities! the sword of the avenging angel would pierce through legions and legions of such guards, as lightning penetrates the yielding air. Shall the whole congregation bend their knees, with solemn confession of their sins, and sincere resolutions of future amendment? This, though absolutely necessary to be done, was extremely improper to be relied on. It

would have been relying on a broken reed, and despising the ordinance of the Holy One.

The Lord himself appoints a method of preservation. Moses is directed to slay a lamb. Each family in Israel is to do the same. Having received the blood into a basin, they are to sprinkle it, not on the threshold, but on the lintel and side-posts of their doors. This shall be a sign to the destroying angel. Looking upon this sign, he will pass over the house; will strike no blow, and execute no vengeance, wherever he sees the blood sprinkled. All this, in pursuance of the divine direction, being performed, with faith and tranquillity they wait the event.

You will say, perhaps, What is all this to us? I answer, It is a pattern for our imitation. Are we then to do the very same thing? We are to do what their practice typified. The shadow was theirs, the substance is ours. The blood of the lamb typified the blood of Christ, who is the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. By the blood of Christ is frequently signified in Scripture, the whole merit of his life and death, of his actions and sufferings, of his trials and graces; which satisfied God's justice, and magnified God's law; which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Well does the apostle call it precious blood: Unspeakably precious are its effects. It appeaseth the wrath of God revealed from heaven, and makes peace between the offended Creator and the offending creature. Sprinkled on the conscience, it takes away all guilt, and secures from all vengeance. This, therefore, my brethren, this blood is our security. This is to our souls what the blood of the paschal lamb was to the Israelitish families. The name of the Lord, the grace and goodness of God manifested in the death and obedience of Christ, is a strong tower; not only the righteous person, but the distressed creature, and the endangered sinner, runneth unto it, and is safe. Prov. xviii. 10.

Since this is a point of the utmost importance, it cannot be too clearly displayed, or too strongly established. For this purpose, the Scripture gives us several most amiable and instructive views of Christ, as our refuge and safety. He is called a hiding-place, Isa. xxxii. 2. To a hiding-place people retreat, and are secure from their enemies, even from those cruel enemies that seek their destruction. Thus the prophets, whom Obadiah hid by fifty in a cave, were secure from Ahab's tyranny and Jezabel's persecution. So the soul that flies to Christ, that takes sanctuary under the blood of sprinkling, is secure from the most formidable of all enemies; is secure from all the wrath due to sin, and from every accusation which Satan can bring. To such a person shall be fulfilled what is spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "When the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found." Jer. l. 20.

Christ is styled a "covert from the tempest." "A man," says Isaiah, that is, the God-man Christ Jesus, "shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." Isa. xxxii. 2. When the thunders roar, and the lightnings flash; when the clouds pour down water, and a horrid storm comes on: all that are in the open air retire under the branches of a thick tree, or fly to some other commodious shelter. What storm can be so dreadful as the righteous vengeance of God, poured out upon a sinful nation? What storm can be so dreadful as the eternal vengeance of God, poured out upon a sinful soul? To both these we are exposed, to both these we are justly liable. But Christ's blood and righteousness are a covert. Hither we may fly and be screened, hither we may fly and be safe; safe as was Noah when he entered the ark, and God's own hand closed the door, and God's own eye guided its motions. For "there is no condemnation" of any kind, or from any quarter, "to them that are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1.

Christ is compared to a stronghold. "Turn ye to the stronghold," says the prophet Zechariah, chap. ix. 12. When soldiers fly from a victorious army, being admitted into an impregnable castle, they are beyond the reach of danger. They give their fears to the wind, and repose themselves in tranquillity. When sinners fly by faith to the dying Jesus, they also, from henceforth, are in "a tower of salvation," 2 Sam. xxii. 51. They may say, each one for himself, "Soul, take thine ease: All thy guilt is laid upon thy Lord, and punished in thy surety. The flaming sword of justice is returned to the sheath, having received full satisfaction from the sufferings of Christ. The curse of a violated law is no more, having been executed to the utmost upon the person of my Redeemer. Nay, its curse is turned into a blessing. For Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us Gentiles, Gal. iii. 13, 14, even the blessing of perfect reconciliation, and everlasting friendship with God most high."

This leads me to mention another beautiful comparison, which represents Christ not only as the cause of safety, but as the source of consolation. He shall be "as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," Isa. xxxii. 2. In a dry place, burnt up for want of moisture, nothing is so desirable, nothing

so refreshing as water. To the poor sinful soul, of whose condition the parched ground is a fit resemblance, Christ shall be, not barely as the morning dew, not barely as the transient shower, but as a river; yea, as rivers of water that flow in copious and never-failing streams through the thirsty soil, making even the sandy desert green with herbage, and gay with flowers. In a sultry clime, where the sun pours insufferable heat, and all things languish under the glaring rays, nothing is so cheering to the labourer, nothing so welcome to the traveller, as a cool and gloomy shade. A poor soul, assaulted by the fiery darts of Satan, and distressed with the remembrance of former iniquities, is this sultry clime, or weary land. But Christ and his atonement are not barely as the boughs of an oak, which extend their coolness to a small distance; not barely as the canopy of an alcove, through which much of the glowing influence penetrates; but like the shadow of a rock, a great rock, which projects the friendly shade over many a league, which has repelled and excluded the sun through all preceding ages, and gives you, as it were, "the cold of snow amidst the heat of harvest." Prov. xxv. 13.

Here, then, brethren, is our security amidst all peril. The blood, the righteousness, the infinitely glorious person of Christ; these are our hiding-place, these are our covert, these are our stronghold. And blessed be God! the doors stand wide open; they are never shut, night nor day. The access is free for any, free for all, free for the greatest sinners. We are not only allowed, but we are invited; nay, we are commanded to approach, to enter, to enjoy the protection; or, as the words of the text express it, to sprinkle the blood on our souls.

Sprinkle the blood on our souls! You will probably say, "What does this signify? What was done by Moses, when he sprinkled the visible blood, we easily apprehend; but how can we sprinkle the blood of Christ, which we never saw; the blood of Christ, whom the heavens have received?" This is one of those mysteries which the natural man understandeth not; he can form no notion of it; it is foolishness to his apprehension. Therefore, may the eternal Spirit both teach us to understand the doctrine, and enable us to practise the duty!

To sprinkle the blood of Christ, is truly to believe in Christ, in his infinite atonement and everlasting righteousness: it is to receive these blessings as God's free gift to men, to sinners, to ourselves in particular; and having received, to make continual use of them in every time of trial, for every occasion of need.

Perhaps this doctrine may become clearer, if we illustrate it by an example. A remarkable example we have in the practice of David. After the commission of his grievous crimes, he did in a very eminent manner sprinkle the blood: For he said unto the Lord, "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop," the instrument of sprinkling the typical blood, "and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me" in the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness, "and I shall be whiter than snow," Psalm li. 7. This fountain he looked upon as opened for his sins, and fully sufficient to cleanse him from all his filthiness; so that he should be as free from spot, before the righteous Judge, as the snow on Salmon was free from stain. Had he said within himself, "My crimes are too great for this blood to expiate;" or, "This blood cannot be shed for so vile an offender as I am;" he would then have put the atonement far from him, together with all its expiating virtue. This would have been, not to apply, but to throw away the blood; not to sprinkle it upon the soul, but to pour it upon the ground.

Come then, brethren; come, fellow-sinners; let us also, in this day of fear and danger, look unto Christ, as dying that we may live; as made sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him; as made a curse, that we may inherit eternal blessedness. Let us look unto Jesus as taking our nature, and standing in our stead. Behold him apprehended as a thief; ignominiously bound, and marked with the lashes of the scourge. Behold him crowned with thorns; his hair clotted, his face discoloured, his breast and shoulders all bedewed with his own most innocent blood. Behold him nailed to the cross; hanging in the most racking posture, till all his bones are out of joint; hanging amidst malefactors, forsaken of God, of angels and men. Behold him bowing his head in death, and stabbed to the heart with the executioner's spear. Thus behold him, and say, "Verily, this sufferer was the Son of God, and the Lord of glory. Verily, these sufferings were the punishment due to my sins. In all this extreme anguish he bore my griefs, and carried my sorrows. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, because I had done amiss, and dealt wickedly. He was cut off out of the land of the living, that he might make his soul an offering for my sins, and obtain eternal redemption for me."

Thus behold the blessed Jesus; thus, sinners, behold the Lord your righteousness; with this look of application, with this appropriating faith. Be verily persuaded that you shall find mercy before a holy God, not because you have any worthiness, but because Christ has incomparable merit; that you shall never come into condemnation, not because you have fasted and

prayed, but because Christ is your great propitiation. Be persuaded, that God has given his Son for you; that God gives his Son to you; and together with him eternal life. Be persuaded of all this, upon the best of foundations, the infallible word of God; who has declared, that Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. v. 6; and by his obedience sinners are made righteous, Rom. v. 19; that Christ was wounded on the cross, and intercedes in heaven for transgressors, Isa. liii. 12; that he received spiritual gifts, and divine blessings, even for the rebellious, Psalm lxviii. 18. The Lord God omnipotent, the author and finisher of faith, enable you thus to believe! on the ground of his own most sure word, thus to believe! Then you keep the Christian passover; then you sprinkle the blood of Christ; then you may boldly say, "Under his shadow we shall be safe." Which reminds us of the third particular, namely,

III. The success of this method, denoted by the destroyer not so much as touching them: "Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them." What a beautiful antithesis! The Egyptian first-born were wounded, were mortally wounded, were absolutely destroyed; the Israelites were not hurt, nor endangered, no, nor so much as touched. So sure and complete a defence was this blood of sprinkling! Nothing else could have yielded any protection: this afforded perfect security. When this was sprinkled on their door-posts, they had no cause to be "afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday." Psalm xci. 5, 6.

And is not the hiding-place, the covert, the stronghold, provided for us in the blood and righteousness of Christ, an equal security? do they not yield absolute, perfect, consummate safety? Nothing else could administer the least hope to the chiefest apostle; this opens an inviolable sanctuary even for the greatest of sinners. None ever perished who laid their help upon Christ. He saves, he saves to the uttermost; he saves not a few only, but all—all "that come unto God through him," Heb. vii. 25. Is our danger great? Our security is greater. Is our danger exceeding great? Our security is incomparably greater. In short, our refuge and security are the greatest that can be wished, that can be imagined, that God himself could provide. Cheering, charming, ravishing truth! Suffer me to enlarge upon it, brethren: Let your attention hang on the glad tidings: May your hearts imbibe the precious doctrine!

Had "more than forty men bound themselves with an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed" (Acts xxiii. 21,) some one in this congregation; the danger would be great, and the case startling. Nevertheless the endangered person would think himself sufficiently safe, if he could steal away, and hide himself in one of the deepest caves of America, with a vast tract of unknown land, and all the waters of the vaster ocean, between himself and the ruffians. Much safer will your souls be under the hiding, cleansing, and atoning efficacy of this blood of sprinkling; by which unrighteousnesses are forgiven, sins are covered, and iniquities done away, as though they had never been.

Were you overtaken by a violent and impetuous storm: If you sought shelter under a covert that was firmer than boards of cedar, harder than slabs of marble, thicker than the roofs of all the houses in Europe; you would reckon yourselves secure from torrents of rain, or from volleys of hail. Much more secure will you be from everlasting wrath; secure, even when "the Lord shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest," Psalm xi. 6; provided you are found under the covert of Christ's magnificent and meritorious righteousness: by virtue of which, "all that believe are justified," I say not from millions, or from thousands of millions, but from all offensive, provoking, criminal things. Acts xiii. 39.

Should you be pursued by a conquering foe, determined to cut you in pieces: If you turned into a castle whose walls were stronger than brass, stronger than adamant, stronger than all the rocks in the world, you might laugh at the attempts of your enemies, you are guarded from the power and peril of the sword. So, and abundantly more, are you guarded from every spiritual enemy, and from every spiritual evil, when you fly to the stronghold of Christ's death and atonement. The souls that abide in Christ, "they shall dwell on high," beyond the rage of the old serpent, and the great dragon; "their place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks," Isaiah xxxiii. 16, against which all the assaults of earth and hell shall never be able to prevail. They may say, with the triumphant apostle, "How much more shall we, who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," be delivered from ruin, and "reign in life by Christ Jesus!" Rom. v. 17.

And will you not prize such a stronghold? shall not such a covert be dear to your guilty souls? will you not set an exceeding great value upon such an hiding-place? especially when the storm is gathering, and threatening all around; when days of desolation and perplexity are coming upon the world, and judgments, inflicted by men, may transmit us to the everlasting

judgment of God? How did Israel bless and adore their most merciful Jehovah, for granting them such an effectual means of preservation as the blood of the paschal lamb! And shall not we bless and adore the same most gracious Jehovah, for granting us a means of preservation altogether as effectual, and incomparably more wonderful?

If you should say, "How does it appear, that the blood of Christ is such a security? so great, so wonderful, so matchless!" Because it is the blood of him who is "Jehovah's fellow," Zech. xiii. 7; of him who "is God over all, blessed for ever." Rom. ix. 5; of him "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9. Permit me, brethren, to clear up and establish this doctrine; as it is a doctrine of the last importance, on which the very strength of our salvation is built, and from which the fulness of our consolation flows.

There are in Christ, in his one undivided person, two distinct natures. One nature is eternal, infinite, almighty; which is called by the apostle the form of God, Phil. ii. 6. The other nature had a beginning; is limited as to extent, and limited as to power. This is termed by the apostle the seed of Abraham, Heb. ii. 16. As God, he is subject to no authority, and infinitely superior to all possibility of suffering. To become capable of obeying, suffering and dying, he humbled himself, and was found in fashion as a man; that, by obeying, suffering, and dying, in human flesh, he might triumph over sin and Satan, in that very nature which Satan had overcome, and sin had ruined: that, by accomplishing all this in the room and stead of his people, he might bring many sons unto glory; not without a full satisfaction to the rights of injured justice, and to the demands of a violated law.

Jesus Christ then, in his divine nature, is the most high God. The heaven of heavens is the august palace and royal residence of this blessed and only Potentate. Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The church militant rely on him; the church triumphant adore him; while all the hosts of angels pay homage to him. Jesus Christ, in his divine nature, is the majestic and adorable *I am;* self-existent and independent. All worlds and all beings are derived wholly from him, and depend continually upon him: he "made the worlds, and upholdeth all things." Heb. i. 2, 3. View the beauty, the magnificence, the harmony, observable in heaven, on earth, through the universe. All is intended, like the miracle wrought at Cana of Galilee, to "manifest his glory," John ii. 11; to tell every one who has eyes to see, and a heart to understand, how great our Saviour is, how sublime his majesty, and how marvellous his perfection. All things, says the Spirit of inspiration, were created by him, and for him, Col. i. 16. Judge then, whether the obedience and atonement of such a Redeemer are not sufficient to secure, perfectly to secure any sinner, every sinner, all sinners, that fly by faith under his wings. As perfectly sufficient they are for this blessed purpose, as the unmeasurable circuit of the skies is roomy enough for a lark to fly in, or as the immense orb of the sun is beamy enough for a labourer to work by.

Behold now the dignity and excellency of this blood, which is your covert, your hiding-place, your stronghold. It has all the power and efficacy that every divine perfection can give it. It is the blood and righteousness of him who is eternal, incomprehensible, and exalted above all blessing and praise. Surely then nothing can bear any proportion to it. Guilt, all guilt, though ever so execrable and horrid compared with the grandeur and riches of this invaluable blood, is as a glow-worm before the sun. All manner of sins and blasphemies are blotted out by such an expiation, as the shades of night are abolished by the light of day. Every sinner washed in this blood must be whiter than the unsullied wool, whiter than the virgin snows. Every sinner clothed in this righteousness, must be unblamable and unreprovable, even before the eye of Omniscience itself.

For this, therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my brethren; and let every thing that hath a being praise his unutterable grace: For, "behold! God is our salvation." God himself is made flesh and become our sacrifice, our sin-offering, our justifying righteousness; "therefore will we trust, and not be afraid," Isa. xii. 2; trust in this infinitely sufficient Saviour, and not be afraid of death or hell, of any enemy, or any evil. But this leads me to apply the whole; which I shall do by way of *Examination,—Direction,—Exhortation,—Consolation.*

1. By way of *examination.* "Examine your ownselves," says the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Have you kept the passover? have you sprinkled the blood? Many, perhaps, will be ready to answer, "We have." But beware, my friends, lest ye deceive your own souls. Let me give you a touchstone, whereby you may try your spirit, and pronounce aright concerning your state.

Have you been convinced of your great sinfulness? of your sinful nature, and your sinful practice? Have you been made sensible, that hell, the deepest hell, is your deserved portion? is what you deserve for any transgression, for every transgression?

how much more for the many thousands; how much more for the many millions; how much more for the numberless multitude of your provocations? If you have never been convinced of these most alarming, but certain truths; if you have never been touched with a sense of your extreme guilt and undone state—I fear you are settled upon your lees, you are in the dead sleep of sin. You are not so much as awakened: much less have you applied Christ.

Again, Have you been made to see, that nothing but Christ and his precious blood, nothing but Christ and his divine righteousness, can be your security from vengeance? Have you been convinced, that thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, could never expiate the least of your iniquities? that no tears, no confessions, no amendment, nothing but the sacrifice of the body of Christ, can make your peace with God? If you have not been taught the absolute insufficiency of every remedy, save only the meritorious sufferings of Jesus Christ; you have not seen him, neither known him, much less is his blood sprinkled upon your conscience.

Once more, Have you a supreme, a matchless esteem for Christ? Is Christ and his great salvation the thing that you long for? is he to your souls the pearl of great price? do you account all things but loss, that you may win Christ, and be found in him? If this is not the state of your soul, I dare not flatter you with vain hopes; I must not buoy you up with ungrounded imaginations. You are not, as yet, in your hiding-place; neither have you fled to your stronghold. All the curses of the divine law stand charged and pointed full against you. You have no security from being hurt by the first death, nor from being irrecoverably ruined by the second death. If judgments should come upon a sinful and backsliding people, you have no defence; there is no wall of fire around you. You must therefore expect to fall among those that fall; and, falling by the sword, may immediately drop into hell.

Can you hear this, and be unconcerned? can you listen to this warning, more awful than the voice of ten thousand thunders, and not start from your insensibility? are you not looking around, and ready to cry out, "What then shall I do to be safe in the day of evil?" O! that this inquiry came from the very bottom of your hearts. I should then proceed, with great cheerfulness, to

2. A word of *direction*. Fly to Christ, alarmed sinners! Come under the covert of his blood. Appropriate the blessed Jesus, look upon him and his merit as your own. Thus sprinkle his blood: sprinkle it upon your lintel and door-posts; upon all you are, upon all you have, and all you do; upon your consciences, that they may be purged; upon your souls, that they may be sanctified; upon your works, that they may be accepted. Say, every one for himself, "I am a poor, guilty, helpless creature; but in Jesus Christ, who is full of grace and truth, I have righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24. I am a poor, polluted, loathsome creature; but Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, and the brightness of his Father's glory, has "loved me, and washed me from my filthiness in his own blood," Rev. i. 5. I am by nature a perverse depraved creature; and by evil practice, a lost, damnable sinner; but Jesus Christ, who made the worlds—Jesus Christ, whom heaven and earth adore—even Jesus Christ himself came from the mansions of bliss, on purpose to seek me, to save me, Matth. xviii. 11, to give himself for me. And how can I perish, who have such a ransom? how can I be undone, who have such a repairer of my breaches? how can I come into condemnation, who have the blood, not of ten thousand sacrifices; the merit, not of ten thousand angels; but the blood and merit of Jehovah himself for my propitiation?

Should you say, "Have I a warrant for such a trust?" You have the best of warrants, our Lord's express permission, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. It is not said, this or that person only, but whosoever; including you and me; excluding no individual man or woman. It is not said, whosoever is worthy, but whosoever is willing. "Wilt thou be made whole?" was our Lord's question to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Wilt thou, all terms and conditions apart, inherit grace and glory? is his most benevolent address to sinful men in all ages. "Let him take the water of life;" let him receive me and my righteousness; let him look upon all that I have done and suffered, as done and suffered for his redemption. This will administer peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; this will produce love of God, and alacrity of obedience; in which things the true life of the soul consists. All these blessings are to be received freely, without money and without price; that is, without any good works, any good qualities, or any preparatory requisites whatever: to be received, as the infinitely rich gift of divine grace, vouchsafed even to the lost, the guilty, the undone.

You have our Lord's most gracious invitation, "Come unto me." And whom does he call? The righteous? No. The excellent? Quite the reverse. He calls sinners; miserable sinners; even the most

miserable of sinners; those who are "weary and heavy laden;" overwhelmed with iniquities; bowed down to the very brink of hell, and ready to think "there is no hope for them." Yet them he encourages; them he invites; to them he declares, "I will give you rest," Matth. xi. 28; rest in the enjoyment of peace with God, and peace in your own consciences. Observe and admire the riches of your Redeemer's grace. He says not, Ye are vile wretches, polluted by sin and enslaved to the devil; therefore keep at a distance; but, Therefore come. Come, and be cleansed by my blood; come, and be made free by my Spirit. He says not, Furnish yourselves with this, or that, or the other recommending accomplishment, but only Come: come just as you are; poor, undone, guilty creatures. Yea, come to me for pardon and recovery; to me, who have given my life, myself, my all, for your ransom.

Should you still question, whether these inestimable blessings are free for you? Remember, brethren, they are free for sinners. Is this your character? Then they are as free for your acceptance, as for any person's in the world. "To us eternal life is given," 1 John v. 11; not us who had deserved it by our goodness, but us who had forfeited it by our sins. "To you is preached the forgiveness of sins," Acts xiii. 38; not you whose transgressions were inconsiderable, but you whose iniquities were more in number than the hairs of your head. Even to you, who are the lost and perishing sinners of Adam's family, "is the word of this salvation sent." Acts xiii. 26. And, by a commission from God, we publish it; that, as sinners, you may receive it; that, receiving it, you may commence believers; and "believing, may have life through his name." John xx. 31.

Some, perhaps, will be inclined to debate, "Is this so extraordinary a matter? will this exercise of believing do such great things for us, or put us in possession of such singular blessings?" Moses might have formed the same scruple with regard to the sprinkling of blood. Will this seemingly insignificant circumstance be such an extraordinary safeguard to us? Will this preserve us from the impending blow, more effectually than the labours of the engineer, or the shield and spear of the warrior? But Moses consulted not with flesh and blood; Moses rejected all such carnal reasonings. By faith he and his people kept the passover, and were made partakers of the temporal salvation. By faith may you and I receive Christ! So shall we be partakers of pardon and eternal salvation.

By believing the promise of God, and by trusting in the person of Christ, we are united to the Lord Jesus, Eph. iii. 17, so as to have a real interest in his blood and righteousness. Being united to Christ, our sins are done away by virtue of his infinitely precious atonement; and eternal life becomes ours, on account of his everlasting righteousness. Whoever thus believes, believes merely as a sinner, not upon the supposition of any goodness in himself, but upon the sole warrant of God's promise in the infallible word of the gospel. Such a person shall not be ashamed of his belief; shall never be disappointed of his hope; "according to his faith shall it be unto him." Matth. ix. 29.

Come then, fellow-sinners, believe the record of heaven. Set to your seal, that God is true. Honour his word, which cannot lie; honour his grace, which is absolutely free; honour his dear Son, who has obtained eternal redemption for such unworthy creatures as you and I. What shall hinder you? But this leads me to,

3. A word of *exhortation*. I say then, what shall hinder you? what shall withhold you, a single moment, from believing, "since all things are ready" (Matth. xxii. 4) in Christ Jesus? The great propitiation is made by him; the perfect obedience is performed by him; all the conditions of the new covenant are fulfilled by him. Come then, and partake of the heavenly blessings; as you partake of a marriage-feast, when the entertainment is all prepared, and the bridegroom bids you welcome.

Fain would I prevail in this most important address. Lord, make bare thy arm; incline their hearts; "make them willing in the day of thy power," Psalm cx. 3. My dear friends, if you turn away from such invitations, you are ruined to eternity; misery awaits you here, and damnation hereafter. Suffer me then to be importunate. Refuse not him that calleth you by my mouth; that bids you trust, and not be afraid; that offereth himself, with all his fulness, to you. Why are you backward? why slow of heart to believe? why do you stand at a distance from the all-gracious Jesus?

Is it because you are guilty wretches? Then he publishes the act of indemnity to you: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions, for mine own sake." Isa. xliii. 25. Is it because you are polluted creatures; loathsome in your own eyes, and much more loathsome in the eye of infinite purity? Then hear the word of the Holy One: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Is it because your sins are more numerous, and more heinous than the sins of others? Be they ever so heinous, or ever so aggra-

vated, thus saith the God of immensely rich grace in Christ, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. i. 18.

Are you still objecting, "I am weak; I have no strength; I cannot believe?" Look then to a promising God, that he may help your unbelief; that he may fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. For he who is truth itself hath said, "Your God will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." Isa. xxxv. 4—6. Has the Lord given you a desire to believe in his dear Son? Doubt not but he will also give you the power. Does God the Lord bring to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth? That be far from him! the suspicion be far from us! He has, in unspeakable mercy, appointed his blessed Spirit for this purpose. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, attendeth continually on this very thing, to testify of Christ, and to reveal Christ in our sinful souls; enabling us to discern the all-sufficiency of Christ, to discern our right to make use of Christ, and to receive Christ as our own, our own God and Saviour.

Be it then your daily endeavour, your continual business, to believe; firmly, confidently, assuredly to believe in Jesus Christ, as the great and glorious Redeemer, in whom you have pardon, you have righteousness, and eternal life. Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, and "God will help you; God will strengthen you; yea, God will uphold you with the right hand of his righteousness." Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, depending on the divine faithfulness, proceeding on the divine warrant, in obedience to the divine command, which expressly says, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper," 2 Chron. xx. 20; "believe in his dear Son, so shall ye be saved." Acts xvi. 31.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Now thou art commanded, this do." Gen. xlv. 19. Let me also say to my hearers, Now ye are allowed, invited, commanded to believe in the Son of God, this do. It is your grand concern; the one thing needful. Without this nothing will profit you. Therefore I repeat my exhortation; therefore I am so urgent; therefore I cannot dismiss the subject, without beseeching the Father of mercies to command a blessing upon the word, that you may indeed "believe unto righteousness," (Rom. x. 10.) unto life, unto salvation. Thus will you glorify the ineffable goodness of God, and the inestimable merit of Christ; thus will you find a sure, a full, and incomparably rich provision made for your safety; and thus will you most effectually comply with that tender and gracious invitation of the Lord your God, "Come, my people; enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold! the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.

And what will ye do, when the Lord cometh forth to punish, if you are not received into the hiding-place? What will ye do, ye men of sober and decent conversation, who have nothing but an outward regularity, and some customary conformity to religious worship? These, though in their place valuable, yet are no security. They are only the outworks, not your fortification nor your citadel. When the righteous Judge "shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel," 2 Thess. i. 7, 8; these, without the blood of sprinkling, will be but as a withered leaf amidst the inextinguishable burning.

What will ye do, ye men of wealth and large possessions? Will riches profit you in the day of wrath? Prov. xi. 4; will riches protect you in the day of the Lord's controversy? Alas! they will mark you out for a prey, and serve only to lure the vultures. If riches have been your idol—hoarded up in your coffers, or lavished out upon yourselves—they will, when the day of reckoning comes, be like the garment of pitch and brimstone put upon the criminal condemned to the flames.

What will ye do, ye mighty men of valour? If the Lord turn his hand upon you, your heart shall fail, and your knees be feeble; your arm shall lose its strength, and your sword shall lose its edge. Your fleets and armies "shall be as tow," and the commanders of them "as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them," Isa. i. 31. If you are not sheltered and secured by this blood, what will ye do when the shout of the archangel is made, and the trump of God is heard? Undaunted as you now seem, you will then, in an agony of despair, "call upon the rocks to fall upon you, and mountains to cover you." Rev. vi. 16.

What will ye do, ye voluptuous men, and ye careless women? ye that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall? ye that drink wine in bowls, and anoint yourselves with the chief ointments? Ah! what will ye do when "the whole land," for the universal degeneracy of its inhabitants for their contempt of

Christ and neglect of grace, "shall become brimstone, and salt and burning; insomuch that it shall not be sown, nor bear, nor any grass grow thereon?" Deut. xxix. 23. Much more may I ask, What will ye do when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the whole earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up?

What will ye do, people of all ranks and conditions, when "mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour?" Ezek. vii. 26; "when your houses shall be laid in heaps, and your streets be made a place of graves? when your cities, that were full of inhabitants, shall be solitary; and not a voice heard amidst them, but sighs of the disconsolate, and groans of the dying? when your children shall be slaughtered in one place, your parents in another; and the slain shall lie behind the slayer, as the sheaves behind the reaper in the time of harvest?" Jer. ix. 22. But above all, what will ye do when the great white throne is erected; when the earth and the heavens flee away from the face of him that sitteth thereon; and the dead, both small and great, stand before God to be judged? Without the blood of sprinkling, where can you be safe? how will you appear? what will you do? Whereas, if Christ and his blood are yours, all is yours. You have nothing to fear, in time or eternity. "O! well is it with you, and happy shall you be." But this reminds me of adding a word,

4. By way of *consolation*. Possibly you may be ready to inquire, "What consolation will this administer, amidst the presages, or under the approach of national calamities?" Very great. "Fear not," says the Lord, "for I have redeemed thee," Isa. xliii. 1. Redemption by Christ is a preservative from all terror, and an antidote against every evil. This causes the serene breast, and the lightsome heart. Hence comes calmness of conscience, "quietness and assurance for ever." Therefore, says the prophet, "This man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land." The blood and righteousness of our incarnate God shall be the sovereign support of our souls, even when the enemy invades our territories, and preys upon the vitals of our country; yea, when he "treads upon our palaces," Micah v. 5; not only demolishes our dwelling-houses, but lays our royal edifices in the dust, and makes us feel all the grievousness of war.

Further, when this blood is sprinkled, sin is done away, and God is appeased. His promises are your portion, and his arm is your defence. For the comfort of such people it is written, "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh," Job v. 19—21. In the hands of this reconciled and faithful Creator, this unwearied and almighty Deliverer, how safely may you deposit yourselves and your families, your possessions and your all!

Be not then discouraged, ye followers of Christ, though troublous times should come. All creatures, and all events, are under the control of your heavenly Father. If he has any further occasion for your service, or sees it conducive to your good, he will preserve you amidst the greatest dangers. He can draw a curtain of concealment over you, as he did over David in the cave, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. He can plant an invisible guard around you, as he did around Elisha in Dothan, 2 Kings vi. 17. He can turn the hearts of your adversaries, and make even the enemy and the avenger to be at peace with you, as he did in the case of Jacob and his enraged brother Esau. Or, if you fall in the common calamity, "your latter end shall be peace;" your inheritance is inalienable, and "your joy no man taketh from you." Your best things, your eternal interests, are secure, inviolably secure, being "hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3.

Happy, unspeakably blessed and happy the people on whom this blood is sprinkled. If vindictive visitations come upon the land, this may screen and protect their persons; like the mark, which the man clothed with linen set on the forehead of God's chosen ones, Ezek. xi. 6; or like the line of scarlet thread, which Rahab the harlot bound to the window of her house, Josh. ii. 18, 19. However, by this blood of reconciliation, all afflictions shall be disarmed, and every evil unstrung. Nay, "all things," not in prosperity only, but in adversity likewise, "shall work together for good."* Death, even death is vanquished for them, and become their gain; and the last judgment is no longer the object of their dread, but their unspeakable privilege. Being justified by this blood, they may even "glory in tribulation and rejoice in hope,"

* Rom. viii. 28. This seems to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost, in the passage lately quoted from Job;—In six, in manifold and various troubles, God shall deliver thee. Or, if he suffer thee to be involved in seven, there shall no evil, no penal evil, touch thee. His gracious presence shall be more than deliverance. Thou shalt not feel anguish, but enjoy comfort; thou shalt not suffer harm, but receive benefit. Though the flames of tribulation kindle all around, they shall not consume thee: but (like the fire which surrounded the three Hebrew confessors) shall only loose thy bonds, and set thee free; set thy affections free from a troublesome world, or set thy soul free from a prison of clay.

in sure and steadfast "hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 1—3.

Will ye not then, brethren, ardently join with me, while I lift my voice to God in the heavens, and say, "Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord; let this be a day of thy power, and a day of our redemption? Behold, O God our Saviour, and look upon thy various congregations. See what a gathering of the people there is in thy courts; let there be as great a gathering of souls to thy blessed self. Fulfil the prophecy, almighty Shiloh! Let sinners, won by the discovery of thy grace, fly unto thee as a cloud; and take shelter in thy wounds as the doves in their windows; that they may rest in the day of trouble; and, when time shall be no more, may enter into that everlasting rest which remaineth for the people of God." Amen.

SERMON VII.

THE WAY OF HOLINESS.

Ezek. xviii. 27.—"When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

Many of my hearers, I observe, are husbandmen; and the season, if I mistake not, is the season of seed-time. I will suppose a person unskilled in your business, brethren, taking notice of your work. Perhaps he goes home, and says, "What strange inconsiderate creatures have I seen in the field! I saw them, instead of laying up their corn in the garner, throwing it away by handfuls: Nay, they even buried it in the ground, and left it to putrefy under the clods. Is this the way to improve their stock, and increase their substance? is this the way to get gain, and provide for their families?"

Should any one make such a reflection on your conduct, you have an answer ready. The same answer, only with an alteration of circumstances, will be equally proper for your preacher. It is true, his usual subjects are, the absolutely free grace of God, and the immensely rich merits of Christ; the infinite atonement and everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer. But because he generally enlarges upon these doctrines, is he therefore throwing away his words? does he neglect the cause, or disregard the interests of holiness? Far from it. He is sowing the seed of vital holiness; without which seed, holiness will never flourish in your hearts, will never bring forth fruit in your lives; any more than your ploughed lands would produce a crop of corn, without receiving the appointed grain. It is "through the knowledge of our adorable Saviour, as calling us to glory and virtue, that we have all things pertaining unto life and godliness," 2 Pet. i. 3; unto the enjoyment of life eternal, and the practice of true godliness.

To convince you that this is my aim, I have chosen a text full to the purpose, and not unsuitable to the occasion of our present assembly. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."

The words naturally divide themselves into the following particulars:—

I. What the wicked man should turn from—*wickedness.*

II. What he should turn to—*to do that which is lawful and right.*

III. What will be the effect of such turning—*he shall save his soul alive.*

May Christ Jesus, the Head of his church, and the wonderful Counsellor, enable us to open these truths; to add a word of lively application; and to receive godly edifying from the whole!

I. What the wicked man should turn from—wickedness. Here, perhaps, you expect, that I should mention several sorts of wickedness; should display the detestable nature and destructive consequences of each; and deter you, by such considerations, from the commission of them all; deter you from lying and defrauding, from cursing and swearing, from drunkenness and uncleanness, from a spiteful temper and a backbiting tongue. These are horrid evils. On account of these the land mourns. These bring the vengeance of God on a person, and on a people, Col. iii. 6. If I could speak in thunder, I could never inveigh too loudly against these vices. "Ye that go on in such iniquities, ye are scattering brimstone upon your habitations," Job xviii. 15; ye are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5. "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matth. xxiii. 33.

But let me forbear invectives. Let me reason with you in the spirit of mildness.

a will suppose you possessed of a pleasant garden. In some favourite bed many weeds spring up, alluring to the eye, but full of deadly poison. Will you order your gardener to crop off the leaves, or to pluck up the roots? To pluck up the roots, most certainly. Because, if he does the former only, it will avail but little; it will be no better than labour lost; whereas, if he does the latter, he will effectually rid your ground of the pernicious encumbrance. Thus would I act. Wickedness is this pernicious weed. It is full of deadly poison; it pollutes your souls, and will be the bane of your happiness. I would not therefore be content with using the pruning knife, and cutting off the shoots, but I would take the spade, and level my blow at the root.

I would fain have you turn, not partially and superficially, but thoroughly and habitually: not from some only, but from all wickedness; and not barely from the practice, but even from the love of it, and any fondness for it. This will never be accomplished, unless you turn

From a *thoughtless*
From a *prayerless*
From an *insensible*

} state.

1. From a thoughtless state. You are made for eternity; you are immortal beings. You must dwell either with God in heaven, or with devils in hell; and that to endless, endless ages. You know not how soon you may be summoned into the invisible and eternal world; the following night, for aught you can tell; or before the present hour is expired. Do you seriously consider to which of these everlasting abodes you are approaching? for which of these unchangeable conditions you are meet?

"Except a man be born again," says our Lord, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," John iii. 3. This is the fixed determination of the righteous Judge. You all hope for heaven; and I humbly beseech the Lord that you may not be disappointed of your hope. But do you diligently inquire, whether you have experienced this new birth? Is there a spiritual change wrought in your souls? are your affections taken off from vanity, and fixed on the infinitely amiable God? is your memory filled with the truths of the gospel? and are your desires rising to things above? To expect the blessedness of heaven, and have no concern about this renewal of your nature, is to contemn the counsels of Christ, and to trifle with his unalterable decree.

"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. This is the standing rule for our present conduct, and indispensably necessary for our future happiness. You may be civil and decent in your behaviour; you may attend the place of divine worship, and pass for reputable persons: yet, unless you are holy in your hearts, and holy in your conversation, you cannot enter into God's blissful presence. To be holy is to put on Christ, Rom. xiii. 14; to resemble Christ in your spirit and carriage, as one man resembles another when he puts on his dress, or imitates his manners. Do you look to Christ as your pattern, follow Christ as your guide, and in the general course of your life, walk as Christ walked? Perhaps you have never so much as aimed at this; never so much as seriously considered eternity, regeneration, and a conformity to Christ: These things are seldom, if ever, in your thoughts: Then be assured you are far from holiness; you are not turned from your evil way; no, nor so much as beginning to turn.

Say not, "This duty of serious consideration is a slight matter. If I had been guilty of injustice or perjury; if I had committed adultery or murder, these indeed were heinous crimes; whereas, the omission which you have insisted on, is but a small offence." Small offence! Presume not to think so. However such guilt may appear little in your view, or sit easy upon your conscience, it is heinous enough to make heaven and earth amazed. For "thus saith the Lord, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider," Isa. i. 2, 3. To say the truth, an inconsiderate careless life is an unintermitted course of sin; it is one continued act of rebellion against God. It opposes his compassionate wish, "O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter end!" Deut. xxxii. 29. It disobeys his positive command, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts," the supreme ruler of the world, "Consider your ways," Hag. i. 5, 7. It defeats the design of his holy word, and would make the blood of his Son to be of none effect.

2. Turn from a prayerless state. Alas! how many of those whom we call Christians are strangers to prayer! How many servants rise to their work, and never bend a knee before their Master in heaven! How many masters set their servants an ungodly example! enter upon the affairs of the day, without imploring the God of all grace either to prosper their business or to sanctify their souls! How many parents know not what it is to make earnest supplications for the conversion and salvation of their children! and how many children are as ignorant of the nature, the necessity, the advantages of prayer, "as the wild ass's colt!" Job xi. 12.

Shall I reckon these good people? are these turned to their God? No; they are despisers of the Most High; they cast contempt upon his Majesty. The language of their practice is, "Depart from us: Omnipotent as thou art, we have no need of thee; no need of thy Spirit to make intercession in us; no need of thy Son to make intercession for us." Most justly, therefore, is it reckoned by Eliphaz as part of a wicked and abandoned character, "Thou restrainest prayer before God," Job xv. 4. Nay, it is mentioned by the Psalmist as the finishing part, that which seals up the soul under the dominion of iniquity, and shuts out all reasonable hope of a reformation: "They are corrupt; they do abominable works;" and there is no prospect of their doing otherwise, since "they call not upon the Lord," Psalm xiv. 4.

Religious, yet neglect prayer! Impossible. Can a man live without food? can he breathe without air? No more can you withstand temptation, or exercise godliness, unless you "watch unto prayer," Eph. vi. 18. The neglect of prayer is not only sinful in itself, but the sure sign of an unsanctified heart, and the wide inlet to every unrighteous practice. "Shew me a prayerless person," said one, "and I will show you a graceless person." Turn then, sinners, turn without delay to a habit of prayer; of secret, serious, earnest prayer; otherwise you cannot expect that the wrath of God should be turned away from you. No; when he whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold on judgment, you are the persons that cause the indignation; you are the persons who have reason to tremble at the stroke: For thus it is written in that venerable book, which is a transcript of the divine will, and the rule of the divine procedure: "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, that know thee not; pour out thy fury upon the families that call not on thy name," Jer. x. 25.

3. Turn from your insensible state. Be sensible of your guilt, your misery, your ruin. Thoughtless and prayerless people, you are sinners before the God of heaven; you are the children of his wrath; you are the objects of his vengeance; condemned and accursed by his holy word. O! may the Lord of all power rend the veil from your understandings, and show you your perilous, your dreadfully perilous condition.

If, while I am speaking, the earth shall reel to and fro, and be in strong convulsions under your feet; if it should open its horrid jaws, and gape frightfully wide to devour you; not one in the assembly but would be greatly alarmed. How then can you be careless and unconcerned, when hell from beneath is opening her mouth to swallow you up in endless perdition! If this building was rocking over your heads, and tottering on every side; if the beams were bursting, and the walls cleaving; you would be struck with astonishment and horror. And how is it that you are under no apprehensions, when the indignation of an almighty God is ready to fall upon you? which, far more insupportable than the fall of loaded roofs, or ponderous millstones, must even grind you to powder. If the French were landed, and an army of desperate Papists ravaging the nation; if you were pursued, or surrounded, by those barbarous enemies of your religion and country; if their swords, reeking with British blood, were now at your throats; you would tremble for your lives. And will you not feel some concern for your souls, when the sword of Omnipotence is sharpened to cut you in pieces? when, for aught you know, it may be already unsheathed; may have received a commission to give the fatal blow; and, before another hour passes, may actually strike? If the late distemper among the cattle should turn to a plague among men; if it should sweep away thousands and ten thousands to an untimely grave; if you should see multitudes of your neighbours sickening, drooping, dying on every side; certainly you would be terrified. How then can you remain unimpressed, when the curse (Gal. iii. 10,) of God is approaching you? when the curse of God is hovering over you? when the curse of God is ready to be poured out upon you; and turn all your delights unto weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth?

Behold then, sinners, inconsiderate and insensible sinners, you are this day impleaded at God's bar; you are found guilty before the Judge of the world; you are upon the very brink of everlasting destruction. Not the earth, but hell, is opening her mouth to devour you; not the stones and timber of your houses, but the vengeance of the Most High, is rushing down upon you. The sword, not of an enraged adversary, but of God's most tremendous displeasure is drawn, perhaps stretched out to destroy you: the pestilence, or what is infinitely more to be dreaded than the pestilence that walketh in darkness, the curse of God is ready to break forth upon you. And will not these terrors awaken you, alarm you, persuade you? 2 Cor. v. 11. Thou God of the world, and God of our souls, let not thy judgments and thy threatenings go forth in vain!

I hope some of you are inclined to ask, How or to what should we be persuaded? If so, my second particular will suggest the proper answer.

II. What the wicked man should turn to? "To do that which is lawful and right;" to repent of sin, and love God; to be pure in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation. This is implied in the exhortation

of the text; this is the indispensable duty of all men; and to promote this is the continual aim of our ministry.

But you are guilty, ruined, impotent creatures. Guilty, and can you, under a load of trespasses, arise and do your Lord's will? Ruined, and can you, amidst such discouraging circumstances, have any heart to set about the work of reformation? Impotent, and can you, under the most deplorable weakness, perform the most difficult of all services? No; you must first be relieved and enabled, before you can be sufficient for these things. Like the woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, or like the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, you must receive restoration and strength from God your Saviour. Turn then to Christ, who says by his prophet, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help," Hos. xiii. 9.

If you should inquire, What shall I find in Christ? All that you can want; all that you can wish; incomparably more than I am able to express. For "it hath pleased the Father, that in Christ should all fulness dwell," Col. i. 19.

Because you are guilty, and have a burden of iniquity on your souls, he is "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," John i. 29; a lamb of God's own appointing; a lamb of infinite excellence and dignity; to whom nothing is equal, nothing comparable. This Lamb of God has shed his blood for sinners; has suffered death for sinners; yea, has died in their stead, and endured all that vengeance which they have deserved. In this most wonderful and perfect manner has he obtained their pardon! Pardon, not of some only, but of all sins; be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous, it maketh no difference with him. An infinite Saviour taketh away millions, unnumbered millions, of the most abominable iniquities, with as much ease as he expiates a single offence or the smallest fault. "He blotteth out transgressions," aggravated transgressions, innumerable transgressions, "as a cloud," Isa. xliv. 22; as easily and as completely as the wind sweeps away a floating cloud from the face of the sky. Delivered from this load of guilt, you will be fitted to walk in the way of God's commandments, "and not be weary;" yea, "to run, and not faint," Isa. xl. 31.

Because you are ruined, and have nothing that may recommend you to the most high God, Christ has brought in a righteousness, a complete righteousness, a divine righteousness. Consider the unspotted purity of his nature, and the unsinning obedience of his life; consider his fervent charity to man, and his patient resignation to God; consider all his exalted virtues, and all his exemplary actions; these, all these, in their utmost perfection, are not only for the imitation, but for the justification also of such sinners as you and I. "His name is Jehovah," which speaks incomprehensible grandeur in him; "Jehovah our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. which speaks unutterable comfort to us. In this righteousness we may be fully accepted and entitled to life eternal. Of this we may make our boast, and say, "In the Lord have I righteousness," Isa. xlv. 24.—I, a transgressor, have a real righteousness; I, a defective creature, have a consummate righteousness; I, a frail, relapsing Christian, have an invariable and everlasting righteousness. O what a treasure is this! what an unspeakable gift is this! Is there a cordial that can revive our spirits, is there a motive that can animate us to duty, like justification through Immanuel's righteousness? Blessed Lord! this makes thy yoke easy, and thy burden light.

Because you are weak and disabled, Christ has "the residue" of the Spirit, Mal. ii. 15; the "fulness" of the Spirit, Col. i. 19; the "seven spirits" of God are before his throne, Rev. i. 4. The Holy Ghost in all his operations, and with all his graces, Christ sends to whomsoever he pleases, John xvi. 7. He gave this inestimable blessing to Saul the persecutor and blasphemer; he gave this inestimable blessing to many of his murderers and crucifiers: he still confers the heavenly gift on his enemies; "yea, on the rebellious also," Psal. lxviii. 18. And "the promise," the free gracious promise, "is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God," by the preaching of his gospel, "shall call," Acts ii. 39.

How salutary and beneficial are the effects of this gift, our Lord himself, who best knew, has admirably shewn. "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," John vii. 38. This spake he of the Spirit, which every one that turns to him, and believes on him, shall receive. Observe some beautiful and copious river, how it exhilarates the country, and fructifies the soil through which it passes; bestows a thousand conveniences, and gives birth to a thousand delights, wherever it takes its winding course: So the Comforter, dwelling in the heart, gives such charming views of Christ and his unsearchable riches, as gladden the conscience and make us truly happy. Hence, as from an inexhaustible source, true holiness flows, and every spiritual good. This disposes us to love our neighbour; this teaches us to be meek in spirit; and this will raise our desires far above earthly, sensual, tran-

sitory things, even as David's thoughts were raised far above the shepherd's scrip, when he sat exalted on the throne of Israel.

Under the influence of this divine Spirit, you will say, "Christ has taken away the execrable filth of my sins; and shall I wallow in the mire of iniquity again? Christ has delivered me from the pit of everlasting destruction; and shall I leap into those unquenchable flames, from which, as a brand, I have been snatched? In my adorable Redeemer I have a perfect righteousness, and am completely justified; and shall I not endeavour to walk worthy of such favours; to shew my gratitude for such beneficence, by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness in all my conversation?"

Yes, brethren; when you are turned to Christ, to receive his atonement, to rely on his righteousness, to be filled with his Spirit, it will be with your soul as it is with the earth when it is turned to the sun. The earth, you see, is now barren and unfruitful, because it has been very much withdrawn from the enlivening beams of the sun. Ere long it will be replaced under the full influence of that fountain of light and heat. Then what a change will take place! how will the flowers appear on the ground! how will the leaves adorn the trees! how will the singing of birds be heard in our land! So shall holiness and a heavenly temper be produced in your souls; so shall obedience, with all the fruits of godliness, flourish in your lives; when this Sun of righteousness manifests himself in your hearts, 'makes you partakers of his salvation, and thus arises upon you with "healing in his wings," Mal. iv. 2.

Should any one douht, whether this is the way to do that which is lawful and right, I ask, Is it not a pleasing way? such as we should wish for; such as we should prefer above all others; and such as will render our Lord's service perfect freedom? Is it not a rational way? apparently adapted to engage the heart, to strengthen the hand, and thereby to fit the whole man for every good work?

Besides, is it not the way appointed by God? Would we "earnestly repent, and be heartily sorry for all our misdoings?" The wisdom of God assures us, this sorrow must arise from believing views of Christ; from "looking unto him whom we have pierced," Zech. xii. 10; looking unto him as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. This, if any thing, will incline us to be afflicted, and mourn and weep for all our abominations. Thus, and thus only, shall we experience that "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of."

Would we love God? The oracles of heaven inform us, that we must first see his love; his infinitely free, and infinitely tender love towards us; his love not imputing any sin to our souls, but laying all our iniquities upon his own Son. Then shall "we love him," when we perceive and know that "he has, in this most divinely gracious manner, regarded, loved, blessed us."

Would we be pure in heart? The Lord "purifieth the heart by faith," Acts xv. 9; faith in Christ, as shedding his most precious blood, as giving his most glorious person for our ransom; and, by his one oblation, "finishing our transgression; making reconciliation for our iniquity;" yea, "perfecting us for ever;" insomuch that we may boldly and assuredly say, "Through this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved." He that hath this faith and this hope, "purifieth even as he is pure."

Would we "renounce all ungodliness?" would we "live soberly, righteously, and godly?" Tit. ii. 12. By grace we must be enabled; even that grace which brings salvation, a finished and free salvation, to sinners. That grace appearing in the heart, and appropriated by faith, is the sure, the effectual means of true sanctification; the sure, the effectual motive to willing obedience. Therefore our Lord says, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." John vi. 57. "He that eateth me," that receiveth my righteousness and redemption; that maketh a daily use of me and my benefits for the refreshment and health of his soul, as people make a daily use of their necessary food for the nourishment and support of their bodies: "even he shall live by me;" he shall live to God in real holiness here, and live with God in everlasting glory hereafter. This method will strengthen and prepare us for discharging all the duties of a Christian life, as bread strengthens and prepares the labourer for despatching the business of his toilsome calling. Whereas, without using this sovereign expedient, we shall be as incapable of exercising ourselves unto godliness, as the hireling, deprived of his usual meals, would be incapable of performing his daily task.

Upon the whole, brethren, we do not urge you to make brick without straw; we do not call upon you to arise and work, without showing you from whence your ability and vigour are to proceed. Some, perhaps, might exhort you to all holy obedience; but, neglecting these most necessary directions, their exhortations would be comfortless and insignificant; because you might fetch a sigh, and may answer, "All this we would gladly do, but, alas! we are not able." Whereas, here is grace sufficient for you in Christ. Whatever hinders you, Christ removes; whatever you want, Christ

bestows; "that, being delivered from your enemies, and from the hand of all that hate you;" from the influence of all that embarrasses, and all that discourages you; "you may serve him without" slavish or disquieting "fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life." Luke i. 74, 75.

Happy deliverance! thrice happy conduct! but happier still the issue of all! Which reminds me of my last inquiry; namely,

III. What will be the effect of this turning? "He," the wicked man thus turned, "shall save his soul alive."

He shall save. Safety shall be his companion; safety shall be his guard; safety shall escort him through the dangers of life. All the days of his appointed time "he shall dwell under the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm xci. 1. Most desirable situation! especially when judgments, desolating and destructive judgments, are abroad. While the storm of calamity is gathering, or when the tempest of tribulation is raging, O what a calm must it create in the heart, to have the eternal God for our refuge! Deut. xxxiii. 27; to say within ourselves, "The hand that is stretched over the sea, and shakes the kingdoms of the earth; the hand that rends the mountains, and scatters the everlasting hills, Hab. iii. 6; that hand is my defence and my shield."

Save his soul. It is not improbable but his bodily welfare may be secured. God may set a mark upon his forehead, and command the sword of the destroying angel to pass over his house. But however this may be determined, his soul shall be safe. As to his spiritual welfare, he has "a writ of protection" under the great seal of heaven. The Lord Jesus is his ever-faithful guardian, and "none shall pluck him out of the divine Redeemer's hand." John x. 28. The roaring lion may go about, seeking to devour him: but he has a strong city, which the infernal adversary cannot storm; he has an impregnable bulwark, which the powers of darkness cannot scale. Though he fall, the arm of Christ will raise him; though he be defiled, the blood of Christ will cleanse him; though he die, it will be no loss, but gain. He that has the keys of the grave, will give commandment concerning his mouldering bones; he that lives for evermore, will receive his departing soul. This, perhaps, may be meant by that other emphatical word, *alive*.

He shall save his soul *alive*. He shall not barely be safe, but happy. He shall enjoy what truly deserves the name of life. A man may escape from his enemy, by flying to a fortified castle; but in the castle there may be drought and famine. He may perish by these disasters, though preserved from the pursuing foe. It shall not be thus with the returning, believing, renewed sinner. He shall be saved with a complete and everlasting salvation. He is a child of God, and an heir of glory: he shall rejoice in Christ Jesus here, and shall enter into the joy of his Lord hereafter. When the earth is burnt up, he shall see it; when the heavens pass away, he shall stand with boldness; when all nature sinks into dissolution, he shall not only survive, but enjoy the ruin. He shall leave a dissolving world, to possess a kingdom in heaven; to wear a crown of righteousness; and to be for ever with, for ever like, his blessed and glorious Lord.

We have now shown what the wicked man should turn from, what he should turn to, what will be the effect of this turning. Give me leave to ask, Has the arm of the Lord been revealed? are you impressed by the awful, or encouraged by the comfortable truths? If so, perhaps you will be ready to say, "Will Christ receive me? will he make me a partaker of these incomparable benefits? shall such a one, who is so very unworthy, find favour in his sight?"

Yes, such a one may find favour. Any one, every one who comes, he will receive. He sends his ministers to invite you; he sends his judgments to compel you; he uses every expedient to gain you. He bids earthquakes tear the foundations of nature, and turn mighty cities into ruinous heaps, that you may be built on that Rock which shall never be shaken. He calls the sword of war out of its scabbard, and commands it to be bathed in blood, that you may fly for safety to the Prince of Peace. While ruin and desolation are pursuing their dreadful work all around, he throws open the doors of grace and righteousness, and most compassionately cries, "Come, my people; come, poor offenders; enter into these chambers, and find rest!" Isa. xxvi. 20.

Is any of you still inclined to reply, "Will Christ indeed receive me, who am not only a sinner, but a great sinner, a long-persisting sinner, and now seem to come but at the last hour; more like one driven by fear than drawn by love?" What thinkest thou? Would the widow of Nain, who went mourning after the corpse of her only son, almost inconsolable with her loss—would she be unwilling to receive him, when our Lord reanimated the cold clay, and "delivered him alive to his mother?" Luke vii. 15. Would she need much importunity, and hardly be prevailed on, to embrace her beloved, her lamented child? Impossible to suppose. Remember what Christ has done for sinners; what he has suffered for sinners; how his bowels yearn over sinners; and it will appear equally impos-

sible that he should reject any returning profligate.

Reject! No. The good father, aged and venerable as he was, hastened; yea, ran to meet the prodigal. He fell on his neck, and tenderly kissed the dissolute youth. Luke xv. 20. So, with such readiness, and such compassion, will the everlasting Father receive you to his family, his favour, his love. Nay, more, he will receive you with joy. He is the good Shepherd; you are the lost sheep: he is come, in his word, to seek you; when you turn to him, he has found you. Then, says the Scripture, the good shepherd goes home with his recovered sheep "rejoicing." Luke xv. 5. O! let your minister, and (which is unspeakably more engaging) let the blessed Jesus have joy with you, my brethren; even that Jesus by whom sinners are "dearly beloved and longed for," Philip. iv. 1, who has no greater delight than to save them from their iniquities, and number them among his children.

If you should answer, "This is a matter of the utmost importance: It lies at the very root of all my comfort: Let me hear it confirmed from our Lord's own mouth: I will hearken what the Lord God will say concerning me." Psal. lxxxv. 8.

Hear then his own promise; the most precious promise that words can form, or fancy conceive: "Whosoever cometh to me," for pardon, for justification, for holiness, "I will in no wise cast him out," John vi. 37. "Whosoever;" whether he be high or low, learned or illiterate; whether he be a servant or a master, a prince or a beggar; no one is excepted, no one shall be refused. "In no wise;" on no consideration of past transgressions, on no account of present depravity, on no foreknowledge of future failings. Only let him come, "only let him come," and nothing shall debar him from the enjoyment of my benefits; nothing shall separate him from the endearments of my love.

Hear his kind invitation: "Return unto me, for I have redeemed you," Isa. xliv. 22. Ye that have hitherto been strangers to seriousness, and always alienated from me, "turn unto me," and I will not so much as upbraid you (James i. 5,) with your folly. Ye that are now backsliders, and have for a season ungratefully departed from me, "turn unto me," and I will heal your backslidings; my stripes shall make you whole. Ye that have been slaves to vice, have sold yourselves to work wickedness, and are grown old in abominable practices—it is not too late even for you: "I have redeemed even such as you;" I shake the pillars of nature, and rock the foundations of the world; "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering," Isa. l. 3. Yet, for such as you, "I gave my back to the smiters, and hid not my face from shame and spitting," Isa. l. 6. Yes, sinners, sinners of every kind, I bore the curse of the law, and died the death of the cross, on purpose that I might redeem such as you.—Most amiable Redeemer! who would not listen to a call so wonderfully endearing? Sinners, how can you withstand a motive so sweetly constraining?

Hear his solemn oath: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Was there ever any declaration so charming, or any address so affectionate? See how the high and lofty One condescends! He commands in heaven, on earth, through hell; yet, more like a supplicant than a sovereign, he vouchsafes to solicit and beseech you. From the habitation of his glory he cries, "Turn ye," poor perishing creatures! Again he cries, "Turn ye" to your God and Saviour; that ye may be delivered from all your transgressions, and iniquity may not be your ruin. To take away all your reluctance, he pleads, he expostulates, "Why will ye die?" why will ye destroy yourselves, and be undone for ever? That you may have no doubt of a free pardon, and a favourable reception, "he swears;" swears by himself, by his own life and immortal perfections, that he "has no pleasure in your death;" but shall rejoice, infinitely rejoice in your recovery and salvation.

Here then you have the promise, the invitation, the oath of the Lord. Can there be greater encouragement? will not this threefold cord draw you? Should you say, "I cannot turn; I am tied and bound with the chain of my corruptions. O that Christ —" Fear not: he will, he will. He that sends his minister to give you this exhortation; he that sends his Spirit to work this desire in your soul; he that spilt his blood to obtain all blessings for you; he will put forth his strength, and turn you to himself. He stretched his beneficent hand, and saved Peter from sinking in the tempestuous sea. What he did for him, is a pattern and a pledge of what he is ready to do for you. Only continue to seek his face; let your heart talk of him; set his unbounded goodness and almighty power before your eyes; meditate on his infinite propitiation and incomprehensible merits; consider his everlasting righteousness and never-ceasing intercession; look upon all these as your own. To look upon them as your own, you have a warrant, you have a command. And if Christ has done so

great things for you, you may assuredly believe, that in his due time, in his wise manner, he will "bring you spiritual health and cure;" he will carry on what he has begun, and enable you to grow in grace; he will comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good work.

Shall I proceed? I have already been copious, perhaps somewhat tedious. Yet you will bear with me on this distinguished and solemn occasion: Yes, you will bear with me a little longer; for I am loath, very loath to dismiss you without persuading you. Persuading! alas, I cannot. "God, and none but God, can persuade Japheth," Gen. ix. 27. However, as an instrument in his all-powerful hand, let me address you once again.

I observe several persons here, on this day of humiliation, who very rarely attend the public worship. Why my friends, why do you wrong your own souls? Why do you withdraw yourselves from the preaching of the gospel? Know ye not "that Jesus passeth by" (Matt. xx. 30,) in the way of his ordinances? Here you may, like Bartimeus of old, approach the Son of David; here you may obtain faith and holiness. Faith cometh by hearing, and holiness by the word of God. And are not these blessings worth your attendance? can you live happily without them? can you die comfortably without them? or can you, without them, be prepared to meet your God, when he cometh to judge the world? Why should you forsake the assembling yourselves together? Do you hear terrifying or distressing doctrines in this place? Is not this the house of praise, as well as of prayer? Does not the joyful sound echo under these roofs? Is not Christ set forth crucified before your eyes? crucified for such offenders as you? crucified that such offenders as you may be pardoned, may be accepted, may be glorified? And will you despise such a divinely compassionate Saviour? will you refuse such astonishingly rich mercies? Oh that hereafter you may "be glad when they say unto you, Let us go into the courts of the Lord," Psalm cxxii. 1.

Should my wishes prove vain, I have at least delivered my message. If you perish through obstinacy and unbelief, I am clear from your blood. I call heaven and earth to witness, you have been warned, you have been instructed, you have been exhorted. You cannot say you perish for lack of knowledge; for life and salvation have been set before you, have been brought to your very door, and you are importuned to lay hold of them. You will therefore be without excuse, and have no cloak for your guilt.

But why should I leave you with such melancholy apprehensions? Let me hope better things of you: let me hope that you will not disregard these admonitions, however you may have disregarded too many exhortations of this kind. This is a remarkable day: O that it may be memorable on account of your turning to God! Let this be its distinction through all your future life; let this be its distinction through all the ages of eternity; that you may say, when death summons you into the invisible state, when the trump of God calls you to the great tribunal, when you mingle with saints and angels in the kingdom of heaven, "Blessed be God for that solemn day, and its sacred exercises! That was the day of my better birth. Then I began to consider; then I began to pray; then I began to see my undone condition, and my extreme need of a Saviour; then too I saw Jesus giving himself a sacrifice for my sins, and redeeming me to God with his blood." Happy! thrice happy! inexpressibly happy day! if thus, if thus improved!

You have, I presume, abstained from your usual food, as you have been joining in confession, supplication, and prayer. This is well done; but this is only half; rather it is, by infinite degrees, the smallest part of your duty. It is not said, When the wicked man abstaineth from his usual food, but "when he turneth from his wickedness," as the consequence of his believing in Christ. It is not said, When the wicked man joins in public confession to God, but when "he doth that which is lawful and right," as a fruit of his fellowship with Christ—*then* he shall save, he shall save his soul, he shall save his soul alive. O that all, from the king on the throne, to the labourer in the barn; from the highest nobleman to the meanest tradesman; that all might now be inclined, now be enabled to turn unto the Saviour of the world. In him millions, unnumbered millions, of wretched sinners have found recovery and liberty; recovery from the death, and liberty from the bondage of sin; "and," blessed be his unbounded grace, "yet there is room."

Then the national fast would be a national blessing; whereas, without this all-important turning to the adorable Saviour, what will the formalities of our devotion signify? They will be a mere lip-labour, a religious trifling; nay, they will be a solemn mockery of the Almighty, and provoke his abhorrence. Does not Jehovah himself speak to the same purpose? "Is 't such a fast that I have chosen—a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?" Isa. lviii. 5; to discontinue your ordinary business, and refrain from a meal's meat? to make a little doleful lamentation, and put up a few petitions extorted by fear? "Will you call

this a fast?" saith the high and holy One, with an air of sovereign contempt: "this an acceptable day to the Lord?" No, verily: it is the most odious hypocrisy; like crying, Hail master, with the tongue, while treachery and enmity fill the heart: unless you turn to Christ, that you may be washed, that you may he justified, that you may be sanctified: that, having remission of sins through his blood, and peace of conscience through his grace, you may feel the bands of wickedness loosed, and may become the willing servants of righteousness.

What is the grand sin of our nation? Ignorance and neglect of Christ. What is the cause of all our other sins? Ignorance and neglect of Christ. Why are the judgments of the Almighty hanging over our heads? For ignorance and neglect of Christ. Never, therefore, shall we answer the end of our sacred assembly, nor the design of God's alarming visitations, till we begin to know Christ, to receive Christ, to make use of Christ by faith. When this is done, we may reasonably hope, that our prayers will go up with acceptance, and not return again till a blessing be sent: that, as individuals, our "light shall break forth like the morning, and our health shall spring forth speedily:" that, as a community, "the favour of God shall go before us, and the glory of the Lord shall be our rere-ward," Isa. lviii. 8.

Then we may look around on our most enraged enemies, and say with the Psalmist, "Though an host of men should encamp against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid," Psalm xxvii. 3. Then may we look backward to the late desolating earthquake, and say with the believers of "God is our refuge and strength, therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea," Psalm xlvi. 1, 2. Then may we look forward to an incomparably more dreadful scene, even to the righteous Judge, and the great tribunal, and say with the triumphant apostle, "Who shall lay any thing to our charge? It is God that justifieth; who shall condemn us? It is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 33, 34.

Let me entreat you, therefore, brethren, for the sake of your own immortal souls, and for the welfare of our endangered nation—let me charge you by all that is desirable in time, and awful in eternity, not to neglect these counsels. Being so solemnly reproved, if "you harden your neck," your destruction cometh suddenly, and "that without remedy," Prov. xxix. 1. Having these warnings from the divine word, and warnings from the divine Providence, "if ye still do wickedly," it is not man, it is not an angel, it is *God himself* who declares, "Ye shall be consumed; even ye, your country, and your king," 1 Sam. xii. 25.

THE

KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION PRECIOUS IN THE HOUR OF DEATH;

A SERMON,

Preached January 4, 1759,

Upon the death of the Rev. Mr. JAMES HERVEY, by W. ROMAINE, A. M. Lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West, London.

Righteousness delivereth from death.—PROV. x.

Luke ii. 29, 30.—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

ACCORDING to the ancient prophecies, in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son. He came to his own, when there was a general expectation of his birth. Many just and devout persons in Jerusalem were then looking out for the Redeemer's coming in the flesh; and among them, good old Simeon, and Anna a prophetess, are particularly mentioned. St. Luke says, "there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just," a justified person, "and devout," fear-

ing to offend God, as the Greek word signifies, "waiting for the consolation of Israel;" he was waiting for the incarnation of the divine Comforter, by whose birth all the promises of comfort were to be ratified and fulfilled, and the Israel of God were to receive everlasting consolation. The Lord was pleased to vouchsafe a particular revelation of his will in this matter to Simeon; "For the Holy Spirit was upon him, and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ incarnate. And he came by the direction of the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the holy child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God that he had lived to this happy hour, when he could take up the prophet's words, and say, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him; and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Simeon waited to see God incarnate; and having seen him, he wanted to live no longer. He desired his dismission. All the ends of living were answered; and therefore he put up this sweet prayer: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

With these same words, one of our dear brethren, now with the Lord, finished his course. They were the dying words of the Rev. Mr. James Hervey. He had long desired to depart and to be with Christ, which he knew was far better than to abide in the flesh; but he waited patiently for the Lord's time; and, when it was come, he thus expressed the thankfulness of his heart, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy" most holy and comfortable "word; for mine eyes have seen thy" precious "salvation."* The Lord heard him, and gave him a gentle dismission. He died, as he had lived, in a perfectly even and calm composure of mind. Death showed that he came to him as a friendly messenger to call him to glory; for he cheerfully obeyed the summons. There was no fear, no struggle, not a sigh or groan; but he departed in peace, and in full assurance of faith. Oh! that you and I, my brethren, may so live by the faith of the Son of God, that when we come to die, we may be able to use this same prayer, and may receive of the Lord a like gracious answer.

These sweet dying words of our dear brother have made a great impression upon several of his acquaintance; for they have been led to consider them more closely than perhaps they ever did before, and several have meditated upon them with great comfort. In order that others might do the same, and that his happy death might be the means of stirring up many to seek to die the death of the righteous, and that their latter end might be like his, I have determined to speak upon the words this day. May the same Spirit by which Simeon spake them be in all your hearts! may he teach you their true and full meaning, and, in God's due time, may he give you the comfortable experience of them! Under his guidance let us consider,

I. That when Simeon had seen the salvation of God, he was prepared to depart:

II. He therefore desired it, and prayed for it: and,

III. He expected he should depart in peace according to God's word, which was fulfilled to him. And under each of these particulars, I shall speak of the experience of our deceased brother.

I. Simeon had it revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ; and when Jesus was brought into the temple, he was directed to go and receive him for the promised Messiah, and, taking him up in his arms, he blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It is evident he spoke these words in their primary sense, of his seeing Jesus with the eyes of his body; but this could have been no great cause of joy to him, unless he had before seen Christ some other way; for multitudes saw him with their bodily eyes while he was upon earth, who were no better for the sight; and multitudes will hereafter see him in his glorified body, but it will be to their everlasting confusion. There is another kind of sight to which our church referred you this afternoon, when each of you took up these words, and said, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." If you knew what you said, and spoke the truth as you had experienced it, you meant that you had seen the salvation of God with the eye of faith; according to what is said of Moses, "That by faith he saw him who is invisible." Heb. xi. 27. He saw him by the eyes of his soul, who was invisible to the eyes of his body; for the soul has its eyes as well as the body: but sin darkened them; it put them into the state in which the eyes of the body are when they have no light: then they can see nothing. So the soul is said, in Scripture, to be in darkness and blindness, until the eyes of the understanding be enlightened. They cannot see any spiritual objects, until the Sun of Righteousness shine upon them; nor, when he does shine, can they see any loveliness in those objects,

* Several particulars in this Sermon respecting Mr. Hervey are more fully related in the account of his life.

until they be able to act faith upon them; for the eye of faith not only beholds the object, but also distinguishes its own interest in it. Faith keeps all the senses of the soul in act and exercise upon the proper object which each apprehends: here the eye of faith is fixed upon salvation, not only viewing it as a blessing belonging to others, but also appropriating it to itself. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation:" here Simeon, speaking of our Saviour, calls him *salvation*, because all salvation is in and from him. He is the author, and he is the finisher of it. The great plan of it was laid by the coequal and coeternal Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, before the foundation of the world; it was carried into execution by our divine Saviour in the fulness of time; and he is an eternal salvation, an eternal deliverance from all evil, and an eternal possession of all good. Upon the entrance of sin into the world, this great salvation of our God was revealed; and by faith believers under the Old Testament dispensation enjoyed the benefits of it. At the appointed time Jehovah took a body of flesh, and our divine Immanuel stood up to save his people from their sins. He undertook to satisfy all the demands of law and justice. The law he satisfied, by paying it a perfect unsinning obedience; which being a divine, as well as a human obedience, did therefore magnify the law, and make it more honourable, than if all the creatures in heaven and earth had never offended against it. Justice he satisfied, by enduring the threatened punishment; and after his sufferings and death, justice had no more demands upon him; for he came out of the prison of the grave with a full discharge. This satisfaction made to law and justice by the obedience and sufferings of the Lord Jesus, is what the Scripture calls the righteousness of God, because it is a divine and infinitely perfect righteousness; a divine righteousness wrought out by Jehovah himself, and as infinitely perfect a righteousness as Jehovah could make it. In this all-glorious righteousness of the God-man, Christ Jesus, consists the sinner's salvation; for he is accepted and justified by it: the fruits of this righteousness are his sanctification, and the robe of this righteousness is his glorification. So that salvation in time and in eternity depends upon the righteousness of the incarnate God. This is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion, for which our dear brother was a noble champion. He saw, he experienced the importance of it, and therefore, in his conversation and in his preaching, it was his favourite topic. How sweetly, how profitably have I heard him dwell upon it! and how excellently has he defended it in his writings! Read his Theron and Aspasio; and when you are thoroughly convinced that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth, and can say with faith, "In the Lord have I righteousness and salvation," then your mind will be settled in peace and comfort, and you will be delivered from those dangerous errors which are now propagated concerning the righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Thank God for the masterly defence of it in these Dialogues.* In them, Mr. Hervey, being dead, yet speaketh the praises of his adorable Redeemer, and clearly proves, that we have our salvation through his righteousness. Immanuel the Saviour is the justifier, as he says himself, Isa. xlv. 21, 22. "There is no God else beside me, a God that gives righteousness and a Saviour, there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." How could they be saved by looking unto Christ? Certainly not by a look of their bodily eyes. Simeon's joy did not arise from having Christ in his arms, and looking upon him; but from being able to look upon him by an act of faith. He knew him to be his Saviour. Thence arose his joy; and from thence must yours arise. It is the look of faith which saves; the eye of faith kept in exercise upon its proper object, even upon Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. It is this act of faith which our Lord requires: "Look unto me," with this promise annexed, "and be ye saved." There is salvation in the look of faith; for it sees and receives Jesus, as he is offered in Scripture, for a free, full, and complete Saviour. And whoever keeps the eye of faith in constant exercise, is prepared, with good old Simeon, to depart in peace; because, by having an interest and property in the salvation of our God, he is thereby delivered from every thing that can make death dreadful, and is in possession of every thing that can make death desirable.

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* About a week before Mr. Hervey was taken ill, I mentioned to him a report that was spread about concerning Mr. Sandeman's Letters on Theron and Aspasio to this effect,—That he (Mr. Hervey) had written a letter to Mrs. Cooke, and therein had said, that Mr. Sandeman was in the right, and had convinced him of his error; or words to that purpose. To which he answered, That he had written a letter to Mrs. Cooke, and therein he had acknowledged, that many of Mr Sandeman's remarks were judicious, and that he had corrected some of his expressions and inaccuracies. But he said, that he was very far from having changed his opinion as to the substance and matter of the argument; for therein he thought Mr. Sandeman was entirely wrong. Whereupon I desired he would insert an advertisement in some of the London papers, signed by himself, to set this mistake right, lest it might hinder the sale and reading of his books, and thereby prevent much good. To which he agreed; and added, that he would let that paragraph stand in his Answer to Mr. Wesley, relating to Mr. Sandeman, only softening the expression a little; but all this was prevented by his illness and death. The truth of this I am ready to attest.

ABRAHAM MADDOCK, Curate of *Weston-Favell*.

What is it that makes death dreadful? Is it not guilt in the conscience, accusing the sinner for the breach of the holy law, and alarming him with fear of the threatened punishment, which the justice, and holiness, and truth of God are concerned to see inflicted in time and in eternity? Thus we read, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Death has power to sting, so long as the broken law gives sin a right to accuse and condemn: all unpardoned sinners therefore are afraid of death. From this state of fear and bondage our Lord came to save his people: "He came to deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage;" and he does deliver them, when their sins are forgiven, and his righteousness is imputed to them: for then the broken law cannot condemn, nor justice punish, there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Upon which death loses its sting; and when the pardoned sinner looks upon it, he sees nothing terrible in its appearance, but can boldly, and without presumption say, "Yea, when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou my God art with me."

And he is not only prepared to die, because he is delivered from every thing that could make death dreadful, but also, because he is in the possession of every thing that can make death desirable. He knows he has an interest in Christ, and Christ is the possessor of heaven and earth. He has all things in his hands, and has promised to make them all work together for the good of his redeemed people; so that whoever has Christ, has all things. "All things," says the apostle, "are yours, whether life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours." And the reason follows, "And ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." As all that Christ has is yours, and all that God has is Christ's, consequently all is yours. And death by name is yours: no longer a curse and a punishment, but turned into a real blessing; for it is the gate and entrance, through which you pass into endless life and never-fading glory.

Thus he is prepared to depart, who has seen with the eye of faith the salvation of God. The doctrine is clear from Scripture; but how is it, my brethren, in your experience? are you prepared to depart? and on what do you build your preparation? on the Lord Jesus, or on what? Search and see; for nothing can comfort you in the hour of death, but having received him into your hearts by faith and love. You must see his salvation, and be able to keep the eye of faith intent upon it, before you can be prepared to depart; but when this is your happy case, then, in whatever shape death comes, you will be able to say with our dear brother, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He might well say, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" for all that came near him were convinced that he had seen it. The effects showed it. He had put off the old man, and had put on the new; and was under the influence of divine love to his adorable Saviour. The love of Jesus ruled in his heart, and was therefore constantly uppermost in his mouth. He loved to be telling of his salvation all the day long. And he did not talk like a professor, full of mere head-knowledge; but what he spake had a warmth, and life, and power in it, which showed that it came from his heart. He was perfectly inflamed with the love of his divine Lord and Master; and if you sat any time in his company, you could not help catching some of the holy flame. So that if strangers to his person may doubt of his experience of a Saviour's love, we who have conversed with him cannot. We are sure, from what we saw and heard, that he had seen the salvation of God, and therefore was prepared to depart. He knew in whom he had believed, and was certain the power and the love of the dear Immanuel were in his interest; so that neither death, nor he that had the power of death, could hurt him.

A friend of mine was much with him on the 15th of December, and the discourse turned upon what Christ had done for his soul. Mr. Hervey spake strongly and earnestly of the assurance of his faith, and of the great love of God in Christ to him. He declared, that the fear of death was taken from him: and it afterwards appeared, that death had no sting to hurt, nor the grave any power to get victory over him; for when death came, it found his mind in perfect peace. He had no uneasy apprehensions of dying, but had hopes full of glory and immortality. Doubtless then he had seen the salvation of God. The knowledge of salvation had been precious to him in life, and theretore he experienced the preciousness of it in death: for then he could give thanks to God for giving him the victory through Jesus Christ his Lord. Happy are they to whom God has given the knowledge of their salvation: they believe, on good grounds, that their Saviour has brought them into a state of salvation; and therefore they are prepared to meet death, yea, they can desire and pray for it, as Simeon did; which is the second particular I was to consider.

Simeon, knowing that he was prepared, therefore desired to depart. And this is the believer's case. He longs for death, not out of an impatient discontented temper, but out of a real holy affection. When

worldly men are oppressed with troubles on all sides, and see no way to escape, they are apt to desire death, that it may bring their misery to an end, and put them out of their pain: And there are some most miserable and abject cowards, who murder themselves to get rid of the troubles of life. These men court death as a less evil; but the believer desires it as a real blessing. He knows that his death will be to the glory of his Saviour; for it grieves him to the heart, that he should ever do any thing displeasing to such a kind Benefactor. After receiving so many tokens of Christ's love, oh! it is indeed afflicting to give him the least offence. I appeal to yourselves. You that have the love of Jesus in your hearts, are not you sorry that you love him so little? Have not you reason daily to mourn for your ingratitude to him; and what will such thoughts suggest, but a desire to be where the very occasion of offence will be removed? It was on this account that Mr. Hervey desired death; for the last morning of his life, when his brother came in to inquire after his welfare, he said, "I have been thinking of my great ingratitude to my God." And these thoughts made him wish to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And he desired it as Simeon did, and all believers do, upon another motive, namely, because the Lord will get himself honour, by the honour which he will give to his people in his kingdom. "He will be glorified," says the Apostle, "in his saints;" he will get himself glory, by the great glory which he will bestow upon them. And as the believer has in all things an eye to God's glory, so has he especially in his desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ. He knows that God is glorified in him and by him at present; but then it is imperfectly, and that grieves him. Self, or the creature, will be trying to share the heart with God, and thereby to rob him of his glory. A bare thought of this, when only rising in the mind, hurts the believer. He would have every thought brought into subjection to Christ; and that makes him desire to be where temptation and sin shall be no more, and where he shall glorify God, and God shall be glorified in him for ever and ever. With this view, Mr Hervey desired to depart. His great love to his Saviour's glory made him wish for death. He longed to be dissolved, that he might be freed from the frailties and infirmities of this mortal life, under which he laboured, and could not always, nor in a perfect degree, promote the glory of his redeeming God: therefore he desired to be with them who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and are ever receiving glory from him, and ever giving glory to him. And the Lord granted his desire; he literally answered his prayer; for he departed in peace, according to the word of God, as I purposed to shew under my third head.

What it is to be at peace with God, and to depart with a sense of this peace upon our minds, I cannot better express, than in the excellent words of the present archbishop of Canterbury, in his Nine Sermons, p. 132. "The peace of God is that sense of being in friendship with him, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him, which passeth all understanding, exceeds the conceptions of those who have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conceptions of those who have." And the believer, even when he is departing this life, has a sense of his being in friendship with God, and has a feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him. This is promised in Scripture, and this is fulfilled to them who, being justified by faith, have peace with God: being reconciled to the Father through the Son of his love, they live, and they die in peace.

I suppose some weak in the faith are thinking thus within themselves; "Well, is it so, that true believers die in peace and joy? I am sure I could not at present; for I am dreadfully afraid of death: and what would not I give to be delivered from these fears, for they make my life miserable?" My brethren, why are you in bondage to them? God offers you deliverance. There are many general promises in his word, that let what will happen to believers, the peace of God shall rule in their hearts. Thus, Isa. xxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid upon thee." And as it is a perfect, so it is a continual peace. "The Lord of peace himself," says the apostle, 2 Thess. iii. 16, "give you peace always by all means;" for, after he has once given this peace, he makes all means, even the most unlikely, tend to the promoting of it; therefore death can by no means weaken, and much less destroy, this peace of God. These general promises he fulfilled to the patriarchs: for St Paul says, Heb. xi. 13. "That they all died in faith:" they acted faith in their death, and consequently had a sweet sense of the peace of God in their hearts when they died. David shews us the reason of their dying in faith, Psalm xlviii, 14. "This God is our God for ever and ever: he shall be our guide even unto death." They knew that their God would be with them to guide and keep them, when the body returned to dust, and the spirit returned to God who gave it: and therefore David spoke for himself, what each of them also could say, "When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, because thou my

God art then with me ; thy rod and thy staff comfort me even then," Psalm xxiii. 3. With this faith, they looked upon death as disarmed of its sting and power to hurt ; and therefore they laid down their heads, and fell asleep in the arms of death, with as much composure as any weary traveller ever longed for rest. They "fell asleep." The Scripture speaks of their death under this beautiful image, to teach us, that death was as sweet to them as ever sleep was to a hard-labouring man. The faithful fell asleep quietly and composedly. And how should it be otherwise ? they had no evil to fear ; for they were at peace with God. And what could death do to hurt that peace ? It does indeed dissolve all other bonds, but it strengthens this. It is the happy instrument of fastening the bond of peace with a tie which never, never can be dissolved. And when the faithful look upon death in this light, what is there in it but joy and peace, even a joy unspeakable, and a peace that surpasseth all understanding ?

Perhaps some of you think this is not always the case ; because there are very good men who have had strong conflicts and struggles before death. Nay, my brethren, think not so wickedly of God. Is it according to his word that the faithful shall depart in peace, and do they not ? What ! can the word of God be broken ? No ; it shall stand fast for ever and ever. And in the case which you state, it does not follow that this peace is weakened or destroyed because it is tempted ; by no means. The sense of this peace may remain when it is most furiously attacked ; for it is the peace of God. God gave it, and God keeps it ; and he may suffer the devil to tempt, but not to destroy it. The more it is tempted, the more honour redounds to God for preserving it in the fiery trial. It was more to God's glory to preserve his children in the fiery furnace, than to have kept them out of it. Doubtless he that has the power of death will make his last efforts, and try to shake the faith of a dying believer. The devil will then set upon him with all his fury. But though he be a roaring lion, yet he is chained ; and the almighty Saviour so overrules his malice and rage, that he makes them work together for his glory and his people's good ; as he did remarkably in the last efforts which the enemy made against our dear brother. He saw him in great weakness of body, and then made a furious onset against his faith ; but the dear Immanuel was with him, and would not give him over into the enemy's hands. His faith was tried, and it came like gold out of the fire. He knew that it would be tried, and had therefore prepared himself for the fiery trial. Speaking of it to a faithful minister of Christ, who was often with him in his last sickness, he said, "How many precious texts are there, big with the rich truths of Christ, which we do not comprehend, which we know nothing of ; and of those which we do know, how few do we remember ? *Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus ;* and that is the armour. The word of God is the sword, these texts are the weapons, which I must use when that subtle spirit, that arch adversary of mankind, comes to tempt and sift me in my last conflict. Surely I had need be well provided with these weapons ; I had need have my quiver full of them, to answer Satan with texts out of the word of God when he assaults me." Satan did assault him, but found him prepared and armed. Mr Hervey said to his friends the day that he died, "Oh, you know not how great a conflict I have." And after he had sat for some time with his eyes constantly lifted up towards heaven, and his hands clasped together in a praying form, he said, "Now this great conflict is over." Jesus made him conqueror over all the powers of darkness : having endeavoured to rob him of his peace, but in vain, they left him in his Saviour's arms, never more to be tempted ; and he watched over him with the tenderest love, until he took him home. And when he went, he indeed departed in peace. His body seemed to be ready as well as his soul. When death came, he had not one struggle with it. There was not a single groan or sigh, or any thing that could shew the least unwillingness to depart. He had such a gentle dismission as he had prayed for in Simeon's words. He departed in peace, and fell asleep.

I have now finished what I had to offer upon the three particulars mentioned in my text ; and it appears, that when a sinner is convinced of his want of a Saviour, and is convinced that Jesus is such a Saviour as he wants, able and willing to save to the uttermost ; and when he is made to see his interest in the perfect complete righteousness of this adorable Saviour, and is assured of it from the word and Spirit of God, and from the fruits of righteousness produced in his life and conversation, then he is prepared to die ; then he may desire it with submission to God's will ; and whenever death comes, he may expect to depart in peace, according to the word of God. These great truths I have illustrated from Scripture and from experience ; more especially from the experience of our dear brother now with the Lord, of whom I have spoken nothing more than what the words of my text naturally led me to say. If I were to attempt to draw the character of this exellent man, I would consider him in the several relations in which he stood to God and man, and would exhort you to follow him, so far

as he followed Christ. But the compass of this discourse will not suffer me to enlarge; I can only just observe some particular instances, from whence it will evidently appear, that he had seen the salvation of God. He had a clear view of it by the eye of faith, and was able to act faith upon it; for his was a faith working by love. "We love God," says the beloved Apostle, "because he first loved us;" because we know by faith that he first loved us: so that our love is the reflex act of his love to us. And Mr. Hervey had great experience of God's love to him, and therefore his heart was full of love to God; and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake. There was such a sweetness of heart-love upon his tongue, that he used to speak of the love of the adorable Redeemer, like one who had seen him face to face in the fulness of his glory. He would, with all the power of language and dignity of sentiment, speak for a long time together in praise of the ever-blessed Saviour. But you might plainly see, though every body else was pleased, yet he was not satisfied with what he had said. He thought he had not said enough, and what he had said fell far below his Lord's merit. But still he would try again, and indeed was never weary. You could not hear him speak, for any time, upon this his favourite subject, without being convinced that he felt what he said; and if you had any love of God when you went into his company, his conversation would inflame it. He had an excellency which I never saw to so great a degree in any other person: He never let an opportunity slip of speaking of the love of Christ. He would take occasion from the most common incident, and yet it would not appear forced; for he had a wonderful talent at spiritualizing and improving whatever happened about him; by which means he hindered the conversation from turning upon trifling matters, and at the same time kept it up with spirit and usefulness. Having set the Lord always before him, he saw the love of God in every thing; and therefore it is not to be wondered at, that all objects and events should give him occasion to speak of it. In his last sickness, it continued still to be his favourite theme; for whenever my friend, who was much with him, came into the room, he would begin to talk of the love of Christ, and of the great things which Christ had done for him, until his breath failed him; and as soon as he had recovered himself a little, he would proceed upon the same sweet subject: so that he might have truly applied to himself the words of the prophet, "My mouth shall be telling of thy righteousness and of thy salvation all the day long for I know no end thereof."

This heart-love to God appeared evidently in every part of his character. As a minister, his faith wrought by love to the souls of men in all the offices of his function. While his health permitted him, he watched like a faithful shepherd over his flock. He used to visit them from house to house, and to speak freely to them of the state of their souls; and when the weakness of his body obliged him to drop these religious visits, he would often grieve that he could not be more useful, and would speak with great concern and uneasiness of his not being able to preach oftener, and to do more for Christ. In the pulpit, he was fervent and earnest with his people, and would often exert himself beyond his strength: for he preached the great doctrines of salvation as one who had experienced the power of them. It was manifest to all who heard him, that he felt what he spake. And when we speak what we know, and testify what we have seen, then God blesses this experimental preaching. He puts a divine power and energy into it, and renders it effectual to awaken sinners, to comfort them that mourn for sin, and to edify and build up the faithful. Mr. Hervey had many happy proofs of the usefulness of his preaching for each of these purposes; and therefore he did not think it enough to preach once a-week on the Lord's day, but he set up a weekly lecture at Weston-Favell, which was very well attended, and was blessed to many of his neighbours, who will be his glory and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming.

He did not forget that he was a minister in his own house; for he called his family together twice a-day to serve God. It was his custom in the evening, after the servants had read the Psalms, and the second lesson, to explain some part of what had been read. In this exercise he would sometimes dwell for half an hour; and when he met with a sweet passage upon the love of Christ, I have heard him speak for three quarters of an hour, and then he concluded with prayer.

In the morning, when the family were met together he used to ask the servants, "Well! where was our text last night?" And after they they had repeated it, he made them give an account of what had been said upon it; and then he would repeat and enforce his last night's discourse, concluding with prayer.

In the afternoon, when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his Hebrew Bible, or Greek Testament with him, and would either speak upon one verse, or upon several verses, as occasion offered. This was generally an improving season. The glory of God is very seldom promoted at the tea-table; but it was at Mr. Hervey's.

Drinking tea with him was like being at an ordinance; for it was sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

As a member of society, his faith wrought abundantly by love to his neighbour: for he was full of good works. His charities to the poor were very large; and that he might be liberal to them, he was very frugal in his own expenses. He chose rather to clothe the poor, than to give them money. He used to get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloth, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand, alleging that the poor could not buy so good a commodity at the little shops, and with driblets of money. "I am God's steward," says he, "for his poor, and I must husband the little pittance I have to bestow upon them, and make it go as far as possible." But where money would be particularly serviceable to a family long afflicted with sickness, or to a prudent housekeeper who had met with great losses in trade, he would give five, ten, or fifteen guineas at a time, taking care it should not be known from whence the money came.

He gave away a great number of good books, with suitable instructions for their use, and especially Bibles. In the blank leaf, he frequently wrote something striking, or else stuck in a printed paper, relating to the promises of God in and through Jesus Christ.

Mr. Hervey's income was but small, and it may be wondered how he managed it so well as to have such sums to spare for charitable uses; but what money was left after the family expenses were paid, and all the profits arising from the sale of his books, which was a very considerable sum, he gave away in charity. He made of it a bank for the poor. "And this," says he, "I have devoted to God. I will on no account apply it to any worldly uses. I write not for profit or for fame, but to serve the cause of God; and as he has blessed my attempt, I think myself bound to relieve the distresses of my fellow-creatures with the profit that comes from this quarter." And he is still relieving them. He was not willing that his charities should die with him; for he ordered all the profit arising from the future sale of his books, to be constantly applied to charitable uses. Thus, having believed in God, he was careful to maintain good works, knowing that these things are good and profitable unto men.

In his private life, he was under the influence of the same faith, working by love to the will and commandments of God. His holy walking was very examplary. What he said, in words, concerning his interest in the Redeemer's righteousness, he proved by his actions; for he was very sensible of the importance of this scripture, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked," 1 John ii. 6. Mr. Hervey walked very close after Christ; and found that the belief of Christ's righteousness being imputed to him for his justification, was so far from being a licentious doctrine, that it inspired him with the noblest motives to a grateful obedience. His holy life was an excellent recommendation of his principles; for I never saw one who came up so near to the Scripture character of a Christian. God had enriched him with great gifts, and with great graces, and had made him numble: for he was humbled by the power of grace. He had been a very vain proud young man but the grace of God emptied him of pride and self, and clothed him with humility. Having put on Christ, he had put on with him the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which appeared in his great patience and resignation to the will of God. He had some very sharp trials of his faith and patience, both from God and from men; and he learned obedience by the things which he suffered. It was very remarkable, that, in his long illness, he was never known to fret or be uneasy; nor did the persons about him ever hear one angry, or one hasty word come out of his mouth.

The same principle of faith working by love was manifest in his studies, which he directed to the glory of God. He was once a great reader of the Greek and Roman authors, and his writings shew that he had a good taste for classical learning; but for some years past he chiefly applied himself to the study of the sacred Scriptures. God had blessed him with a fine understanding, and a great memory, which he exercised in reading the Bible in the original languages. He was very well skilled in the Hebrew, and was an excellent critic in the Greek, and was a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who, like unto a man that is an householder, bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. He had a great veneration for this treasure of the Old and New Testaments. He used to talk of them in the highest terms, next to that adorable Person of whom they treat. They were sweeter to him than honey and the honey-comb; and so they will be to every one who reads them, as he did, with faith. Whoever can act faith upon the exceeding great and precious promises contained in the sacred volume, will find so much sweetness in it, that he will have but little relish left for other books.

As to his writings, I leave them to speak for themselves. They stand in no need of my praises. They are in the hands of the public, and every reader will form his own judgment. Oh that the Spirit of the living God may direct it, that whoever reads his writings may learn to have no

confidence in the flesh, out to make mention of Jehovah's righteousness, even of his only!

The time would fail me, if I was to enlarge upon all the particulars of his life and death. That was not my design: I only intended briefly to relate some things, from whence a tolerable judgment might be formed of Mr. Hervey's character. But I cannot finish without taking notice of the last scene of his life, which was very triumphant and glorious. The last and great trial of his faith was more precious than that of gold which perisheth. Its preciousness never appeared more than in the hour of death; for then he evidently saw by faith, and apprehended the salvation of God, and could rejoice in a clear view of his own interest in it. When Dr. Stonehouse saw him for the last time, namely on Christmas-day, about two hours before he expired, Mr. Hervey pressed home upon him his everlasting concerns, in the most affectionate manner; telling him, that here is no abiding place, and begging of him to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to the one thing needful.

The Doctor, seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke, (for he was almost suffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings,) and finding by his pulse that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. "No," says he, "Doctor; No. You tell me I have but a few moments to live; O let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer. Though my flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." He then expatiated in the most striking manner upon these words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All things are yours, life and death: for ye are Christ's." "Here," says he, "is the treasure of a Christian. Death is reckoned among this inventory; and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for death, as it is the passage through which I pass to the Lord and giver of eternal life; and as it frees me from all this misery you now see me endure, and which I am willing to endure as long as God thinks fit! for I know he will, by and by, in his own good time, dismiss me from the body. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory. Oh welcome, welcome death! Thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian. To live is Christ, but to die is gain."

After which, as the Doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr. Hervey expressed great gratitude for his visits, though it had been long out of the power of medicine to cure him. He then paused a little, and with great serenity and sweetness in his countenance, though the pangs of death were then on him, repeated these triumphant words:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable word: for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation. Here, Doctor, is my cordial. What are all cordials to the dying, compared to the salvation of Christ? This, this supports me." He found this supporting him in his last moments, and declared it by saying, twice or thrice, *Precious salvation!* and then leaning his head against the side of the easy-chair in which he sat, he shut his eyes, and fell asleep. O precious salvation! how precious must it be to the dying man, who, interested in it, can thank God for death, and reckon it among his riches; who, supported by faith in the salvation of God, can account it his gain to die; and can gladly say, Oh welcome, welcome death! May this faith support you, my brethren, when all other supports fail, and make salvation as precious to you as it was to Mr. Hervey! and of this you may be assured, that what the Lord did for him, he is able also to do for you. He was indeed a glorious instance of the power of grace; for by the grace of God he was what he was. And grace is free; as free for you as it was for him; able also to make you live and die as much to the glory of God as he did. He was truly a burning and shining light; but the Lord's hand is not shortened. It can make your light shine also before men, and enable you to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour as much as Mr. Hervey did. And the great use to be made of his example is, to stir you up to glorify God for the gifts and graces bestowed upon him, and to desire the same may be bestowed upon you. With this view I shall apply it,

First, To those persons who have never seen the salvation of God, and, consequently, are not prepared to depart in peace; and these are all careless sinners, who live secure in the wilful commission of sin. Mr. Hervey knew, that whenever the Lord should call him out of this life, he should be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; and, clothed in this righteousness, he was certain that he should appear at the bar of Justice without spot of sin, unto eternal salvation. But this is not your experience. Nay, you have never been awakened to desire it. You have never been humbled under a sense of your lost condition, nor broken down under a conviction of your helplessness: so that you have never seen your want of a Saviour; and, consequently, have never seen the salvation of our God. If you entertain any

hopes of departing in peace, while you are in this state, you are of all men the most deceived; for when death comes, it will find you in your sins unpardoned, without any faith in the Redeemer's righteousness to make death desirable, but with every thing that can make it terrible. The holy, just, and good law of the most high God will accuse, conscience will plead guilty, justice will condemn and punish, and the wrath of God will abide upon you for ever and ever. How is it possible you should depart in peace, unless you die insensible? and that would be dreadful indeed. If sin should so far infatuate you, that you never awake out of its delusive slumbers until you are called to receive the wages of sin, oh think what sort of a peace you speak to yourselves; since it leaves you in the greatest danger, and, at the same time, insensible of it. To depart in such a false peace, would be your everlasting destruction. Oh, sirs, consider then what a delusion you are under! The wrath of an offended God abideth on you, the curses of his broken law hang over your guilty heads, and you are liable to the vengeance of his almighty justice; and yet you think yourselves safe. You are saying, Peace, peace, while all the powers in heaven and earth are at war with you, and in a moment you may be cut off, and delivered over to the tormentors: and then you will have a sad and eternal experience of that awful threatening, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Men and brethren, what do you say to these things? Are they true, or are they not? If they be true, why are you not influenced by them? And if you think them not true, why do you make any profession of the Christian religion? why do you come to the house of God to attend upon his ordinances? Your appearance here ranks you among professors; and, if you keep up the form, without the power of godliness, I have for you, in the *second* place, a word of reproof.

There have arisen, in the latter days, mockers, who pretend to ridicule the seeing of the salvation of God, and the being thereby prepared to depart in peace. Possibly there may be some such amongst us to-day, who laugh at all vital and experimental religion. If there be, I would ask them, whether the Scripture has not promised deliverance from the fear of death? Is it not written (Heb. xi. 15,) "That Christ came to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage?" Observe, they were in bondage to the fear of death, but Christ came to deliver them. And did not he attain the end for which he came? Most certainly he did. "I have finished," says he to his Father, "the work which thou gavest me to do." Now it was part of the work to deliver his people from the fear of death, and as the work was finished, consequently they are delivered. And they say they are. They attest it; and they have given the most convincing proofs of their having conquered all fear of death; they have been afflicted, tormented, stoned, sawn asunder, put on the rack; and yet they would not accept deliverance, because they were sure of obtaining a better resurrection. And of these there have not been two or three only, but a noble and numerous army, yea, a great multitude, whom no man could number; and glory be to God, it is an increasing multitude! there are some who daily depart in peace, and there are hundreds, thousands, now alive, who are waiting for their departure with hopes full of immortality. And why should you think they will be disappointed of their hope? Will Christ break his word? Can his promise fail? No: his word and his promise shall be established, when heaven and earth shall be no more; and until the place of them shall not be found, the Lord will always have such witnesses of the truth of the doctrine in my text, as Mr. Hervey, who will depart this life in the triumph of faith.

Against these plain facts what can you object? They are founded upon the clear promises of Scripture, which are literally fulfilled at this very day; and you can have no pretence to reject their authority unless you run into downright scepticism, and deny the authority of the holy Scriptures. If any of you have arrived at this pitch of ridicule, I shall not reason with you at present. Let the day decide the point. If death does not, judgment will. You will be forced to be tried by that book which you reject, and by that Judge whom you have insulted and vilified. O that you may be convinced of your error before it be too late! May God open your eyes to see your guilt and your danger, that you may sue for mercy along with them who are seeking the experience of the doctrine in my text; to whom I have, in the *third* place, a word of comfort.

I suppose there are many persons here, who find the sting of death in their guilty consciences, and who therefore desire to be delivered from the fear and from the power of death. My brethren, there is a glorious Deliverer, who has in his own person conquered death, and him that had the power of death; and he is able to make you conquerors. His power is almighty, for he is the Lord God omnipotent; and he is an all-loving Saviour, who is more ready to give, than you are to ask, his promised help. Since he has shown you your want of it, ask and you shall have, seek and you shall find.

You do seek, you say, but it is with many doubts and fears. Of what do you

doubt? Of Christ's power, or of Christ's love? He can deliver you. All things are possible to him, because all power in heaven and earth is in his hands. And he is a God of love; he has shewed mercy to the greatest of sinners, and has shed his love abroad in their hearts. He has given them faith to see their interest in him, and then they were happy living or dying; for whether they lived, they lived unto the Lord; or whether they died, they died unto the Lord: so that living and dying, they were the Lord's.

True, say you, I believe this was the happy case of Mr. Hervey, and of many others; but I am full of doubts and fears, because I am such an unworthy creature that I do not deserve any mercy. Nor did they: God did not treat them upon the footing of desert; what he gave them was mere bounty, flowing from the riches of his unmerited love. That is the way in which he bestows his great salvation. All the blessings of it are free, as free for one sinner as for another. None are excluded because they are great sinners; Paul found mercy: and none are rejected because of their unworthiness; Mary Magdalen was pardoned; and why may not you? For all the gifts of God flow from his free grace, and are bestowed upon unworthy sinners; and if you are one of them, you are a proper object to receive the blessings of free grace; and the sense of your unworthiness should make you more earnest in asking, but it is no bar to your receiving, all the blessings of salvation; for Jesus Christ assures us in his word, "that he came to seek and to save that which was lost;" such lost sinners as you are.

Thus you see what encouragement you have to believe in God. You have his word and his promise to rely upon; you have the testimony of God's people, declaring that they were once as you are, afraid of death, but now Christ has taken away the fear of it. They have seen the salvation of God, and know by faith that all the blessings of it are freely given them in Christ Jesus; therefore they are ready, they desire to depart. May the tender mercies of our God bring every one of you into this happy state! And to those who are already in it I make my *fourth* remark.

My Christian friends and brethren, you have seen the salvation of God, and are delivered from the fear of death; what return will you make unto the Lord for all the benefits which he hath done unto you? Certainly you will not forget the great things which he has already given you, and the greater things for which you are waiting; and let these considerations constrain you to love this divine benefactor, and to serve him without fear, in an holy obedience, all the days of your lives. Give evidence of the sincerity of your love, as your Lord requires, "If ye love me, keep my commandments:" Keep near to me in my ways, and walk close with me in mine ordinances, and you will not only thereby give proof of your love, but it will also grow exceedingly; and as it grows, your desire to depart will grow with it; for when the love of Christ rules in the heart, you will be ready, yea, you will desire to depart, and to be with him. This was the happy experience of our deceased brother; and let his example stir you up to great care and watchfulness in your holy walking heavenwards, that your faith may be always working by love as his did. Consider the graces of his life, and seek the same. Stop not short, but try to get beyond him. Consider his death. Remember with what perfect assurance he spake of his interest in Christ, and what strong proofs he gave of it; and then pray that your faith may stand as unshaken as his was in that great time of trial. And, above all, forget not what supported him in his last moments; it was the clear view he had of his interest in the great salvation of God: "This, this," says he, "supports me," now at the approach of death! Oh how precious did salvation then appear to him, when he found death coming disarmed, and without a sting! and it grew still more precious, when, with his last breath, he declared, that death had no power to hurt the peace of God which ruled in his heart; for even then he found salvation precious. You need not fear, my brethren, but this will be your happy experience. God has given you the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of your sins; and as your faith grows exceedingly, salvation will grow exceedingly precious. The greater experience you hereby get of the love of Christ, the more will you be supported under the trials of life, and the better prepared for the trials of death. You will find, that the sweet sense of Christ's love in the heart will enable you to rejoice in suffering, and then you need not fear but it will enable you to rejoice in the sufferings of death. For who or what shall separate believers from the love of Christ? Shall the troubles of life, or the pains of death? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No; in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. "More than conquerors!" O glorious warfare! in which believers not only conquer their enemies, but also reap innumerable and endless blessings to themselves. Even death is to them a real blessing; they expect it, they find it so, and they are more than conquerors over it, through him that loved them.

In the last place, I must put you all in remembrance, that neither the words of my text, nor what has been said upon them, will be of any benefit without a blessing from God. We cannot see his salvation with the eye of faith, nor experience the power of it, without the help of his grace. It is from him, who has done all for us, that all must be done in us; and if some good impressions have been made this day upon any of your hearts, they will soon wear away, unless he preserve and strengthen them. If you desire at present to live Mr. Hervey's life, and to die his death, this desire will be ineffectual, unless it be carried into act by the mighty working of God's Spirit: He is all in all. For which reason we always begin and always end the hearing of the word with prayer: being assured, that if Paul should plant and Apollos should water, yet it would be to no purpose, unless God should give the increase. Oh! that it may be abundant his day to his glory, and to the good of your souls. To that end let us pray:—

O almighty and most merciful God, we humbly beseech thee to look down with mercy upon this congregation, and to bless the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears. Make them the means of opening the blind eyes which have never seen their want of thy salvation. Lord, enlighten them, and help them to seek, until they find pardon and peace in thee. Be gracious to those who are now waiting upon thee, believing that, after they have seen thy salvation, they shall be able to depart in peace. O Lord God, manifest it unto them, and add this day to the number of those who have seen and experienced it. We desire to glorify thee for every living Christian who knows in whom he has believed, and is ready and prepared to depart in peace. We give all the praise to the riches of thy free grace. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and love; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, as they followed Christ; that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate: to whom, with thee, and the Holy Spirit, three co-equal persons in one Jehovah, be honour, and glory, and blessing, and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

TRACTS

ON

SEVERAL INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

PREFACE.

THE reader will see, from the date of the following letter, that it was written a considerable time ago. From which circumstance he will probably conclude, that it was not intended for publication. A conjecture which is perfectly just. The publication is owing to the Right Honourable personage, whose name, though it would grace and recommend his papers, the author is not allowed to mention. Her Ladyship's commands, which would admit of no excuse, drew the remarks from his pen; and her desire, which with him will always have the force of a command, has brought them to the press. It will give him the highest pleasure, if, while he is paying the debt of obedience and gratitude to a noble friend, he may support the dignity of the divine word; may raise its esteem, and promote its study among men: because then he may reasonably hope to promote the best interests of his fellow-creatures, and subserve that grand designation of the Almighty Majesty expressed by the Psalmist, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Psal. cxxxviii. 2.

REMARKS

ON

LORD BOLINGBROKE'S LETTERS

ON THE

STUDY AND USE OF HISTORY;

SO FAR AS THEY RELATE TO THE HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, AND ESPECIALLY TO THE CASE OF NOAH DENOUNCING A CURSE UPON CANAAN:

IN A

LETTER TO A LADY OF QUALITY

Merces profundo, pulchrior evenit. Hor.

MADAM,—As you was pleased to ask my opinion concerning Lord Bolingbroke's Remarks on the Scriptural history, I have procured the book; have perused what relates to the subject; and submit to your judgment the thoughts which occured: assuring your ladyship, that, though many might discuss the point much more clearly and satisfactorily than the person you favoured with your commands, yet no one can think it a greater honour to receive them, or a greater pleasure to execute them.

"The Old Testament," it is alleged, "is no sufficient foundation for chronology from the beginning of time."* To enter upon the niceties of chronology, would, perhaps, be too difficult a research; at least, it would require from your ladyship a more painful attention than I should choose to occasion by any of my letters. And I very frankly own, that I am by no means master of the argument, nor equal to the task. Others, I do not doubt, whose inclination has disposed, and whose genius has fitted them for this particular study, will undertake to decide the question, and give the honour where the honour is due. This, however, from a very scanty survey of the case, I can easily discern; that the chronologer will nowhere find such memorable events for fixing his eras, nor such early and substantial aids for computing his time, as from the Mosaic monuments, and the sacred annals.

From the beginning of the world to the flood, we have an orderly gradation of time, marked out by the lives of ten eminent patriarchs. From the flood we may proceed to that glorious promise of a Redeemer, made to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. From this promise, to the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. From thence, to the building of Solomon's temple, which was an illustrious type of that divine Person

* See Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study and Use of History, vol. i. p. 93.

"in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." John ii. 21. From the building of this magnificent structure, to the demolition of it by the Babylonian monarch. From thence, to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian. And from the reign of Cyrus, to that grand, that most important of all transactions, the death of Messiah the Prince; when he "finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness." Dan. ix. 24.

The intermediate space between each of these very distinguished periods, may, I believe, be ascertained, to a considerable degree of exactness, from the sacred volumes. If so, this will constitute a more comprehensive and perfect system of chronology, than can be derived from the Olympiads of the Grecians, or the Hegira of the Mahometans; from the Persian, the Roman, or any other epocha.

But the history of the Old Testament is much more necessary to be known, and much more easy to be understood. Yet this, my lord suggests, (p. 83,) is not a complete history of the first ages. We allow the suggestion. It neither is, nor has materials for, a complete universal history. It pretends to nothing more than to relate the affairs of one particular family; in which the church of God was to subsist, and from which the Saviour of men was to spring. Nevertheless, so many collateral incidents are touched upon, so many branches of this main stream are occasionally pursued, as present us with a collection of the most ancient, the most curious, and most instructive facts.

Here we are brought acquainted with the creation of the world, and the formation of man. The origin of evil, both natural and moral, is discovered in the fall of our first parents; and the displeasure of God against sin is manifested by the waters of a general deluge. Here we see the preservation of our species in the ark, and repeopling of the earth by Noah; the invention of polite arts, Gen. iv. 21, and the rise of useful manufactures, Gen. iv. 20, 22; the establishment of nations, and the founders of their principal kingdoms.* Not to add, that these records are the royal archives in which the charter of our sovereignty over the creatures is preserved, Gen. i. 28, and the original draught of the covenant of grace deposited, Gen. iii. 15. Here, then, may we not challenge any or all the books written in every language under heaven? What memoirs go so far back into antiquity? what memoirs are so interesting to all mankind? Had they been transmitted to us by any Grecian or Roman author, how would they have been admired and valued! how lavishly, and indeed how justly praised!

Another excellency of these writings (and peculiar to these alone) is, that they not only reach backward, as far as the very birth of things, but proceed forwards, even into the remotest futurity. They foretold the ruin of Babylon, Isa. xiii. 19, &c. xvi. 23, 24, the noblest, the best fortified, and most commodiously situated metropolis in the universe; who said, and no one would have suspected it to be a vain boast, "I shall be a lady for ever," Isa. xlvii. 7. Yet the Scriptures pronounced her utter destruction, Isa. xiii. 19, 20, &c. xvi. 23, 24. and specified the person who should bring about this great catastrophe. They pointed out the place of his abode, Isa. xlvi. 11, they described him by several distinguishing circumstances;* they particularized the genius of his warlike enterprises;† they mentioned his very name, Isa. xliv. 28, xlv. 1,—all this, some hundreds of years before the event took place, or the conqueror was born.

They foretold the rejection and calamities of the disobedient Jews, who are the chief subject of their history, (and this surely could not be with a view to aggrandize their nation, or to answer any sinister design:) that they should be subdued by their enemies, lose the favour of their God, and the possession of their native land; yet not be settled, as a colony, in some particular tract of the victor's dominions, but be scattered abroad under the whole heavens, Deut. xxviii. 64. Amos. ix. 9. This was threatened by their Jehovah, this is recorded in their books, and this is, even now, so remarkably fulfilled, as to be a fact of the utmost notoriety. Go into the most polite or most barbarous countries, the nearest or most distant parts of the world; you will everywhere find living evidences of this scriptural prediction.

The Scriptures speak in the most explicit and peremptory terms, with regard to the restoration of the Jews, Ezek. xi. 17; Amos ix. 14, 15. Zech. xiv. 10, 11. This restoration

* Genesis, chap. x. Which, though but little adverted to, is the noblest piece of geographical antiquity extant in the world. It shews us how the whole earth, from the three sons of Noah, was overspread, inhabited, and denominated. It discovers the true source of the several nations about which profane authors either say nothing at all, or else say what is chimerical, precarious, false.

* That he should besiege and take the most impregnable of cities, Isa. xlv. 1, 2. That he should enrich himself with immense spoils, Isa. xlv. 3. That he should not be a tyrant, but a shepherd to the captive Jews; should release them from their captivity, and both permit and promote the rebuilding of their temple, Isa. xliv. 28.

† He is called a ravenous bird, Isa. xlvi. 11, denoting his speed, activity, and great expedition: Which were more like the flight of a swift-winged bird than the march of an army, with all its encumbrances.

could not be effected, at least could not be observed, if they had been blended and incorporated with the inhabitants of other climes. Therefore to be a presumptive proof of its accomplishment, and to render it, when accomplished, the most observable of all revolutions, they have subsisted a distinct people, amidst all the regions whether they have been driven. A most singular and astonishing circumstance! How soon were the Danes, the Saxons, and the Normans, mingled with the Britons! and how entirely are they all melted down and lost among the natives of our isle! But the Jews, like a drop of oil on the water, have continued a separate community; and though dispersed into all nations, are not, through the long course of seventeen hundred years, embodied with any. This is such a peculiarity in the dispensations of Providence, as I can never sufficiently admire; and is, I think, an undeniable voucher to the authenticity of the Scriptures; held forth, as it were by the hand of Omnipotence, in the sight of all the world.

Such events the ancient Scriptures foretell, and such facts they relate! facts of incomparable grandeur, and events of the greatest importance. All which are delivered in such a majestic simplicity of style, as nothing can equal but their precise veracity. Yet these books Lord Bolingbroke disparages, and at the same time extols the writings of Tacitus. "The remains of Tacitus," he tells us, "are precious remains," p. 161. Those of the holy Scripture "are dark and imperfect accounts," p. 108. In Tacitus, "history preserves her integrity and her lustre," p. 161. In the holy Scripture, instead of history you have "an heap of fables; which can pretend to nothing but some inscrutable truths, and therefore useless to mankind," p. 121. Every line of Tacitus has weight, p. 161, and cannot be mentioned without admiration; whereas the sacred history is put upon a level with the extravagancies of Amadis of Gaul, p. 121, and "can never gain sufficient credit from any reasonable man," p. 118.

"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine (said David), that he should defy the armies of the living God?" 1 Sam. xvii. 26. And who is this Tacitus, would I ask, this darling author, that he should be raised to the skies, while the divine historians are trodden to the dust? If your ladyship is unacquainted with his character, let me give it in the words of a most elegant and masterly critic. "Having considered the principal qualities of Tacitus as a writer and an historian, I cannot help thinking, that there is a false sublime and affectation in his descriptions; a scurrility and satirical vein, with too epigrammatical a conciseness, in his wit; an acuteness but too speculative, and a policy over refined, in his observations; a malignant and ill-natured turn in his characters; a philosophy too abstracted and elevated in his reasonings, and a vanity in his learning. In short, that he is in antiquity a pedant; in the philosophy of nature a sceptic; in morals loose; in description gaudy and pompous; in politics subdolous, refined and knavish."*

Yet this is the writer that must be placed in such great superiority to Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; this the history, (rise criticism, and resent the indignity!) that is spoken of with applause and rapture, even while the sacred annals are treated with disrespect and obloquy.

I might recount the glorious privileges exhibited in this blessed book; the inestimable promises made to the righteous; the tenderly compassionate invitations addressed to sinners; the refined and exalted displays of morality; with many other noble particulars, which it is the prerogative of Scripture to contain, the wisdom of mankind to believe, and the only felicity of our nature to be interested in them, and influenced by them.

But my lord is ready to agree on these topics. He expresses, in some places at least, no dislike of the doctrinal and prophetical parts. Nay, he has contrived an expedient to rescue them from the dishonour which he would bring upon the historical. He allows the former to be written under the inspiration of the holy and unerring Spirit the latter, he affirms, are "purely human, and therefore fallible," p. 96. Proceeding upon this supposition, he scruples not to represent them as the divices of craft, or the blunders of ignorance.†

I must beg leave to observe, that such a distinction is without the least ground of reality to support it; and would, if admitted, be an effectual method to subvert the whole of revelation; For, if it could be proved, that the authors of this history were so weak as to fall into palpable errors, where a common degree of sagacity would have secured them from mistaking; or if they were so treacherous as to palm upon the world a multiplicity of forgeries; so impious as to ascribe their falsehoods to the God of truth; this would at once ruin their character as men, and destroy their credit as writers. At this rate, who could depend upon their testimony in any point whatever?

Besides, many of the doctrinal parts of

* Hunter's Observations on Tacitus.

† That this is no aggravated imputation, every attentive reader of his lordship's letters will easily perceive; and I believe it will appear too plainly from the passages to be produced in the sequel of this epistle.

scripture refer to, and are derived from the historical. If the latter were a parcel of impositions and mistakes, what degree of veracity or dignity could the former claim? If the foundation is a bubble, how can the superstructure stand? Whether his lordship, by such a specious pretence of serving the interests of true religion, intended secretly to undermine it, I will not presume to say; but this I may venture to declare, that his scheme is very shrewdly calculated to compass such an end. Grant what his lordship asks; and what all the enemies of Christianity wish will undoubtedly follow.

Farther, madam, such a distinction is contrary to the express declaration of the New Testament; which positively asserts, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. iii. 16. Our blessed Lord, who was very well qualified to discern truth, and equally zealous to maintain it, makes no such difference. He says in general, "Search the Scriptures," John v. 39; the whole collection of sacred writings. "Whatsoever things," adds St. Paul, not some particular passages only, but "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning," Rom. xv. 4, and must therefore have been under such a divine superintendency as secured them from all possibility of error; otherwise they might be written, not for our learning, but for our deception. So that St. Paul's direction is as contrary to Lord Bolingbroke's distinction, as the east is opposite to the west. We may as soon bring these two points of the hemisphere together, as reconcile his lordship's refinements with the apostle's religion.

I believe it will be equally difficult to render his lordship consistent with himself. His concession overthrows his distinction. Admitting the doctrinal parts of the Scripture to be true, the veracity of the historical is, by necessary consequence, and beyond all contradiction, established. They are indissolubly connected; they mutually bear on, and mutually sustain each other; and must stand or fall together. They are like an arch most exactly finished, not a stone of which can be taken away without disconcerting the whole structure; and like an arch firmly founded, as well as correctly finished, the more they are pressed, the stronger they will appear.

My Lord says indeed—"That Christ came not to consecrate all the written traditions of the Jews," p. 94. He says it, but where or how does he prove it? By written traditions of the Jews, I suppose, we are to understand all the Hebrew Scriptures. The drift of the discourse leads us to this sense. Now, it is apparent that our Saviour has actually consecrated, has set the seal of authenticity and infallibility to the law of Moses, to the Psalms, and to the Prophets, Luke xxiv. 44. By appealing to them as decisive, and by allowing them to be predictive, he has acknowledged them to be divinely inspired, to be unquestionably true. And a very little acquaintance with Jewish antiquities will inform us, that in these three partitions the whole body of the Hebrew Scriptures is comprehended. What then becomes of his lordship's assertion? or to whose discredit does it tend?—that of the Jewish Scriptures, or that of his own knowledge?

I must desire your ladyship to take notice of the expression in this passage. It is somewhat singular, and deserves a particular regard. Written traditions is the phrase. Every one knows that we explode, and very justly, those superstitious whimsies of the Jews which pass under the denomination of traditions. Yet my lord thinks proper to call the histories of the Old Testament by this disreputable name; only he admits one difference, that whereas the former were transmitted by strength of memory, the latter are committed to writing. But is this an honest representation? is this free from all malignant disguise?

Let us put the matter to the following trial. The word *legend*, when applied to any modern story, raises the same contemptible and absurd idea as the word tradition excites, when applied to any Jewish notion. Would my lord, or would his friends think, that due honour or common justice was done to his "Sketch of the History and State of Europe," if it should be styled in our public papers "Lord Bolingbroke's written Legends?" The impropriety and the malevolence of such a title would be undeniable and odious: Who then can vindicate the propriety of his lordship's language, or clear it from being a most injurious misrepresentation of the sacred records, which, however some of the facts might come down in a traditionary channel to the writers, by passing through their hands receive the stamp of undoubted certainty, and are no longer traditions, but oracles.

I wish this had been the only instance of artifice and imposition used in the letters under examination. Why are so many idle tales and scandalous stories raked together and exposed to view? (See pages 85, 86, 88, 102, 108, 109.) Why? but to put a cheat upon the inattentive reader, and depreciate the dignity of the divine word? depreciate it much in the same manner as its most illustrious object and author was formerly dishonoured, not only by the false accusations with which he was charged, but also by the infamous company with whom he was numbered. Did my lord imagine, that these tales were really believed even by the warmest advocates for holy writ? No: he must know in his conscience that they

never were received by the generality of divines, neither are mentioned by authors of discernment, unless it be to confute and reject them. However, be they credited or not, it was apprehended they might serve a purpose: But whether it be the purpose of integrity, impartiality, and truth, I leave to the determination of others.

Still it is urged, That these Scriptures are "full of additions, interpolations, and transpositions," p. 95, 96. That they are full of additions, is more easily asserted than evinced. I can find but one instance specified by his lordship, which is the account "of the death and sepulture of Moses, with a sort of funeral panegyric," (p. 102,) recorded in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. Here it is taken for granted that we are reduced to a terrible dilemma—either to own that this paragraph was written by Moses himself, and then we may expect to hear of impossibility and absurdity; or else, that it is all supposititious, and then the Scriptures must have passed through tampering fingers and suffered adulteration. But suppose this small appendix was made by Joshua, a man whose mind was illuminated and his hand guided by the Spirit of the Most High, does such an addition deserve to be branded with an ignominious, or even brought into disesteem by a suspicious character? Or what if some other prophet whose name is unknown superadded this valuable anecdote? Is the concealment of the penman's name sufficient to impeach the genuineness, or invalidate the authority of the passage? especially since it has been approved by other inspired writers, and received the imprimature of the Holy Ghost? I know not who is the printer of his lordship's two volumes; yet, though ignorant of this circumstance, for other very satisfactory reasons, I have no doubt but they are the genuine productions of his pen.

My lord would have done well to consider, whether it was a probable or a practicable thing to interpolate a set of books, which were studied with so much accuracy, and kept with so much vigilance; the number of whose verses, especially in the Pentateuch, was computed, and the arrangement of the very letters known: Whether, after the coming of Christ, the jealous eye which the Jews and Christians had on each other was not an insurmountable bar against any innovations or material alterations. As for transpositions, they are used by the most approved historians. When used with judgment, they redound to the reputation of the writer, and increase the pleasure of the reader. And would his lordship make that a disapragement of the sacred narrative, which is a recommendation of any ordinary composition?

But my lord imagines that he has found out a substantial reason for the aforementioned distinction—has detected such improprieties in the sacred narrative as "contradict all our notions of order and of justice," p. 110. He produces, by way of specimen, the case of Noah denouncing a curse upon Canaan. This, it seems, is the capital absurdity, this the glaring error, which he concludes is sufficient to uncanonize the histories of the Old Testament, and degrade their writers from the class of inspiration. This, therefore, if your ladyship pleases, we will examine a little more particularly.

The charge in general, is thus expressed: "One is tempted to think that the patriarch was still drunk, and that no man in his senses could hold such language, or pass such a sentence." Was I at leisure to criticise upon words, I should be tempted to observe, that the diction, "no man could hold such language," may be French, but it is scarcely English. However, from the expression, I pass to the sentiment. This, for candour and solidity, is much like the reflection of the Jews on the memorable day of Pentecost. When the apostles addressed the inhabitants of various countries each in his native tongue, some of their hearers ascribed this miraculous ability—to what? we are amazed when we read—to the intoxicating power of wine. Acts ii. 13. Strange! that excessive drinking, which incapacitates other people for talking common sense, should enable the disciples of Christ to speak all kinds of languages! Is it not equally strange, that a drunken disorder should enable the patriarch to deliver prophecies, and foretell future events! which (as I hope to prove) was the real import of the speech.

Perhaps this curse may seem to be the effect, if not of disorderly indulgence, yet of intemperate passion. And how incompatible is this with the character of a preacher of righteousness! Surely Noah should not have been so forward to call for the thunderbolts of vengeance. Any benevolent man, much more a pious progenitor, would rather have deprecated the blow. I wonder his lordship did not start this objection, which would have been much more plausible, and much less shocking. To this, in case it had been started, we might reply, That Noah acted as the oracle of God. This, and many other such passages, which seem to be imprecations, are really predictions. Holy men spoke as they were influenced by the Spirit, and uttered not the suggestions of their own minds, but the will of Almighty God; which inclines me to think it might be no less proper, and much more suitable to the prophetic style, if we translated such passages as indicatives, rather than imperatives; making them declaratory of what is decreed in the cabinet of heaven, and will

as certainly take place as if it had already existed. Cursed *is*, rather than cursed *be* Canaan. Blessed of the Lord *is*, instead of *be* his land, Deut. xxxiii. 13. Thus, Isaiah foretelling the incarnation of that wonderful and adorable Person, whom he styles the Mighty God, says, To us a child is born, Isa. ix. 6; so "calling the things that are not, as though they were." Such a manner of speaking would remove, from this particular passage, all that sounds harsh, or seems uncharitable; and would, in the general, impart an unequalled majesty* to the language of Scripture.

It was God then, and not man, from whom this avenging sentence came. And God, to shew his utter detestation of all iniquity, to manifest his singular delight in all virtue, frequently takes occasion to denounce vengeance, or promise happiness, when some notorious evil is committed, or some laudable good performed. And was there not a most notorious evil committed here? "Charity," says the apostle, "covereth all things;"† draws a veil over the various infirmities of every common neighbour. But this man (man shall I say, rather monster of ingratitude) sees the shame of a father, an aged father, a pious father, Levit. xix. 32; and, instead of concealing, "when he cometh forth, he telleth it." Fools they are, abandoned profligates, that "make a mock at sin." What name then can be bad enough for a profane and unnatural wretch, who makes sport with a parent's folly, a parent's sinfulness, a parent's misery? Surely this was a most flagrant violation of filial reverence, filial love, and filial duty;‡ which not only implied so many particular offences, each attended with its respective guilt, but indicated the offender to be destitute of all piety. For, to argue in the apostle's strain, how could this man venerate a Father in heaven, whom he had not seen, if he was so irreverent to a father on earth, whom he had seen?

But supposing the turpitude and immorality of the action to be very enormous, and such as deserved some signal vengeance; the vengeance, it is objected, was misapplied: "For Ham alone offended; Canaan was innocent:" My lord is not sure that Canaan was innocent, though he asserts it pretty confidently. The contrary notion has obtained among the Jews. They apprehended that Canaan was first in the transgression, and, instead of being reproved, was imitated by his father. Bishop Patrick, Mr. Poole, and other eminent commentators, think this to be no improbable opinion.

If his lordship was unacquainted with the Hebrew, he will scarcely be thought qualified to pronounce so peremptorily concerning a case related in that language. If he was acquainted with the original, he acts somewhat unfairly in saying, "This notion is not only without, but against the express authority of the text," (p. 111.) For he must know that it receives some countenance even from the text itself. I would by no means offend your ladyship's eyes with any rugged figures or uncouth quotations. But you may venture to believe me, when I assure you, that the most exact translation of ver. 24 is, Noah "knew what his son had done to him, the *or* that little one." Ham could not so properly be styled the little one, since he was the middlemost, and is always placed in that order, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. But the description agrees perfectly well with Canaan, the grandson of Noah; and it was customary among the Jews to call the grandchildren the sons of their grandfather. Gen. xxix. 5; 1 Chron. i. 17.

Canaan, it is added, "was alone cursed." The words would run smoother if transposed in this manner, Canaan alone was cursed. As for the fact, that wants some better confirmation than my lord's bare assertion. To me it is evident, that Ham was not exempted from the curse. What! if it did not fall upon him in person, yet to be punished in his offspring, must be very affecting, and no less afflicting.

But hold; my lord has forestalled us in this reply. Instead of waiting for it, or acquiescing in it, he plays it upon us with an air of triumph. "Will it be said," this has been said, "that Ham was punished in his posterity," (p. 111.) It has, and, with his lordship's leave, I will venture to say it again. Nor should I, in case Lord Bolingbroke was alive, have went farther than his own breast for a proof of my assertion. Would he, with all his exalted ideas of liberty, have thought it no punishment on himself, provided he had been the father of children, to have heard them doomed to a state of slavery, nay, to be, as he very rightly explains the sacred phrase, "the vilest and worst of slaves?" especially if, like Ham, he was appointed, in the course of providence, to be the father of several nations; and if the doom had been pronounced by a person, of whose prophetic spirit

* Blessed be, is what an holy person might say, and comprehends no more than a supplicatory benediction. Blessed is, suits only the mouth of a prophet, and implies an authoritative blessing.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 7. This is one article in the finest display of social virtue that ever was exhibited to the world; and should, I think, be translated (not beareth, but) covereth or concealeth all things. The natural import of the word justifies, and the context evidently requires, this sense. Otherwise the first and last clauses of the verse will coincide in their meaning, or rather make an unmeaning tautology.

‡ We may see from that awful threatening, Prov. xxx. 17, with what extreme detestation the most holy God resents such an unnatural behaviour: "The eye that *mocketh at his father*, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagle shall eat it."

there was so incontestible an evidence as the universal inundation was of Noah's?

Since my lord has no communication with us or our affairs, I appeal to any, to every parental heart. Let nature, fond, compassionate, yearning nature, speak, whether the infliction of such a penalty on the son (perhaps a favourite son, like Joseph,) the son's sons, and the latest posterity, whether this be not properly a punishment of the father? whether the father must not feel by anticipation, what his wretched progeny must endure in reality? Nature once spoke to such a query, and this was her language; "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!" 2 Samuel xviii. 33. Did history ever record, or poetry ever invent, so melancholy a moan? It breathes the very soul of wo, and exemplifies the sentiment which his lordship would explode.

David, it is plain, was punished in the calamitous exit of this young prince, in the disasters sustained, and the disorders committed, by his other children, 2 Samuel xii. 10. Adam thought himself punished in the ruin which he brought upon the human race, and laments it, in the most pathetic terms, as the severest distress attending his apostasy. One wiser than Adam, one greater than David, whose judgment is always according to truth, is evidently of the same opinion; and, for that reason, has formed the sanction of a most sacred commandment upon this very principle; "He will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him." What God has so expressly threatened, he has actually done; not on this only, but on various other emergencies. Thus Esau suffered in his descendants,* Jehu in his family, Hosea i. 4, and Hezekiah in his children, Isaiah xxxix. 6, 7; who all, like the Canaanites, were children of their father's disobedience, inheritors of their sin as well as of their name. But this would anticipate the reply to another objection.

Where is the equity of cursing a people that are yet unborn? Does not this "contradict all our notions of order and of justice?" It may be contrary to our notions, or at least it would be unjustifiable in our practice; but it is quite otherwise with regard to the all-seeing God. Is it not agreeable to the strictest rules of justice for a magistrate, when he has heard the witnesses, summed up the evidence, and found the prisoner guilty; is it not agreeable to the strictest rules of justice to pass sentence upon such a criminal? The question can admit of no doubt. Yet it is equally certain, that this was the very case with reference to the supreme Judge, and those sinners the Canaanites. They practised the grossest and most inhuman idolatries, they abandoned themselves to the most horrid immoralities, such as violated nature, confounded all order, and such as it would be shocking even to mention, Lev. xviii. 24. Now all these provoking crimes were present to the view of him by whose inspiration Noah spake. He saw them with the same circumstantial exactness as if they had been already perpetrated. Let us take these very important particulars into consideration, the excessive wickedness of those nations, and the all-foreseeing discernment of Jehovah, and then who will dare to insinuate that the everlasting Sovereign acted unjustly; that he launched the lightnings of his indignation in an arbitrary manner, or upon an innocent people? Who will be so precipitate as to affirm with my lord, that "no other writer but a Jew could impute to the economy of divine Providence the accomplishment of such a prediction, nor make the Supreme Being the executor of such a curse?" P. 110.

The former of those circumstances will appear in a proper light, what his lordship calls, "cruelties committed by Joshua in the conquest of the Canaanites." It will make them appear to be acts of righteous vengeance; a much needed and most desirable extirpation of a pestilent people; altogether as serviceable to the public as it was formerly to destroy the wolves from our island, or as it is at present to deliver over some flagitious malefactors to the sentence of the law. Yet the execution of this vengeance was delayed year after year, century after century. The seed of Abraham, for several ages, were not permitted to enter upon the possession of their destined inheritance, because "the iniquity of the Amorites," which was the cause of their extermination, "was not yet full," Gen. xv. 16. Does it then bespeak the man of integrity to represent those proceedings of Joshua under the abhorred image of cruelties, which were acts of a justice exemplary, salutary, and greatly to be revered? Is it becoming an honest inquirer after truth to suggest, without the least shadow of proof, a selfish and malignant reason for the destruction of the Canaanites; when a reason, the most equitable in its nature, the most beneficial in its consequences, is expressly and repeatedly assigned by the sacred historian?* This I refer to your la-

* Compare Gen. xxvii. 40, with 2 Sam. viii. 14. "Thou shalt serve thy brother;" here is the sentence. "All they of Edom became David's servants;" here its execution.

* Gen. xv. 16. Deut. ix. 5. "For the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." See also Lev. xviii. 25, where the sacred writer describes their execrable and unparalleled vileness by one of the strongest and

dyship's decision, who, I am sure, will not err on the uncharitable extreme, yet I believe will find it difficult, with all your good nature, to acquit the author of these Letters from the charge of disingenuity.

May I not add, this way of foretelling, yet respiting the punishment, is gracious both in itself and in its consequences? In itself; because a reprieve is always reckoned an alleviation of the sentence, even though it be not the forerunner of a pardon. In its consequences; because it afforded large space for recollection, and should have awakened the offenders to a sense of their guilt. It should have incited them to use all possible diligence to avert the doom, both by a personal reformation, and by educating their families religiously. Why did they not act as King Ahab acted, (1 Kings xxi. 27, 29;) and argue as the men of Nineveh argued, (Jonah iii. 9,) in a following age, but on a like occasion? Instead of this, instead of betaking themselves to consideration and prayer, to repentance and amendment, they ran to the same, to greater excess of ungodliness.

So that these people, being evidently inheritors of their father's sinful nature, and obstinately persisting in their father's sinful ways, were most deservedly partakers of his curse. And though God is that incontrollable Sovereign, "who giveth not," is under no obligation to give, "account of any of his matters," Job xxxiii. 13; though he often has reasons for his dispensations, absolutely unsearchable by any mortal; yet here he is clearly vindicated even before men, even before the sinners themselves. They themselves must confess the justice of their doom; and own, that "God hath done righteously, but they have done wickedly;" that God has showed all long-suffering, and given full warning before the blow fell, whereas they, notwithstanding this forbearance and this admonition, have continued incorrigible, and without any other change but that of becoming more consummately vile.

Agreeably to all this, and conformably to the most acknowledged rules of equity, it is declared by the sacred historian, that the Amorites, the descendants of Canaan, suffered not till they had filled up the measure of their iniquities, Gen. xv. 16; their own as well as their father's. All which, I should imagine, is sufficient, not only to justify the counsels, but to glorify the judgments of the great Jehovah; sufficient also to satisfy any inquirer who is (as my lord very handsomely expresses himself) "candid, but not implicit; willing to be informed, yet curious to examine."

My lord's curiosity to examine, shall I say? or his resolution to be dissatisfied, proceeds still farther. Accordingly he adds, "Who does not see that the curse and the punishment in this case fell on Canaan and his posterity, exclusively of the rest of the posterity of Ham?" p. 110, 112. The particle *of*, so frequently repeated in a single sentence, can hardly be admired as an elegance* of speech. But taking no more notice of such little blemishes, I shall consider the weight, not the polish of his lordship's arguments. As for this argument, I verily think, when laid in the balance of impartiality and candour, it will be found wanting. For, admitting the objection in its full scope, what follows? Why, that the righteous God pardoneth some criminals, when he might justly punish all. And if it should have pleased the supreme Judge to repeal the sentence, and remit the penalty, with regard to some offenders, who shall arraign his conduct? who shall censure his providence? To exercise mercy is his great prerogative; an act not of debt, but of royal bounty, which he exercises when and to whom it seemeth good in his sight: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," Rom. ix. 16, is his high and holy resolve.

I might therefore answer his lordship's question by asking another, which I might propose in the plain but solemn words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "If these are spared, while those are punished, what is that to thee? Is thine eye evil because God is good?" But I shall rather reply to the objection by denying the fact. The punishment was not confined to Canaan and his posterity. It reached the other descendants of Ham; Misraim himself, the father of the Egyptians (as will be shown in a proper place) not excepted. Canaan, it is true, is particularly mentioned; because he was (as from this very circumstance is extremely probable) an accomplice† with Ham in the breach of filial duty; because this branch of the family was more than ordinarily corrupt, nay, beyond measure vicious; because the Canaanites were, in the first place, and in the fullest manner, to feel the effects of the curse: And Moses, being charged with

boldest figures imaginable. So vile they were that the very country loathed them, and was weary of bearing them: "The land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants."

* This, and one or two preceding remarks of the same nature, are scarcely worth our notice, were it not to put a query upon the popular notion, that his lordship's style is so correct, elegant and noble, as to be a standard for fine writing. It cannot, in my apprehension, justly claim this honour.

† This is rendered still more credible, by that particularity of style which the Scripture uses in speaking of Ham. Ham the father of Canaan, Gen. ix. 18, 22. Why of Canaan so especially? Had he no other children, no other sons? Several other. But this distinction seems to be a brand of infamy set upon the offender; and intimates, that he who was father of Canaan by blood, was his partner, was his brother in iniquity.

a commission to execute the vengeance on this people only, had no occasion to concern himself with any other. Just as the sheriff of a county, demanding the body of a condemned malefactor, produces the dead-warrant for his execution, without intermeddling, or thinking himself under any necessity to intermeddle with the other prisoners in the jail. This leads me to a new, and, if I judge right, by far the most important inquiry, namely, whether the curse was executed as well as pronounced?

As I hasten to the proof of this particular, my lord embarrasses and retards me with a fresh obstacle. He himself has thought proper to inform us, "why the posterity of Canaan was to be deemed an accursed race." But he lets the world know "it is not so easy to account why the posterity of the righteous Shem, that great example of filial reverence, became slaves to another branch of the family of Ham during more than fourscore years," p. 112. I am by no means convinced that the point proposed enters into the merits of our cause. Should the reasons for this dispensation remain an impenetrable secret, yet, if we clear up the propriety, and demonstrate the equity, of the curse denounced, we compass our main end, and confute the grand censure. However, as the question is presented, it shall be considered; and, though his lordship should affect to sneer, I choose rather, in imitation of those noble writers whose dignity I would assert, to be serious.

Why were the Israelites sojourners in Egypt? A reason occurs that is worthy of a gracious God, and greatly for the public good—that they might carry thither the knowledge of the everlasting Jehovah, and of the promised Messiah, of the only acceptable method of worship, and the only effectual way of salvation. As Egypt was the parent of literature, and the fountain-head of science; as men of letters and curiosity came, from all parts of the world, to complete their studies at Egypt; if these heavenly doctrines were received there, they would be more likely, some streams of them at least, to be transfused into all climes and improve every nation. So that the people of the Lord, the only depositories of divine philosophy, were settled in this land of general resort, with much the same wise and beneficent views as the ablest professors of learning are placed at our famous universities.

But why were they slaves in Egypt? This might be to try them, and to humble them; to show them what was in their heart, and to purge out their dross. We are taught in Scripture, that the Almighty chastens whom he loves, and scourges the men whom he receiveth to himself. Even the heathen classics, my lord's favourite authors, have frequently remarked, That adversity is a school, in which both private persons and public societies have learned the most heroic virtues. Besides, this might be intended to animate and inspirit the Israelites for their invasion of Canaan. They were in the general a supine and grovelling* set of people. Had they been settled in a state tolerably easy, or in territories that were but moderately commodious, they might never have aspired after the land flowing with milk and honey; never have made any resolute efforts to possess their destined inheritance. But, being driven by the lash, and instigated by the goad, of pungent, galling slavery, they were even constrained to burst the chains, and push their way to liberty and Canaan. Their insupportable slavery was somewhat like bending the bow, and straining the string, in order to launch the arrow. Farther, God Almighty assures Abraham, that his seed, though enslaved for a while, should come out of their bondage with great substance, Gen. xv. 14, with the silver, the gold, the jewels, and the choicest treasures of Egypt. So that, when labouring for their task-masters, they were in fact labouring for themselves. The wealth of the oppressors was laid up for the oppressed; and the season of their affliction in the enemy's country was like the rigorous cold of winter, which, far from obstructing, only makes preparation for the blossoms of spring, and the fruits of autumn. These considerations might have solved the difficulty to his lordship as a politician.

Other reasons are suggested by our divines, which, if my lord had thought it worth his while to regard, might have given better satisfaction, and yielded more edification. They would have reminded the right honourable querist, that such a gloomy aspect of the Jewish affairs made way for the brightest manifestation of God's glorious attributes; of his power in rescuing them from their tyrannical rulers; of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promise made to their fathers; of his goodness in supporting and conducting them—keeping them, amidst the most formidable dangers, as the apple of an eye; and bearing them, even through the most insuperable difficulties, as on eagles' wings.† This also opened a most conspicuous theatre for that amazing train of miracles which have been, in all ages, as serviceable to the faith of Christians, as they were formerly conducive to the welfare

* Let none imagine that the wisdom of God is impeached by selecting to himself a people of this character. His clemency, his forbearance, and all those benign perfections which are so necessary for the salvation of sinners, are hereby displayed with peculiar advantage, and to our unspeakable consolation.

† See Deut. xxxii. 10, 11. These, I think, are most delightful and inimitably delicate representations.

of the Jews. They would farther have informed his lordship, and have confirmed their opinion by apostolical authority, that the whole of this most wonderful transaction was typical of spiritual things; was a series of living lessons, delivered, according to the eastern method of conveying knowledge, in figures and emblems. The Egyptian bondage was a resemblance of our natural condition, which is a state of the most abject slavery to sin. The arbitrary and injurious impositions of the task-masters shadow forth, though but faintly, the tyranny of unruly appetites and imperious passions. The barbarous edict for the destruction of all the infant males, fitly enough represents the genuine tendency of carnal and corrupt affections, which destroy our true comfort, subvert our noblest interests, are as death to the joys and to the hopes of our souls. Their deliverance from that miserable state was an expressive sign of our redemption from the guilt and the dominion of sin.* Both which the Lord Jesus accomplishes, the one by price, the other by power: not by slaying the first-born, but by shedding his own blood; not by softening rocks into a stream, but taking away the heart of stone; not by turning the current of Jordan backward, but by turning all our desires into a new channel. The many troubles and oppositions they met with in the wilderness, exhibit a lively picture of the molestations that attend, and the temptations that assault the Christian. Trials await us: Snares are around us: Through many conflicts, and much tribulation, we must enter into the kingdom of heaven. Only let us beware, lest, like the ungrateful Israelites, we forget the God of our salvation, and fall after the same example of unbelief. The cloud that was spread over them by day, to intercept the glare, and screen them from the heat of the sun; the fire that shone before them in the night, to cheer the nocturnal darkness, and lead them through the trackless desert; were not these very amiable and exact emblems of our Saviour's merits, and of his holy word? The former of which are refreshing to the guilty conscience, as the veil of a thick interposing cloud is welcome to a traveller in sultry climes. The latter is a light to our feet, and a lantern to our paths, to guide us in the way everlasting. Their passage through Jordan, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant going before them, (Joshua iii. 13, 14, &c.) and standing in the midst of the river, till all the congregation were passed over; this very emphatically prefigured our great High-priest, bearing our sins, fulfilling the law in our stead, abolishing death, and making it a safe, as well as a short transition to life eternal.

You will excuse me, madam, for expatiating upon these topics. They are so inviting, so pleasing, so comfortable, that I can hardly persuade myself to leave them. If any other parts of the epistle, through a kind of unhappy necessity almost inseparable from controversy, should resemble the asperity of the thorn, this, I hope, will bear some affinity to the fragrance of the rose. For which cause it is, that I choose only to touch, and but lightly touch, the one, while I would open the other into a wide expansion, and a rich effusion. Let me add one more observation on this head, and I have done. It is apprehended, by very judicious persons, that the punishment of the Egyptians, and their total overthrow, may be a presage of the misery and ruin which will sooner or later fall upon individuals and nations that reject the glorious gospel, and vilify its sacred repository, *The Bible.*

If the reasons I have offered are neither tiresome nor unsatisfactory to your ladyship, I shall proceed the more cheerfully to show that the curse was executed as well as pronounced. Had it been the senseless extravagance of a man intoxicated with liquor, or the rash imprecation of a man heated with resentment, or the designing interpolation of some crafty statesman, would the holy, the gracious, the true God, have set the broad seal of heaven to it? would he, who overrules all events, have suffered it to succeed, have commanded it to succeed, nay, have brought it himself to pass by a mighty hand and stretched out arm? Impossible to conceive. If, therefore, it was really brought to pass, and with a surprising punctuality, and not by any competency of human means, but by the most evident display of divine power, this will be such a proof of its credibility, its reasonableness, and equity, as no one who thinks reverently of the Deity can deny.

Canaan was to be a servant to Shem. This was accomplished when the Israelites, the descendants of Shem, conquered the land of Canaan, slew thirty of its kings, and took possession of their cities, Joshua xii. 24; when the Gibeonites particularly, who composed one of their principal states, Joshua x. 2, became "hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation," Joshua ix. 27; or, in other words, the most menial servants to the lowest of the people.

By what instruments was this extraordinary revolution wrought? by one of the finest armies in the east or west? marshalled by the bravest officers, and headed by the most experienced general? No; but by raw, undisciplined, enslaved people, who were destitute of military skill, and without any personal qualifications, or warlike appa-

* The divine writer to the Hebrews, makes the land of Canaan typical of "a better country, even of an heavenly." Heb. xi. 16; xii. 22.

ratus for so difficult, so dangerous an enterprise.

Through what obstacles was it begun, carried on, and completed? In spite of the attempts of one potent monarch to detain them in servitude; in spite of the resolution of several combined kings to dispute with them every inch of ground to the last drop of their blood. A deep river and an arm of the sea must be crossed by six hundred thousand men, with their wives, their children, their cattle; and without any vessel to transport them, or any bridge to transmit them. They must dwell forty years in a desolate, inhospitable, barren wilderness, which was infested by ravenous beasts, and fiery flying serpents; in which there was neither water nor corn, nor any sort of accommodation for abode, or sustenance for life.

How were all these difficulties surmounted? Not by the arm of flesh; this was utterly impracticable; but by the most astonishing interposition of Omnipotence. The Egyptian tyrant is humbled, and brought to their terms, by the infliction of ten tremendous plagues. The waters of the river are dried up, and the waves of the great deep are divided, so as to yield them a safe unobstructed passage. A stream gushes even from the hard rock, and gives them drink, as it had been out of the great depths. Prodigious quantities of manna* descend with every morning dew, and supply them, not from the garner, but from heaven, with their daily bread. Vast flights of quails arrive with every setting sun, and drop, like a bird shot through the wing, "in the midst of their camp, and round about their habitations." The walls of an impregnable city fall to the ground at the blast of rams horns, Joshua vi. The sun stands still in the midst of heaven at the voice of a man, Joshua x. 12, 13. All the hosts of the nations, with all their weapons of war, are "driven asunder as the foam upon the waters, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn."

And is it probable, can it be possible, that every element, and all nature, should not only concur, but alter their established course, depart from the fundamental laws of their creation, on purpose to ratify what was bolted out by the patriarch in a drunken revel, or foisted into the text by some Hebrew Machiavelian?

Canaan was to be servant also to Japheth. Pursuant to this prediction, did not the Greeks and Romans, who derive their lineage from Japheth, make themselves masters of the residue of Canaan? Tyre, built by the Sidonians, and Thebes by Cadmus, were both destroyed by Alexander the Grecian. Carthage, founded by Dido, was, after a long succession of losses, and a vast effusion of blood, demolished by Scipio the Roman; which losses made Hannibal, a child of Canaan, cry out, with a mixture of astonishment and despondency, "*Agnosco fortunam Carthaginis!*"* *i. e.* "I see plainly the hand of destiny working; I see that oracular doom hasting to its accomplishment, in these dreadful calamities sustained by Carthage!"

If these facts are true, which have the unanimous consent of historians for their support, what can we say of his lordship's assertion, "That Canaan was servant to Shem, though not to Japheth?" (p. 111.) This, I am apprehensive, will be found as false as the following objection is weak, in which he urges, that "Canaan was servant to one of his uncles, not to his brethren," (p. 111.) Such a cavil (for certainly it deserves no better name) discovers an utter ignorance of the Hebrew phraseology, or else a strange inattention to it. I would not say, an egregious misrepresentation of it. I thought every one had known, till Lord Bolingbroke undeceived me, that nothing is more common in the oriental idiom, than to express any relatives of the male line by the denomination of brethren.†

I hope your ladyship will not think this, or any of my other remarks, indecently free. In the presence of the most high God, all men are upon a level. When the honour of his divine word or glorious attributes is concerned, we are to "know no man after the flesh," 2 Cor. v. 16; pay no deferential regard to the distinctions of birth or elevations of character. In these lists, the privileges of peerage cease; and I should reckon myself the most abject of creatures, if, through respect of persons, I should palliate or secrete the truth, when the ever-venerable oracles of inspiration are treated with contempt. A violation of decency this! by whatever hand it is offered, or from whatever quarter it comes, incomparably more flagrant than *scandalum magnatum*.

Pardon, madam, this digression, and permit me farther to observe, That the progeny of Ham, in another line, are, to this very day, the slaves of the whole trading world: The negroes I mean; whose descent is

* We are not to think that the manna took its name from any resemblance to the medicinal drug, which, among us, is so commonly known and so frequently used. It is rather derived from the abrupt expression of the Israelites, on their first beholding this wonderful food. They cried out with amazement, *Man Hu?* What is this? Which exclamation, denoting their own surprise, and the unexpected as well as unparalleled nature of the gift, became both a memorial of the one and a denomination of the other.

* Vid. Liv. Lib. xxvii. ad finem.

† See Gen. xiii. 8; where Abraham and Lot, though uncle and nephew, are called brethren, Gen. xxiv. 48; where Bethuel, another of Abraham's nephews, is styled his brother, Gen. xvi. 12; xxiv. 27.

from that unhappy man. And what is their country but the market of slavery? Are not their persons bought and sold as the meanest commodities? are they not debased to the most sordid, and harassed with the most toilsome drudgery? made, in the strictly literal sense of the phrase, servants of servants?

I have not forgotten what I promised to make appear with relation to the Egyptians, neither shall I overlook what his lordship has remonstrated from the same quarter. "The descendants of Misraim," he says, "another of the sons of Ham, were the Egyptians; and they were so far from being servants of servants to their cousins the Shemites, that these were servants of servants to them," (p. 112.) For a season they were; but this servitude was calculated for the good of their community, and redounded to the glory of their God. It terminated in such a signal deliverance, as brought honour and opulence to themselves, confusion and ruin to their enemies. Does it then follow, from this temporary superiority of the Egyptians, which ended in so disastrous a manner, that they were excepted in the denunciation of the curse, or favoured with an act of indemnity?

What says the supreme Arbitrator? "The nation whom they serve will I judge," Gen. xv. 14; I myself will punish, not by any human instruments, but by my own immediate hand. Accordingly, they were visited with the most dreadful and destructive plagues. In the last of which, the first born, the flower of their kingdom, were cut off; and at length their king and his whole army perished in the Red Sea. Does my lord make no account of these most terrible and unexampled judgments?

Besides, what was the condition of this people in the following ages? If we consult Ezekiel, he will declare it as clearly by the spirit of prophecy as if he had lived on the spot, and seen the face of affairs. Ezek. xxx. 20, 21, 23; xxix. 15, xxx. 18. "And it came to pass, in the eleventh year, in the first month, in the seventh day of the month, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it, to make it strong to hold the sword. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries. Egypt shall be the basest of kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more among the nations. And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." Is not all this confirmed by ancient history, and by the present state of Africa? From the one we learn that the Egyptians were subject first to the Persians, next to the Grecians, then to the Romans, afterwards to the Arabs. And from the other it appears that they now wear the Turkish yoke; are governed, not by a prince of their own, but by the Grand Seignior and his Bashaws.

Nay, let any person look round upon all the countries peopled by the progeny of Ham, and I am much mistaken if he does not find them what the Psalmist describes, "dark places of the earth, and full of the habitations of cruelty," Psalm lxxiv. 20; the dens of rapine, and the dungeons of ignorance, where slavery drags the chain, and tyranny lifts the scourge. Insomuch that we need not scruple to say, in the emphatical words of Joshua, "Not one thing has failed of all the good or the evil things which the Lord spake by the mouth of Noah, concerning each of his sons respectively. All are come to pass, not one thing has failed," Joshua xxiii. 14.

This calls upon me to clear up another part of the prediction, the blessing pronounced upon Shem, and the enlargement promised to Japheth; which will afford a new argument to maintain the authenticity of the passage, and assert its divine inspiration.

I said, the blessing pronounced upon; because I would not translate the words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, but, Blessed of the Lord God is Shem." This will put a striking contrast between the doom of the irreligious scoffer, and the reward of filial piety: this is what we naturally expect from a God who is not unrighteous to forget his people, and their labours of love: this sense the original language will very commodiously bear,* and the event seems to require. For how manifestly, how eminently, was this benedictive sentence fulfilled! since in the posterity of Shem the church of God was established, and his true worship propagated. From him the Redeemer of mankind, that blessing of blessings, according to the flesh, sprung.

The great enlargement of Japheth's territories is no less certain, and no less remarkable. He had for his possession the isles of the sea westward, and the fine extensive countries near them, Spain, Italy, Greece, Asia the Less, all Europe, and the vast regions towards the north, which anciently the Scythians, now the Tartars inhabit, from whom the Americans, the people of the new world, seem to be derived. By Japheth's dwelling in the tents of Shem, is meant the conversion of the European Gentiles to the gospel of Christ; who,

* Gen. ix. 26. Words of the very same import in the very same construction, are thus rendered by our translators, Deut. xxxiii. 13, and will hardly admit of any other interpretation, "Blessed of the Lord," &c.

through a long progression of years, were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope of eternal life, and without any saving knowledge of God in the world," Eph. ii. 12; but were in due time persuaded to embrace the true faith, were made (as the apostle elegantly speaks, and in a strain perfectly corresponding with the language of our prophecy), "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Eph. ii. 19. An event altogether as undeniable as it is important, delightful, and glorious.

Upon the whole, I cannot but think that his lordship has planted his battery, and played his artillery, if not like an unskilful, at least like an unsuccessful engineer. He has planted his battery against a place too well fortified to admit of any impression, and that must infallibly triumph over every assault. He has so played his artillery, that it recoils upon himself, and crushes his own design. And this, I apprehend, will always be the issue, when men, even of the finest genius, and most improved capacities, presume to attack the Scriptures of eternal truth.

This very passage, instead of depreciating, unspeakably ennobles the divine writings. It shows that they bear the stamp of that all-overruling power which purposes, and none shall disannul it; of that all-comprehending knowledge which discerns events long, long before they come into existence. And let any unprejudiced reader judge what degree of esteem those books may fairly challenge, whose least considerable, or, in his lordship's opinion, "most obnoxious" parts, have such a depth, and such a dignity of wisdom! such as will be admired and revered so long as historic truth has any credit, or commercial intelligence any being.

Shall I trespass upon your ladyship's patience a little farther? The penmen of the Old Testament carry all the marks of the most disinterested and undesigning sincerity. They record the failings of their favourite and most illustrious heroes, without concealing the punishment inflicted on such miscarriages. The uniform tendency of their narratives and observations is to promote a religion the most pure, the most benevolent, the most elevated imaginable; as remote from all selfish aims, and every low art of collusion, as the heavens are higher than the earth. They were men singularly qualified for their work; being either eye-witnesses of the facts they relate, or else contemporaries with the persons they describe, or still more remarkably distinguished by their ability to work miracles, and their insight into futurity. As to the facts related, some of them had anniversary solemnities on which they were commemorated; some of them had significant ceremonies by which they were represented. They were publicly read in the synagogues, and universally known through the nation. It was a duty of religion to talk of them by day, to meditate on them by night, and diligently to instruct the children in them. And were not these circumstances a security, an inviolable security, against any attempt to corrupt, to innovate or alter? So that their writings appear with every character, both internal and external, of genuine truth, and with the most unquestionable credentials from the God of power, and God of wisdom.* Consequently they have a credibility of their own, sufficient both to claim and to support the faith of an ancient Jew; such as must command the assent of every rational and honest inquirer, even before the Christian dispensation took place.

If my lord had duly adverted to these considerations, surely he would have expunged that bold and rash assertion, "Without Christianity we have no obligation to believe the Old Testament," p. 94. Surely he would never have left behind him that unwarrantable and injurious insinuation, that the Hebrew original deserves no better credit than the fabulous story† of the Septuagint translation, nor have found any reason to protest that he knew of no rule to go by, (p. 100,) (in settling the degree of assent due to the several parts of the Old Testament), but the fanciful distinction which has already been examined. He would rather have found reason to adopt and subscribe Agur's confession of faith; a man who was famous in his own, who will be famous in every generation; and for this, among other most judicious maxims, "Every word of God is pure," Prov. xxx. 5. It is all gold, fine gold, without any the least alloy.

For my own part, I freely acknowledge to your ladyship, that I value the sacred history (even exclusive of its connexion with the transcendent glories of Christ, and the unspeakable benefits of redemption) on the very same principles which incline our connoisseurs to value those celebrated antiquities they call medals, singular, because it is supposed there is but one of the sort extant. Considering the private interests and personal attachments which are so apt to bias

* Another very extraordinary peculiarity in these writings, and, to me at least, an undoubted proof that their authors were divinely inspired, is their perfect agreement and entire consistency throughout. Though they were composed by different men, placed in very different stations of life, and flourishing in very distant ages of the world, yet they are as consonant and harmonious as if they had all been penned by the same hand. Any thing equal to this I never saw, never heard of, and I believe the most inveterate or most sagacious adversaries of the Old Testament will not attempt to produce a parallel.

† The story is told page 86. The insinuation is made in a prolix, confused, and obscure paragraph, page 87.

the human mind, considering the imperfect information and ignorance of causes, to which all other writers are unavoidably subject, I cannot but conclude, that the sacred history is, in point of strict, precise, universal veracity, singular. There is none other besides this, no not one in the whole world, that is free from all the false colourings of prejudice, clouded with no mixture of uncertainty, most minutely true, and to be depended on in every particular. The sacred history is not only seated on the throne of truth, but in these respects, possesses it without a rival.

Lord Bolingbroke is fond of Davila,* because Davila discovers the hidden springs of action, and traces up almost every enterprise to its source, p. 167. Is this so valuable a qualification in the Italian? How then should we admire the inspired historians, who disclose to us, not the secret measures of a court, but the unsearchable counsels of Heaven; not the little motives that actuate the politician, but the deep designs of the universal sovereign; and all this, not from precarious surmise, but with the fullest assurance? An excellency to which no other narrative on earth can lay any claim.

The Scriptures throw light upon the most memorable transactions that have passed in the heathen world, and are recorded by the classic authors. When the Assyrian monarch subdues kingdoms and ravages nations, we are apt to think he is only gratifying his insatiable ambition. But the Scripture assures us, that he was "the staff in Jehovah's hand, and the rod of his indignation," Isa. x. 5; an instrument made use of by the King of kings to execute his righteous vengeance. When Cyrus is habituated to all the noble exercises, educated in all the fine accomplishments that form the gallant prince and constitute the complete general, Xenophon sees nothing more than the exertion of human policy. But Isaiah beholds the all-superintending arm of the Lord girding his hero, Isa. xlv. 5; and preparing him for the deliverance of his people. So that the Scripture history is itself the grandest and most useful, while its intercurrent observations are a key to open the most celebrated affairs which give weight and estimation to other annals.

The grandest and most useful. This will appear to be more than a bare assertion, if we recollect that here is a display of that great Messiah, who is "the hope of Israel," Acts xxviii. 20, and "the desire of all nations," Haggai ii. 7; a display of him in his mysterious incarnation, his wonderful person, and all the gracious, the benign majesty of his mediatorial offices,—from the original promise made to our first parents, through all its progressive evolutions, till he arises in the New Testament "as the only begotten of the Father," John i. 14, with a lustre and dignity suitable to so divine a personage; which is an event of such incomparable condescension, magnificence, and grace, that all the prophets bear witness to it, Acts x. 43, and the "very angels desire to look into it," 1 Pet. i. 12.

How then must your ladyship be surprised to see Lord Bolingbroke undertaking to assign the principal scope of the Mosaic history, (p. 109,) (the former part of it at least), and not enlarging, not dwelling upon, no, nor so much as mentioning the Redeemer, that all-glorious, all-important Redeemer, who is the sum and substance of the whole Scriptures; the Alpha and Omega in all the revelations of God; of whom Moses wrote, John v. 46, and whose day Abraham saw, John viii. 56; whose righteousness was preached by Noah,* and his final advent foretold by Enoch, Jude 14; whose merits, apprehended by faith, were the recommendation of Abel's sacrifice, Heb. xi. 4, and the consolation of Adam, Gen. iii. 15, under the loss of immortality, and expulsion from paradise; from whom many, if not all, the antediluvian patriarchs borrow their honours, and stand upon everlasting record, chiefly as being in the number of his progenitors. This capital omission is (to use his lordship's own language) "a manifest abuse of sacred history, and quite inexcusable in a writer who knew, or should have known," (p. 178,) that in its most early, as well as in its later periods, it invariably testifies of Christ, John v. 39.

Thus to undertake, and thus to execute, is as if some pretender to anatomy should engage to explain the nature of animal motion, and say not a word concerning the nerves, the muscles, the heart; or, as if some smatterer in geography should offer to exhibit a complete map of our country, and leave entirely out of his plan the cities, the towns, and the rivers. Yet this is not the only incident on which my lord, however critical in profane literature, discovers himself to have been very remiss in the study, at least very superficial in the knowledge, of his Bible.

From which hint I would take occasion to entreat, and with the most affectionate earnestness, all that are inclined to dispute against this divine book, first to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with it. And would they once set about the momentous

* He wrote a history of the civil wars of France, in fifteen books, containing all that was remarkable, from the death of Henry II. in 1559, to the peace of Vervins, in 1598

* 2 Peter ii. 5. It can hardly be doubted but Noah preached the very same righteousness of which he himself was an heir; and that, we are assured, was the righteousness of faith, Hebrews xi. 7.

work with a candid, upright, and impartial mind, free from the jaundice of prejudices, not blinded with the fumes of self-conceit, nor intoxicated with the cup of vicious pleasure;—if they would thus examine the inspired volumes, they would soon perceive such a lovely constellation of truth, of wisdom, and of grace, shining forth from every page, as must turn their disesteem into admiration, and their aversion into delight.

But if they bring with them a fondness for fame, a haughty self-sufficiency of spirit, or an ignoble attachment to sensual gratifications; if they are determined to cherish, and will on no consideration divorce these seducers of the heart and perverters of the judgment, we cannot wonder that the Scriptures should appear to them with much the same aspect as the miraculous cloud appeared to the Egyptians, which threw darkness on their paths and shed horror on their souls, even while it gave light to the steps and alacrity to the hopes of the Israelites, Exodus xiv. 20. In this case we may assign a reason for their opposition, from the unhappy circumstances recorded of Ishmael, Genesis xvi. 12: Their hand, their tongue, their pen, is against the word of God, because the word of God is against them, their tempers, and their ways.

In the sacred narrations we behold "the arm of the Lord revealed." Other historians only guess at the interposition of an avenging or propitious God. And though conjectures of this kind occur but very rarely in their works, they are frequently censured as a presumptuous intrusion upon the arcana of heaven. But the penmen of Scripture, with unerring certainty, declare, "This is the Lord's doing"—a stroke from the sword of his justice, 2 Chron. x. 15; xv. 6; xxv. 20; xxviii. 5, 6; xxix. 8, 9;—or a reward from the riches of his goodness, 2 Chron. xii. 7; xiii. 15, 16, 18; xiv. 6, 12; xxvi. 5; xxvii. 6.*

Here we perceive, as in the brightest mirror, what practices he favours, and what methods he opposes; what courses are attended with his blessing, and what behaviour provokes his displeasure. These records set before us the most striking exemplifications, both of the divine threatenings and of the divine promises; demonstrating, from repeated experience, that the former are more than vain menaces, the latter are far from alluring fallacies. By which means they are admirably well adapted to inculcate those fundamental lessons of practical religion, a continual advertence to God, a believing dependence on God, and an habitual expectation of success in our schemes, not merely from any address or industry of our own, but from the all-powerful benediction of God, which are, of all other precepts, perhaps the most salutary and beneficial to mankind.

My remarks would be immoderately prolix were they to enumerate all the perfections of sacred history. I shall content myself with wishing that your ladyship may esteem, may reverence, may love the whole book of God, only in proportion to its worth. Then, I am persuaded, it will have your highest esteem, your profoundest reverence, and most devoted love.

Before I conclude, give me leave, madam, to make one request, which I make under a sense of my various obligations to your ladyship, with all the engaging acts of your condescension and generosity full in my view. It ought therefore to be, and it really is, expressive of the most unfeigned thankfulness for your favours, and of the truest zeal for your happiness. It is this, That you would carry on a daily intercourse, and cultivate a holy, an intimate familiarity with the inspired writers, and their inestimable volumes. Read them—recollect them—weigh them. Contemplate them in their magnificent whole, in their beautiful parts, and their harmonious connexions.

I should be afraid to recommend, in this zealous manner, and to this assiduous perusal, the most correct compositions that ever proceeded from a human pen. But here I am under no apprehension of your exhausting the mine, and complaining of emptiness; under no apprehension lest the entertainment should flatten upon your taste, and create disgust. The more we search those storehouses of wisdom, the better we understand those oracles of truth, the more they will approve themselves to our judgment, and become dearer, still dearer to our affections. The pages of Scripture, like the productions of nature, will not only endure the test, but improve upon the trial. The application of the microscope to the one, and a repeated meditation on the other, are sure to display new beauties, and present us with higher attractives. Nay, the very attempts of an adversary to blacken the Scriptures, serve only to increase their lustre. For my part, I never should have seen the prediction of Noah rising, with such perspicuity, propriety, and glory, to observation, had not Lord Bolingbroke made an effort to overwhelm it with objections, and sink* it into discredit.

* I refer to the Chronicles rather than to the other parts of sacred history, in order to create a higher esteem for these excellent memoirs. I would compare them to some noble mine, whose surface is barren and seems to include nothing valuable. But as you penetrate the soil, the treasure opens. The deeper you go, the more riches you find: and, instead of regretting the little toil of application, you are only grieved that you undertook the gainful search no sooner.

* An allusion to the motto in the title page, "*Mer-*

Above all, we may bring to this best of studies an humble mind, a mind deeply sensible of its own ignorance and weakness, yet frequently and cheerfully lifted up to God for his enlightening and animating Spirit; that, by his blessed influences, our "understandings may be opened to understand the Scriptures," Luke xxiv. 45, and our "hearts opened to receive them," Acts xvi. 14; to understand them in all the fulness of their heavenly meaning, to receive them in all the force of their transforming power; that, reading the threatenings, we may tremble* at the awful word, and acknowledge ourselves justly liable to those terrible judgments; but at the same time believe, that "Christ has delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13: that reading the promises, we may confess ourselves unworthy of an interest in such unspeakable blessings; yet rest assured, that "all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus," 2 Cor. i. 20; are our unquestionable portion, through his merits and atonement, and will certainly be fulfilled through his intercession and faithfulness. Reading the precepts, let us rejoice in the belief that our Saviour, obedient unto death, has fulfilled them perfectly for our justification; that our Saviour, exalted unto heaven, has engaged to "put his Spirit within us" for our sanctification; "causing us to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Contemplating the various examples, may we use some of them as admonitory sea-marks to avoid the rocks of sin; use others as a conducting clue to guide our feet into the way of peace; use all as so many incitements to awaken our circumspection or quicken our diligence in "making our calling and election sure."

Then we shall have another proof that the original of these holy books is not from man, but from the Lord Jehovah; a proof which some people may explode as imaginary or enthusiastical, but is really of the utmost solidity, and of the last importance; which, though by no means independent on, much less exclusive of, other evidences, is nevertheless to each individual person incomparably more valuable than any, or every other attestation. We shall "have the witness in ourselves," 1 John v. 10. We shall experience on our own souls the happy energy of the Scriptures. They will be the instrument of working such a lively faith in Christ, such an ardent love of God, such a cordial benevolence for our fellow-creatures,* as cannot fail to exalt our desires, refine our affections, and dignify our tempers; such as will administer comfort under affliction, and impart an additional relish to prosperity; such as will teach us to order our conversation right amidst all the snares, all the labyrinths of time; and gradually train us up for the pure bliss and consummate enjoyments of eternity.

May this proof, madam, be written on your heart, written in bright and indelible characters, written by the finger of the living God! Then, I am assured, every attempt to stagger your belief, or withdraw your veneration from the Bible, will be like an attempt to shatter the rock in pieces with a bubble, or to pierce the adamant with a feather. This is not only the sincere wish, but, so long as religion and gratitude have any place in my breast, it will also be the earnest prayer of your Ladyship's much obliged, and most obedient humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

April 22, 1752.

P. S.—I have taken no notice of his lordship's animadversions relating to the genuineness of the gospel history, because this would be entering upon a new field, which I leave open and untouched for some more able defender of that invaluable depositum: not that I apprehend there is any thing very formidable in the attack; but I think it would be serviceable, as I am persuaded it is easy, to show the weakness and unreasonableness of those arguments which men of superior abilities are obliged to take up with, when they list themselves under the banner of scepticism or infidelity. It would also be a piece of public justice to inquire into the sincerity, probity, and consistency of those writers, who, in some places, lay a mighty stress upon the authority of the New Testament (page 94,) in others, endeavour to sap the very foundation of its credibility, (page 177.)

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ces profundo, pulchrior evenit," and expressive of its meaning.

* See Ezra x. 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27, where it might not be amiss to compare the temper of true believers, and the behaviour of an illustrious king, with the spirit that runs through his lordship's performance.

* This is what his lordship means, or ought to mean, when he speaks of the proper force of religion; that force which "subdues the mind, and awes the conscience by conviction," p. 182. And I am well assured, whatever he may surmise to the contrary, that this voucher to the real inspiration of the Scriptures, and divine original of Christianity, "is not wanting."

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PREVAILING CUSTOM OF VISITING ON SUNDAYS.

THE sentiments here offered against the prevailing custom of profaning the Sabbath, will probably be a satisfaction to every serious reader, and be productive of much good; especially as it is in every body's power to reform one, and as then his own conduct will be a tacit reproof to his acquaintance, who may probably, through his example, be induced to weigh these proceedings attentively, and no longer follow a multitude to do evil. It is certainly a matter of importance to inquire, whether Sunday visits are justifiable upon the principles of Scripture and of reason? as the conscientious observation of the Sabbath has of late years been so much disregarded, and as it is now become the principal day of visiting among persons of all ranks. The chief advocates for the continuance of such a practice should, methinks, defend it publicly, that their arguments may be properly examined, if (in their opinion) such a custom can admit of any rational defence. And those who are sufficiently convinced by what is here advanced, should resolve to discontinue Sunday visits themselves, and discountenance them in others as far as they can, consistent with decency and prudence. That the number of such well disposed persons may be daily increasing, is undoubtedly the hearty wish of every one who is sincerely desirous of promoting the glory of God, and the good of mankind.

Q. *Whether it be right for truly religious Persons to visit on Sundays?*

The persons here mentioned are the truly serious. As to many people, it matters not whether they are at home or abroad: God is not in all their thoughts; they have no concern for their eternal welfare; they therefore are, in every place, altogether and alike unprofitable.

But when we begin to discern the things that are excellent, when we sincerely desire to "obtain salvation, with eternal glory, by Jesus Christ," then, whether it be proper to fall into the prevailing custom of visiting on Sundays? is the question.

Were our companions religious, and was our conversation edifying, I should make no scruple to give my voice in the affirmative. Every parlour would then be a little sanctuary, would echo back the exhortations, and second the designs of the pulpit; and we might truly say, "It is good for us to be here."

But, alas! where do we find such company? when do we hear such conversation? The general conversation is all impertinence, not so much as seasoned with a spice of religion. "They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour," Psalm xii. 2. For which reason, I cannot think it safe or expedient, allowable or innocent, habitually to visit on Sundays.

It is inconsistent with the best example. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," says St. John. I was filled with the communications of the Holy Spirit, giving me clear views of Christ, bright hopes of glory, and shedding abroad the love of God in my heart. But is this compatible with the idle, trifling, insignificant chat, which engrosses our ordinary visits?

Objection I. Will it be said the apostle's was a peculiar case? I answer, It was a peculiarly happy case. And will a prudent Christian relinquish the prospect of such unspeakable happiness, for the most empty and delusive amusements? But, I believe, it was not peculiar to the apostle, rather the common privilege of all believers; written as a pattern for their practice, and to be the plan of their expectations.

It is contrary to the divine prohibition. The negative law relating to the Sabbath is, "not doing thy own ways, not finding thy own pleasure, not speaking thy own words," Isa. lviii. 13. "Not doing thy own ways;" abstaining from secular business, and all worldly pursuits. "Not finding thy own pleasure;" renouncing all those recreations and amusements which may tend to gratify thy taste, not to glorify thy almighty Lord. "Not speaking thy own words;" conversing on spiritual, sublime, and heavenly subjects; not on low, earthly, temporal matters, which, having no reference to the Creator's honour, are therefore called

"thy own." However some people may act, or whatever they may think, this is the express and unalterable law established by the God of heaven. Whether it be possible to mingle in modish company, and obey this law, let those judge who are acquainted with the world.

It breaks the divine command. The positive law relating to the Sabbath is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Remember, take particular notice of this injunction. It is a duty greatly to be regarded, and most conscientiously to be observed. Upon the due observance of this, our disposition and ability to observe the other precepts in good measure depends. "Keep it holy;" devote it to holy purposes; spend it in holy exercises; and not only an hour or two, not barely the intervals of private and public devotion, but the day, the Sabbath-day, the whole day. Neither will the whole day be too long, if we make conscience of discharging the several duties of religion, reading and meditation, prayer and praise, teaching our children, and instructing our domestics, examining our hearts, and taking heed to our ways. All these offices, if properly performed, will leave very little, rather no time for unnecessary elopements. And shall we huddle over all these important offices, or totally neglect some of them, only to indulge ourselves in the most unprofitable levities? at once doing an injury to our spiritual interests, and violating the divine precept.

I fear it will be a kind of "crucifying afresh our blessed Master." Heb. vi. 6. This expression we have often read, but think ourselves free from the guilt implied in it, and indeed from the very likelihood of contracting it. But let us be reminded, that "we crucify our Lord afresh," when we give others occasion to conclude, that we have very little esteem for him, or gratitude to him; consequently, that he has little or no excellency for which we or others should desire him. Now, what else can the world conclude, when they see us giving into the vanities of a licentious mode on that very day which is sacred to the commemoration of his resurrection? "Surely," might the children of this world say, "if these Christians had any real reverence for their Lord, they would show it on his own day. They would either be retired to contemplate and adore him, or else come abroad to exalt and glorify him. But they come abroad to be as frothy in their talk, and as trifling in their temper, as forgetful of their Saviour, and as regardless of his honour, as the most arrant worldling among us all." To afford a handle for such reflections, is to wound the Redeemer in the house of his friends.

It will "grieve the Holy Spirit." Eph. iv. 30. Christians believe that he is infinitely wise, all-gracious, and ever blessed; that he dwells in their hearts, and is the source of all their holiness and all their happiness. Therefore we pray daily in our Liturgy, "that the Holy Spirit may not be taken from us." On Sunday we commemorate the descent of this divine guest, and are, in a particular manner, to implore his presence, and cultivate his influences. But can this be done by neglecting his express prohibition, and breaking his positive command? by disregarding the examples which he has set before us, and dishonouring that Saviour whom he delights to magnify? Besides, dare any mortal presume to say in his heart, amidst a circle of our polite visitants, "I am now acting in a manner becoming my relation to the eternal Spirit. These sentiments and this discourse are suitable to his dignity, wisdom, and glory; a proper method of celebrating and honouring the day of his miraculous mission?"

Should any one ask, "What is meant by grieving the Holy Spirit?" It means offending his exalted Majesty, and causing him to act as men commonly act when they are grieved and displeased with any one; they withdraw from his company, and visit him no more. When Samuel was grieved for Saul's misbehaviour, it is written, "He came no more to see Saul." If the almighty Comforter be provoked to deal thus with our souls, alas! what a loss must we sustain! a loss unspeakable, irreparable, eternal!

So that if this practice were not sinful, it must be exceedingly detrimental, and that not in one only, but in various respects. Have we received spiritual good from the public ordinances? The admonition of Heaven is, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," Heb. ii. 1. By this practice we not only suffer them to slip, but open, as it were, a leak for their immediate discharge. Have we been under edifying impressions from our private exercises? The unerring direction is, "Quench not the Spirit." Stifle not the serious desires which he has awakened; allow them their full scope, till they are formed into gracious habits. By the practice under consideration, we pour water instead of oil upon the feeble flame: we extinguish what we should cherish. Is the heavenly seed sown in our breasts? These dissipating interviews are the ravenous birds which follow the seedsman, and devour the grain, so that nothing takes root. No fruit of faith, of joy, or love, is produced.

Let me only add, that, on a dying bed, the misimprovement of all our time will be most bitterly regretted. How much more

the misimprovement of those hours which God himself has hallowed, has set apart for the noblest purposes, and is wont to bless in an especial manner! "While others were seeking the pearl of great price, and gathering those treasures of wisdom and grace which endure to everlasting life, I, alas! was squandering away the precious opportunities in every vanity." To see the curtain of time dropping, to see a vast eternity opening before us, and to have such reflections haunting our conscience; this will cause misery not to be expressed, create anguish not to be conceived.

Object. II. Will it be said, in answer to these considerations, "That company, even trifling company, is a relaxation: We return to the instruction of our families, and to our evening devotion with fresh alacrity, being sick of these triflers?" A strange argument! It should rather be reversed. The objectors might truly say, Being sick of religion and its services, we want such triflers to afford us some relief. The sincere servant of Christ would find no recreation, but feel grief of heart in such interviews. It must be a real affliction to observe his divine Lord absolutely disregarded; disregarded on the day peculiarly devoted to his honour; every vanity now preferred before him, as Barabbas the robber was formerly. The true refreshment for our souls consists in having our faith increased, our hope elevated, and our views of heaven enlarged; in contemplating the infinite perfection and glory of our Redeemer, the infinite grandeur and fulness of his propitiation, and our complete, I might have said our infinite security from wrath and vengeance, by being interested in his merits.

Object. III. "Sunday is the best part of our time for this purpose; business is suspended, every body is ready dressed, all circumstances invite." Is it the best part of our time? Then let it be devoted to the best of Beings. Who is more worthy of our choicest thoughts, affections, hours, than that divinely compassionate Saviour, who offered himself, in the very prime of his life, a bleeding victim for our sins, that his sacrifice might have every recommending circumstance which could render it acceptable to God, and available for man

Object. IV. "It is the universal custom: To discontinue it would render us unfashionable." And cannot you bear to be a little unfashionable for his sake, who was despised and rejected, who humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross, for your sake? Is it the universal custom? Then custom is the idol which we are called to renounce. I must say of custom in this case, as Elijah said of Baal, If custom be God, follow its dictates; but if Jehovah be God, observe his precepts. It is written in the Scriptures, Rom. xii. 2. "Be not conformed to this world." To what does this prohibition relate? To such ungodly customs, no doubt. No battery of cannon was ever pointed more directly against a citadel to be demolished, then this text against such customs. In indifferent matters let the Christian avoid singularity; let him dress somewhat like his neighbours; let him make an appearance suitable to his station; but let him not "follow a multitude to profane the Sabbath, or to do any evil." Here religious persons should by all means be singular; should distinguish themselves by a becoming zeal for their God; should set an example, and shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; otherwise they may do, not themselves only, but others also, incredible harm.

Object. V. Some perhaps may start and reply, "If these things are so, to what a degree of sinful negligence is even the Christian world arrived?" With regard to the world called Christian, this is too true; and no measure of sorrow can be sufficient to bewail the deplorable degeneracy. Negligence, or rather obstinacy, in this capital instance, is a melancholy indication of no less disobedience in other respects.

Object. VI. "This will be irksome, will render our religion a burden." I hope no one that pretends to seriousness will offer to make this objection. The sinners in Zion made it; for which reason they are branded, and by the divine Spirit himself, with infamy that will never be blotted out: "O what a weariness is it! when will the Sabbath and its irksome solemnities be gone?" Mal. i. 13, and Amos viii. 5. This discovers a heart alienated from God, that has not tasted the good word of grace, and savours not the things which be of Christ. Otherwise such would be the language, "One day thus employed is better than a thousand." Psalm lxxxiv. 10. Is it tedious and burdensome to pass a single day in devout exercises? How then shall we pass, how shall we endure the ages of eternity! since we are assured that those happy beings who stand around the throne, clothed with white robes, serve their God day and night, for ever and ever, in his temple. In the regions of immortality they find a heaven, because there they have a never-ceasing and eternal communion with God; because there they have an uninterrupted and everlasting Sabbath.

A TREATISE

ON THE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF DAUGHTERS.

Prov. xxii. 6.—"Train up a child in the way *she* should go, and when *she* is old, *she* will not depart from it.

It has long been a prevailing report, that, among persons of education and distinction, true religion is very rare. This, I would hope, is an invidious rumour, rather than a true representation of the case. May it not be an artifice of the grand enemy, calculated to bring the best and noblest of causes into disrepute, as though politeness and piety were inconsistent, as though grace and good breeding were irreconcilable? Is then the faith of Christ quite fatal to refined manners, as the rod of Moses was to the counterfeit miracles of the magicians? No; it is rather like the influence of the sanctuary on the rod of Aaron; which, while it remained at a distance from the tabernacle, was a dry, sapless, and barren stick; but, when deposited before the ark, was quickened into vegetable life, was adorned with a milk-white bloom, and enriched with full-grown fruit; or, as the sacred historian expresses this surprising fact, "It brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." Numb. xvii. 8.

I find upon the list of saints the most renowned kings and victorious generals, the ablest politicians and the greatest philosophers; men that have bid the sun stand still, and prolong the departing day; have laid an embargo upon darkness, and protracted the shades of night; have commanded the ground to cleave asunder, and transmit their presumptuous foes to a strange and inevitable destruction; have divided the impetuous waves, and led their followers to safety and to conquest through the depths of the sea; men who have walked in the burning fiery furnace as under the shelter of an embowering arbour; and sat in the lion's den, amidst a herd of hungry monsters, with as much serenity and as much security as amidst a circle of bosom friends.

I myself have known various persons admired for their accomplished behaviour, and revered for their exalted station, who have thought it their highest honour to be servants of Jesus Christ. My excellent friend Camillus, at whose house I now reside, is one of the number. I cannot refrain from giving a portrait of Camillus, or rather, of a few of his most distinguishing features; for, to paint him in full proportion, as he daily appears in all the mild, the benign majesty of domestic authority, parental government, and Christian zeal; to do this would require a much abler hand than mine.

Camillus, not long ago, entertained in his house a young clergyman, who was always treated with a respect suitable to the dignity of his office and the piety of his behaviour. Having lately presented the worthy ecclesiastic to a living, and always requiring residence on the benefice, he is now destitute of a chaplain. Remembering, however, that all Christians are spiritual priests, he thinks it no dishonour to have an immediate and personal audience with the King of heaven, nor acting at all out of character to represent the wants of his household with his own mouth at the throne of grace.

Before supper is introduced, the evening incense ascends. This, rather than a later hour, is pitched upon, that the little congregation may join in the sacred service with a lively devotion. After a plentiful meal, when the limbs are weary, people, even though kneeling, and in the presence of God, are more inclined to nod than to pour out their souls; are very, very apt to mistake the cushion for a pillow. No servant is allowed to be absent, one only excepted, whose presence in the kitchen is absolutely necessary. Acquainted with their master's resolution, they are careful so to manage their affairs, and despatch their business, that no avoidable obstacle may intervene to detain them from the stated worship.

When all are assembled, without either tumultuous disorder in their approach, or a slovenly negligence in their apparel, a chapter is read. Camillus makes the choice. He imagines it is not so useful for his family, whose memories are weak, and their capacities scanty, to read the lesson for the day. He has, therefore, selected some of the most instructive and animating portions of Scripture; and judges it advisable

to peruse these again and again, rather than to go regularly through the whole inspired writings. The servants take it by turns to read, which improves them in the practice, and keeps them awake. If any of them discover a disposition to sleep, to him the office is sure to be assigned.

When the chapter is finished, Camillus singles out some one verse, of very weighty and edifying import, which, for the space of five or six minutes, he explains, applies, and affectionately urges upon their consciences. This done, with great seriousness and profound reverence, he offers up evening prayers. His prayers consist of short sentences, and the whole is performed in a little time. Every part is pronounced with that deliberate slowness, and solemn accent, which command attention and create awe. He makes a very perceivable pause at the close of each petition, that every one may have leisure to add, in silence, a hearty Amen; and to recollect the merits of that blessed Redeemer, which render every thanksgiving acceptable, and every supplication successful.

In the morning, before breakfast, the worship of the living God is renewed. At this juncture, Camillus omits the chapter, but requires one of his domestics to repeat the verse on which he enlarged the preceding night. None knows which shall be called to this task; therefore every one is obliged to be properly prepared. He throws the substance of his exhortation into a few searching and interesting questions, which he addresses to one of his children or servants; for in this respect no difference is made. All are equally enjoined to remember, all are equally accountable for what they hear. Sometimes he encourages those whose answers show that they have given diligent heed to his instructions. Sometimes he puts on an air of severity, mixed with tenderness, and reproves the notoriously negligent. Always he reinculcates the principal points, charging them to retain the doctrines in their memory, and revolve them in their thoughts, while they are pursuing their respective business. These doctrines are the seed of faith, the root of godliness. Unless these be lodged in the mind, and operate on the heart, he never expects to have his domestics commence true believers or real Christians; no more than the husbandman can reasonably expect a crop in harvest without sowing his field, or the florist promise himself a blow of tulips without planting his parterre.

I have given a glimpse of Camillus at the head of his family: let me now show my favourite in another attitude. Camillus is convinced that no trust is of superior or of equal importance to the tuitionary cultivation of an immortal soul. As Providence has blessed him with two fine daughters, their present and future happiness is the reigning object of his care. He has no interest so much at heart as to give them a truly refined education;—such as may render them an ornament and a blessing to society, while they pass the time of their sojourning here below; and may train them up for a state of everlasting bliss, when the world, and its transitory scenes, shall be no more.

Camillus never could persuade himself to admire the maxims of prudence said to be gathered from the extravagant rant of our tragedies; and less is his esteem for those modest dispositions which people pretend to imbibe from the luscious gallantries of comedy. For which reason, he has no impatient desire to secure for Miss Mitissa and Miss Serena a place in the front-box. However, as we are apt immoderately to covet what is absolutely forbidden, he has himself attended them once or twice to the theatrical entertainments and public diversions; thinking it much the safest method, that their curiosity should be gratified under his own inspection; and hoping to make them sensible how much they endanger their virtue, who too often frequent them; how shamefully they debase their affections, who are passionately fond of them; and what mere phantoms they follow, who seek for satisfaction in such delusory delights.

They learn to dance, in order to acquire a genteel air, and a graceful demeanour; not to shine at a ball, or win the worthless admiration of fops. He is content to have them unacquainted with the wild and romantic fables of heathen poetry; nor is under any painful apprehensions of damping the sprightliness of their temper, though they have no taste for the chimerical adventures of our romances, and are strangers to the loose intrigues of our novels, being fully persuaded that there is as much sound sense as smartness of thought in that celebrated saying,

> Retire and read your Bible, to be gay,
> There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace!
> YOUNG.

He has introduced them to the knowledge of history, and its instructive facts. They have a tolerable idea of the four universal monarchies, so eminent for their great events, and so circumstantially foretold in Scripture. They have been led through the most remarkable transactions of our own country, and are pretty well acquainted with the present state of Europe. They have, all along, been taught to observe the wonderful revolutions of empires, and the adorable procedure of Providence, that they may discern how "the fashion of this world passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 31.; and how "happy are the people," how happy the persons,

"who have the Lord for their God." They have been taught to observe the honourable success that has usually attended the practice of integrity, guided by Prudence; together with the scandal and ruin which have always pursued Folly in her senseless rambles, and dogged Vice to her horrid haunts; that they may see the rocks on which some have split, and avoid the destructive track; see the road which has conducted others to the haven of happiness, and steer the same auspicious course.

They have been initiated in geography, and understand the several divisions of the globe, the extent of its principal kingdoms, and the manners of their various inhabitants. They will tell you the peculiar commodities which each climate produces; whence comes the tea that furnishes their breakfast, and whence the sugar that renders it palatable; what mountains supply them with wines, and what islands send them their spices; in what groves the silk worms spin the materials for their clothes; and what mines* supply them with the diamonds that sparkle in their ear-rings. A screen, covered with a set of coloured maps, and a custom of referring from the public papers to those beautiful draughts, has rendered the acquisition of this knowledge a diversion rather than a task, has enticed them into a valuable branch of science, under the inviting disguise of amusement. This serves to enlarge their apprehensions of things, gives them magnificent thoughts of the great Creator, and may help to suppress that silly self-admiration which prompts so many pretty idols to fancy themselves the only considerable creatures under heaven.

They spell to perfection, and have obtained this art by a sort of play, rather than by laborious application. Whenever they asked any little gratification, it has been their papa's custom to make them spell the word; which if they performed aright, they seldom failed to succeed in their request. They are mistresses of the needle; and the youngest, whose genius inclines that way, is expert in using the pencil. Music is their recreation, not their business. The eldest, to a skilful singer, adds a melodious and well-regulated voice. She often entertains me with singing an anthem on her harpsichord. Entertains, did I say? she really edifies me. These truly excellent performances exalt the desires, and compose the affections. They inspire such a serenity of delight, as leaves neither a sting in the conscience, nor a stain on the imagination. Methinks they bring us a little antepast of heaven, and tune our souls for its harmonious joys.

Thoroughly versed in the most practical parts of arithmetic, they have each their week wherein to be intrusted with the management of a sum of money. This they disburse as circumstances require, for the smaller necessaries of the family. Of this they keep an exact account, and make a regular entry of each particular in their day-book. Not long ago a tenant of inferior rank came to Camillus with his rent. Instead of receiving it himself, he referred him to Miss Serena. You would have been delighted to observe the behaviour of our little landlady on this occasion, the engaging condescension with which she addressed the honest rustic, the tender goodnature with which she inquired after my dame and the family at home, the ready dexterity with which she wrote and subscribed a proper receipt; and, above all, her amiable generosity in returning half-a-crown, to buy a copy-book for his eldest son, "who," he said, "was just going into joining-hand; but, he feared, would never come to spell or write half so well as her ladyship."

Though Camillus is careful to ground them betimes in the rules of economy, he is equally careful to cultivate a spirit of discreet beneficence. A few days ago, when my friend and his lady were abroad, Miss Mitissa was informed of a poor woman in the parish just brought to bed, after a long and hard labour; who, being unhappily married to a sot of a fellow, was, at a time when the choicest comforts are scarcely sufficient, destitute of the meanest conveniences. Upon hearing the calamitous case, she immediately despatched a servant with a crown from her weekly stock; part to buy for the afflicted creature some present accommodations, and part to defray the expenses at such a juncture unavoidable; but gave a strict charge that the whole should be employed for the relief of the distressed mother and her helpless infant, none of it fingered or enjoyed by the worthless drone her husband. When Camillus returned, he was so pleased with this seasonable and well-judged charity, that, besides his commendation and caresses, he farther rewarded our considerate matron-like benefactress, by making her a present of Clarissa.* For he always contrives to make what tends to their improvement the matter of their reward. If they have committed a fault, they are forbid the privilege of using their maps. If they have behaved in a becoming manner, their recompense is, not a piece of money, or a paper of sweetmeats, but some new instruction on the globe, some new lesson on the harpsichord, which may at once delight and improve them.

* The best of the diamond mines are in the kingdom of Golconda, near to Madras.

* A book admirably calculated to instruct and entertain, wrote by the celebrated Mr. Richardson, in eight volumes.

To prevent a haughty carriage, and to worm out all inordinate self-love, he teaches them to consider their neighbours as members of the same universal family, and children of the same almighty Father. However poor in their circumstances, or mean in their aspect, they are the objects of God's infinitely tender regards; of that God, who has given his own Son to suffer death for their pardon, and has prepared a heaven of endless bliss for their final reception. For which reason they should despise none, but honour all; should be as ready to do them good, as the hand is ready to sooth the eye when it smarts, or ease the head when it aches. One afternoon, when he was going to treat them with an orange, he bid each of them bring a fine toy, lately received for a present. It was made in the shape of a knife, the handle of ivory, and inlaid with the gayest colours; the blade of glass, most dazzlingly bright, but without an edge. Cut the orange in two, said their papa. When they both tried with their pretty knives, and, to their no small mortification, both failed, he furnished them with another of more ordinary appearance, but tolerably sharp. With this they easily pierced the rind, and came at the delicious juice. "Who now," said Camillus, "would not prefer one such serviceable though plain utensil, to a hundred of those glittering but worthless trifles? And you, my dear children, if you have no other recommendations than a showy person and the trappings of dress, you will be as contemptible in your generation as that insignificant bauble. But if it is the desire of your hearts, and the endeavour of your lives, to be extensively useful, you will gain, and, what is better, you will deserve, respect; your names will be precious, and your memories blessed."

With equal watchfulness he discountenances all those acts of petulant barbarity which children are so apt to exercise on the reptile creation. He will allow no court of inquisition to be erected within his house; no, not upon the most despicable, or even the noxious animals. The very nuisances that are endued with life, he thinks should be despatched, not with a lingering butchery, but with a merciful expedition. To rend in pieces a poor fly, and feast their eyes with the mangled limbs, shivering and convulsed in the pangs of death; to impale a wretched insect on the needle or the bodkin; and, what is still more shocking, to take pleasure in hearing its passionate moan, and seeing its agonizing struggles; such practices he absolutely forbids, as insufferable violations of nature's law, such as tend to extinguish the soft emotions of pity, and inure the mind to a habit of inhumanity. He often informs his lovely pupils, that every living creature is sensible of pain, that none can be abused in this cruel manner without suffering very exquisite misery. To turn their torments into pastime, and make sport with their anguish, is a rigour more than tyrannical, worse than brutal; is the very reverse of that benign Providence, whose "tender mercies are over all his works."

He proposes to give them a taste of natural philosophy, and to accommodate them with the best microscopes; that the use of these instruments, and a spice of that knowledge, may inspire them with an early admiration of nature's works, and with the deepest veneration of nature's almighty Author. Camillus has no design to finish a couple of female philosophers, or to divert their attention from those domestic arts which are the truest accomplishments of the sex;* yet neither would he have his daughters debarred from that rational and exalted delight, which is to be found in contemplating the curiosities of the great Creator's cabinet. Why may they not, without departing from their own, or encroaching on the masculine character, why may they not be acquainted with the accurately nice structure of an animal, or with the process and effects of vegetation? Why may they not learn the admirable operations of the air, or the wonderful properties of the water? have some general notion of the immense magnitudes, the prodigious distances, and the still more amazing revolutions of the heavenly orbs? He apprehends it very practicable to conduct an entertainment with dignity, and order a family with propriety, even while they retain some tolerable idea of those magnificent laws which regulate the system of the universe.

The microscope, whenever they are inclined to amuse themselves, will show them a profusion of splendid ornaments in some of the most common and contemptible objects. It will show them gold and embroidery, diamonds and pearl, azure, green, and vermillion, where unassisted eyes behold nothing but provocatives of their abhorrence. This instrument will show them the brightest varnish, and the most curious carving, even in the minutest scraps of existence. Far more surprising than the magic feats of the most dexterous juggler, it will treat their sight, not with delusive, but with real wonders. A huge elephant shall stalk where a puny mite was wont to crawl. Blood shall bound from the beating heart, and eyes sparkle with a lively lustre—limbs shall play the most sprightly motions, or stand composed in the most graceful attitudes—where nothing ordinarily appeared, but a confused speck of animated matter. A

* ——For nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good.—*Milton.*

tincture of philosophy will be the cosmetic of nature, will render all her scenes lovely, and all her apartments a theatre of diversion; diversions infinitely superior to those dangerous delights which are so apt to inveigle the affections, and debauch the minds of young people. When philosophy lends her optics, an unclouded morning, beautiful with the rising sun—a clear night, brilliant with innumerable stars, will be a more pleasing spectacle than the gaudiest illuminations of the assembly-room. The melody of birds, and the murmur of fountains, the humming insect, and the sighing gale, will be a higher gratification than the finest airs of an opera. A field covered with corn, or a meadow besprinkled with daisies, a marsh planted with osiers, or a mountain shaded with oaks, will yield a far more agreeable prospect than the most pompous scenes that decorate the stage. Should clouds overcast the heavens, or winter disrobe the flowers, an inquiry into the causes of these grand vicissitudes will more than compensate the transitory loss. A discovery of the divine wisdom and divine goodness, in these seemingly disastrous changes, will impart gaiety to the most gloomy sky, and make the most unornamented seasons smile.

It is for want of such truly elegant and satisfactory amusements, that so many ladies of the first distinction and finest genius have no proper employ for their delicate capacities, but lose their happiness in flights of caprice or fits of the vapour; lose their time in the most insipid chat, or the most whimsical vagaries; while thought is a burden, and reflection is a drudgery, solitude fills them with horror, and a serious dis course makes them melancholy.

Above all, Camillus is most earnestly desirous to have his tender charge grounded in the principles, and actuated with the spirit of Christianity. No scheme, he is thoroughly persuaded, was ever so wisely calculated to sweeten their tempers, to exalt their affections, and form them to felicity either in this world or another. It is therefore his daily endeavour, by the most easy and endearing methods of instruction, to fill their minds with the knowledge of those heavenly doctrines, and win their hearts to the love of that invaluable book in which they are delineated. He longs to have a sense of God Almighty's goodness impressed on their souls. From this source, under the influences of the sanctifying Spirit, he would derive all the graces and all the duties of godliness. With this view he speaks of the divine Majesty not only as supereminently great, but as most transcendently possessed of every delightful, every charming excellence. He represents all the comforts they enjoy, and every blessing they receive, as the gifts of his bountiful hand, and as an earnest of unspeakably richer favours. He often, often reminds them, that whatever their heavenly Father commands, forbids, inflicts, proceeds from his overflowing kindness, and is intended for their eternal good, if, by these expedients, he may awaken in their minds an habitual gratitude to their everlasting Benefactor. The actings of which noble principle are not only fruitful in every good work, but productive of the truest satisfaction; somewhat like the fragrant steams of consecrated incense, which, while they honoured the great object of worship, regaled with their pleasing perfumes the devout worshipper.

Nothing is more displeasing to Camillus than the fond flatteries which their injudicious admirers bestow on their shape and their complexion, the gracefulness of their carriage, and the vivacity of their wit. He would fain make them sensible, that these embellishments are of the lowest value and most fading nature; that, if they render their possessors vain and self-conceited, they are far greater blemishes than a humph on the back, a wen on the neck, or stuttering in the speech. He would have them thoroughly convinced, that notwithstanding all their silks, diamonds, and other marks of their superior circumstances, they are ignorant, guilty, impotent creatures; blind to truths of the last importance, deserving the vengeance of eternal fire, and unable of themselves to think a good thought; that from such convictions they may perceive their absolute need of a Saviour, a Saviour in all his offices; as a Prophet to teach them heavenly wisdom; as a Priest to atone for all their many, many sins; as a King to subdue their iniquities, write his laws in their hearts, and make them, in all their conversation, holy.

In short, the point he chiefly labours is, to work in their hearts a deep, an abiding sense, that God is their supreme, their only good; that the blessed Jesus is the rock of their hopes, and the fountain of their salvation; that all their dependence for acquiring the beauties of holiness, and tasting the joys of the sublimest virtue, is to be placed on the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Amidst all these efforts of his own, he never forgets, never fails to plead that precious promise of the unchangeable Jehovah, "I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall grow up," in knowledge and in grace, "as willows by the water-courses." Isaiah xliv. 3, 4.

A lady of brilliant parts, but no very extraordinary piety, told Camillus, that he would spoil the pretty dears, would extinguish that decent pride, and fondness for pleasure, which are shining qualifications in an accomplished young lady, which give her

an elevation of sentiment, and a delicacy of taste greatly superior to the ignoble vulgar. To whom he replied, " Far from extirpating their passions, I only attempt to turn them into a right channel, and direct them to the worthiest objects. Willing I am that they should have a decent ambition, an ambition not to catch the giddy coxcomb's eye, or be the hackneyed toast of rakes, but to please their parents, to make a husband happy, and to promote the glory of God. They may entertain a fondness for pleasure, but such pleasure as will ennoble their souls, afford them substantial satisfaction, and prepare them for the fruition of immortal bliss. Let them be covetous also, if you please, madam, but covetous of redeeming their time, and of gaining intellectual improvement; covetous of those riches which no moth can corrupt, nor thief steal—which neither time nor death destroy."

In all these instances of parental solicitude, his beloved Amelia takes her constant, her willing share; contributes her advice in every plan that is concerted, and her hearty concurrence in every expedient that is executed; every expedient for polishing the human jewel,* and making their manners as faultless as their forms. May the God of infinite goodness, the sacred source of all perfection, prosper their endeavours! that, as the young ladies are adorned in their persons with native beauty, they may be enriched in their understandings with refined knowledge, and dignified in their souls with the spirit of the blessed Jesus. Then, surely, more amiable objects the eye of man cannot behold; more desirable partners the heart of man cannot wish.

PREFACE

TO

BURNHAM'S PIOUS MEMORIALS.

Religion, or an affectionate and firm connexion of the soul with God, is the highest improvement of the human mind, and the brightest ornament of the rational nature. It is the most indissoluble bond of civil society, and the only foundation of happiness to every individual person.

The gospel, by which we have access to the King immortal, invisible, through the merits of Jesus Christ; by which we are conformed to his amiable and holy image, through the operations of the blessed Spirit —the gospel is, of all other religions, most exquisitely adapted to compass those desirable ends.

This point hath often been demonstrated with all the strength of argument, and illustrated by every decoration of eloquence. In the following sheets we are presented with a new proof of the same important truth, deduced from a topic level to every capacity, and from a scene in which all must, sooner or later, be personally concerned.

Nothing strikes the mind of a wise and attentive observer so forcibly as fact; nothing hath so strong a tendency to convince the judgment, and influence the conduct. In the collection before us we have a series of indubitable and interesting facts. Here are some of the most renowned, many of the most worthy persons, after a life of exemplary devotion and exalted virtue, bearing their dying testimony to the excellency of the gospel and the pleasures of religion—persons from different countries, of different denominations, and flourishing in distant periods of time—persons in the most awful moments of their existence, when hypocrisy drops the mask, when worldly motives lose their weight, and there remains no more temptation to deceive—all these, uniting in the same sentiments, all reposing their confidence on the same great Mediator, all proclaiming the dignity, efficacy, and glory of the evangelical system, in a manner superior to language; proclaiming it by a peace of conscience which the whole world cannot give, and a joy of heart which transcends all description.

Such a collection of memoirs is, I think, a valuable addition to the evidences for Christianity, a considerable aid to the interests of piety, and worthy both of frequent perusal and universal acceptance.

A work of this nature hath often appeared to me among the *desiderata* of the closet. I have sometimes wondered that no ingenious pen hath attempted it; and always thought that, when duly executed, it would bid fair for extensive usefulness. But I am glad to find myself anticipated in this opi-

* Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
And pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind.
Thomson

nion by a writer,* whose words I shall beg leave to transcribe, and whose judgment cannot be questioned: "There is nothing in history which is so improving to the reader, as those accounts which we meet with of the deaths of eminent persons, and of their behaviour in that dreadful season," Spect. No. 289. Here is a large field, in which the reader may not barely glean a few ears, but gather his sheaves, or reap a harvest of that sacred improvement which our admired critic mentions. Here is a multitude of those most distinguished and animating parts of history, traced through various ages of the church; from the heroic martyrdom of venerable Ignatius, to the peaceful exit of the pious and ingenious Dr. Watts.

These histories are not only unquestionably true, but of the most unexceptionable kind. They are delivered in the very words of the author from whose writings they are extracted; so that we may depend upon a strict exactness in point of authenticity, and shall be entertained with an agreeable diversity in reference to style. None of these accounts personate the romantic insensibility of the stoic, or the brutal hardiness of the sceptic: None of them exhibit the indecent levity of a Petronius, or the pitiable fluctuation of a Socrates: But all display true fortitude, rational tranquillity, and well-grounded hope; built upon the divine promises, supported by the divine Spirit, rendered steadfast and immoveable by a divine propitiation and righteousness.

Here the minister of the gospel may furnish himself with noble materials to enrich and enliven his compositions for the pulpit. And I dare venture to foretell, that no part of his public addresses will be heard with a closer attention, or collected with a sweeter relish, than his pertinent application of the last sayings of truly religious men.

Here the strong Christian may view, not without a glow of gratitude, perhaps with a rapture of delight, the inviolable faithfulness of his divine Master, who never leaves nor forsakes his servants; no, not at that trying season which may most emphatically be styled the time of need. He may view the never-failing tenderness and grace of that good Spirit, who opens the rich promises of Scripture, applies the precious atonement of a Saviour, and makes the soldier of Jesus always to triumph.

Here the feeble trembling believer may see imperfect creatures, men of like passions and of like infirmities with himself, looking death in the face with intrepidity. He may hear them addressing that ghastly monarch in the triumphant language of the apostle, "O death, where is thy sting!" To hear and see this, will be a more effectual expedient to establish his heart, more sovereign to deliver him from the bondage of fear, than the most spirited exhortations, or the most sage directions.

Should the unbeliever be so impartial as to mark these disciples of Jesus, and consider the end of their conversation, he must surely acknowledge both the divine origin and unequalled energy of the glorious gospel; since it administers such strong consolation amidst the pains of a mortal distemper, and the ruins of dissolving nature. Vain, inexpressibly vain and insignificant, must every other scheme of salvation appear, which is destitute of an all-sufficient Redeemer, and void of an almighty Comforter.

Should the libertine, in a serious interval, approach these death-beds of the just, he may behold the genuine fruits of faith unfeigned, and the blessed consequences of vital holiness. And where can he behold

> A scene, so strong to strike, so sweet to charm,
> So great to raise, so heavenly to inspire,
> So solid to support fair Virtue's throne?—*Young.*

Or how can he behold all this without feeling some pangs of salutary regret; without entering into himself, and forming some useful reflections? "Will my vicious gratifications create such sweet composure, such humble joy, such heavenly hope, at the last awful hour? Alas! will they not rather sharpen the fatal arrow, add poison to the point, and anguish, inconceivable anguish to the wound?"

There may be, and there doubtless is, a variety of treatises, written upon a variety of subjects, in which many people are no way interested. But the subject of this book appertains to all. It is appointed, and by an irrevocable decree, that all must die. There is no discharge in this warfare, no, not for the votaries of gaiety and indolence. This consideration, methinks, should incline even the gay and indolent to observe what is transacted in the antichamber to those apartments where they themselves must shortly lodge. And would they from the ensuing narratives make their observations, they might be led to entertain more favourable apprehensions of our holy religion. They will find, that far from imbittering life, it sweetens death. Instead of damping the enjoyments of health, it softens the bed of sickness, and soothes even the agonies of dissolution. Why then should they be afraid of pure and undefiled religion; why stand aloof, why withdraw themselves from its benign invitations? Can that throw a gloom upon the delectable hills, which is able to gild and gladden the valley of darkness?

Some, perhaps, may be prompted by

* Mr. Addison.

curiosity to cast an eye upon this solemn and august spectacle—a multitude of rational beings, arrived on the very borders of the invisible state, bidding a final adieu to time, and just launching out into the abysses of eternity. And blessed be the Divine goodness, the spectacle is as delightful as it is august. Their God, their God sustains them in the greatest extremity. They overcome the last enemy through the blood of the Lamb. Their discourses savour of heaven; their hopes are full of immortality. And is not this a privilege devoutly to be wished?* Who that has the least seriousness, or feels any concern for his true happiness, can forbear crying out, on such an occasion, "Let me die the death of the righteous?" Numb. xxiii. 10.

Life, take thy chance: But oh! for such an end!
Young.

Upon the whole, I would persuade myself, that "The Pious Memorials" may be a word in season, a welcome and well adapted address, to readers of every character; may be a means, in the hand of Providence, to awaken the thoughtless, and fix their attention upon important and everlasting things; may tend to reclaim the dissolute from ruinous practices, and engage them in the pursuit of those substantial acquisitions, which "will bring them peace at the last;" may animate the Christian to fresh zeal and renewed activity in the service of our adorable Immanuel: That each, while he is running his race, may be inspirited to say, with the holy apostle, "To me to live is Christ;" and each, when he hath finished his course, may be emboldened to add, "To me to die is gain."

With this aim the narratives were collected; with this aim they are published. May the Lord of all power and might make them effectual to accomplish what is so laudably designed! Then it will not be deemed a piece of officious impertinence or presuming boldness for me to recommend them: it will rather be looked upon as an act of friendship to the deceased author and his distressed widow; as an effort of true, of Christian benevolence to my fellow-creatures; and a proper expression of my gratitude to the public for that remarkable candour and indulgence shewn to their obliged, and very humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favell, July 18, 1753.

A LETTER TO MR. JOHN TRAILL,

Late Bookseller in Edinburgh, now Minister of a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Chelsea, near London.

SIR—I RECEIVED your very valuable, and no less acceptable present† some weeks ago. I should have acknowledged the favour sooner, but I chose to stay till I had tasted the dish you set before me; and indeed I find it to be savoury meat, the true manna, food for the soul.

Your worthy relative‡ was a workman that need not be ashamed. He knew how clearly to state, and solidly to establish the faith of God's elect, and the doctrine according to godliness. Oh that my heart, and the heart of every reader, may be opened by the eternal Spirit to receive the precious truths!

The letter at the end of the first volume§ is a judicious performance. It rightly divides the word of truth, and lays the line with a masterly hand, between the presumptuous legalist and the licentious Antinomian. I am particularly pleased with the honourable testimony borne to those two excellent books, Dr. Owen's Treatise on Justification, and Mr. Marshall's Gospel Mystery of Sanctification;* books fit to be recommended by so good a judge.

* Even a Pagan writer could not but discern the excellency of such a blessing, and made it one of the principal ingredients which constitute happiness.

Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.
Virg. Georg. lib. ii.

† Mr. Traill had sent Mr. Hervey a copy of his new edition of the first two volumes of the works of the Rev. Mr. Robert Traill, late minister in London: the third volume was not republished till after Mr. Hervey's death.

‡ Mr. Robert Traill was uncle to Mr. John Traill.

§ This letter is entitled, "A Vindication of the Protestant Doctrine concerning Justification, and of its Preachers and Professors, from the unjust charge of Antinomianism."

* "I think," says Mr Traill, "that Dr. Owen's excellent book of Justification, and Mr. Marshall's book of the Mystery of Sanctification by faith in Jesus Christ, are such vindications and confirmations of the Protestant doctrine, against which I fear no effectual opposition. Mr. Marshall was a holy and retired person, and is only known to the most of us by his book lately published. The book is a deep, practical, well joined discourse, and requires a more than ordinary attention in reading of it with profit. And if it be singly used, I look upon it as one of the most useful books the world hath seen for many years. Its excellence is, that it leads the serious reader directly to Jesus Christ, and cuts the sinews, and overturns the foundation of the new divinity, by the same argument of gospel holiness by which many attempt to overturn the old. And as it hath already had the seal of high approbation by many judicious ministers and Christians that have read it, so I fear not but it will stand firm as a rock against all opposition, and will prove good seed, and food, and light to many hereafter."

If the Lord pleases to give Theron and Aspasio any acceptance in Scotland, I shall be sincerely glad; but if he vouchsafes to make them not only welcome, but useful visitants, I shall exceedingly rejoice. In case you should think them calculated to promote the honour, and further the gospel of Jesus Christ, I hope you will favour them with your recommendation, and accompany them with your prayers; which will be a fresh instance of kindness to, Sir, your obliged friend, and obedient servant.

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston-Favell, July 8, 1755.

PROMISES

TO BE PASTED AT THE BEGINNING OF A BIBLE.

"God hath given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet. i. 4.

DIVINE TEACHING.

Isa. xxix. 18. The eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity.

Jer. xxxi. 34. They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.

John xiv. 26. The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things.

Isa. lviii. 11. The Lord shall guide thee continually.

PARDON.

Isa. xliii. 25. I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.

Isa. i. 18. Sins as scarlet, shall be as white as snow.

1 Pet. ii. 24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.

1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.

JUSTIFICATION.

Rom. viii. 33, 34. It is God that justifieth.

Rom. iii. 21—24. Justified freely by his grace.

Isa. xlv. 24, 25. In the Lord have I righteousness.

2 Cor. v. 21. We are made the righteousness of God in him.

SANCTIFICATION.

Ezek. xi. 19, 20. I will put a new spirit within you.

Tit. ii. 14. Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.

Heb. viii. 10—12. I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.

1 Thess. v. 23. The God of peace sanctify your whole spirit, and soul, and body.

TO BE PASTED AT THE END OF A BIBLE.

TEMPORAL BLESSINGS.

1 Tim. iv. 8. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is.

Psalm xxxvii. 3. Verily thou shalt be fed.

Matth. vi. 33. Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things shall be added.

1 Tim. vi. 17. Who giveth us all things richly to enjoy.

TEMPTATION.

1 Cor. x. 13. God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.

2 Cor. xii. 9. My grace is sufficient for thee.

Rom. vi. 14. Sin shall not have dominion over you.

Luke xxii. 32. I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.

AFFLICTION.

Job v. 17. Happy is the man whom God correcteth.

Lam. iii. 32. Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion.

Psalm l. 15. Call upon me in trouble; I will deliver thee.

Rev. iii. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

DEATH.

1 Cor. xv. 55—57. God giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Cor. v. 1. If our earthly house is dissolved, we have a building of God.

John iii. 16. Whosoever believeth shall have everlasting life.

Psalm xxiii. 4. Though I pass through death, I will fear no evil.

CONCLUSION.

"God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." Heb. vi. 17.

A LETTER TO RICHARD NASH, Esq.

*Late Master of the Ceremonies at Bath.**

Isa. lv. 6.—"Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near."

Sir,—This comes from your sincere friend, and one that has your best interest deeply at heart; it comes on a design altogether important, and of no less consequence than your everlasting happiness, so that it may justly challenge your careful regard. It is not to upbraid or reproach, much less to triumph and insult over your misconduct; no, it is pure benevolence, it is disinterested good-will prompts me to write; so that I hope I will not raise your resentment. However, be the issue what it will, I cannot bear to see you walk in the paths that lead to death, without warning you of your danger, without sounding in your ears the awful admonition, "Return and live; for why will you die?" I beg of you to consider whether you do not, in some measure, resemble those accursed children of Eli; whom, though they were famous in their generation, and men of renown, yet vengeance suffered not to live. For my part, I may safely use the expostulation of the old priest; "why do you such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people: nay, my brother, for it is no good report I hear,—you make the lord's people to transgress." I have long observed and pitied you; and a most melancholy spectacle I lately beheld, made me resolve to caution you, lest you also come into the same condemnation.

I was, not long since, called to visit a poor gentleman, erewhile of the most robust body and gayest temper I ever knew; but when I visited him, oh! how was the glory departed from him! I found him no more that sprightly and vivacious son of joy which he used to be, but languishing, pining away, and withering under the chastising hand of God! his limbs feeble and trembling, his countenance forlorn and ghastly, and the little breath he had left sobbed out in sorrowful sighs! his body hastening apace to the dust, to lodge in the silent grave, the land of darkness and desolation; his soul just going to God who gave it, preparing itself to wing away to its long home, to enter upon an unchangeable and eternal state. When I was come up into his chamber, and had seated myself on his bed, he first cast a most wishful look upon me, and then began, as well as he was able, to speak. "O that I had been wise, that I had known this; that I had considered my latter end! Ah! Mr. Hervey, death is knocking at my doors; in a few hours more I shall draw my last gasp, and then judgment, the tremendous judgment! How shall I appear, unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing and Omnipotent God! how shall I endure the day of his coming!" When I mentioned, among many other things, that strict holiness which he had formerly so lightly esteemed, he replied with a hasty eagerness, "Oh! that holiness is the only thing I now long for: I have not words to tell you how highly I value it. I would gladly part with all my estate, large as it is, or a world, to obtain it. Now my benighted eyes are enlightened, I clearly discern the things that are excellent. What is there in the place whither I am going but God? or what is there to be desired on earth but religion?" But if this God should restore you to health, said I, think you that you would alter your former course? "I call heaven and earth to witness," said he, "I would labour for holiness as I shall soon labour for life. As for riches and pleasures, and the applauses of men, I count them as dross and dung; no more to my happiness than the feathers that lie on the floor. Oh! if the righteous Judge would try me once more; if he would but reprieve and spare me a little longer, in what a spirit would I spend the remainder of my days! I would know no other business, aim at no other end, than perfecting myself in holiness: whatever contributed to that, every means of grace, every opportunity of spiritual improvement, should be dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver. But, alas! why do I amuse myself with fond imaginations? The best resolutions are now insignificant, because they are too late: the day in which I should have worked is over and gone; and I see a sad horrible night

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* Mr. Hervey is supposed to have written this letter when he was at Bath in the year 1743. It was found among Mr. Nash's papers after his death, and an extract of it was inserted in an account of his death, published several years ago. For ought that appears, this man of pleasure despised the awful warning given by the benevolent Mr. Hervey and died as he had lived.

approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Heretofore, (woe is me!) when God called, I refused; when he invited, I was one of them that made excuse: Now, therefore, I receive the reward of my deeds; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me; I smart, I am in sore anguish already, and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows! It doth not yet appear what I shall be; but sure I shall be ruined, undone, and destroyed with an everlasting destruction!"

This sad scene I saw with my eyes; these words, and many more equally affecting, I heard with my ears; and soon after attended the unhappy gentleman to his tomb. The poor breathless skeleton spoke in such an accent, and with so much earnestness, that I could not easily forget him or his words; and as I was musing upon this sorrowful subject, I remembered Mr. Nash;—I remembered you, sir, for I discerned too near an agreement and correspondence between yourself and the deceased. They are alike, said I, in their ways, and what shall hinder them from being alike in their end? The course of their actions was equally full of sin and folly, and why should not the period of them be equally full of horror and distress? I am grievously afraid for the survivor, lest as he lives the life, so he should die the death of this wretched man, and his latter end should be like his.

For this cause, therefore, I take my pen, to advise, to admonish, nay, to request of you to repent while you have opportunity, if happily you may find grace and forgiveness. Yet a moment, and you may die; yet a little while, and you must die: And will you go down with infamy and despair to the grave, rather than depart in peace, and with hopes full of immortality?

But I must tell you plainly, sir, with the utmost freedom, that your present behaviour is not the way to reconcile yourself to God; you are so far from making atonement to offended justice, that you are aggravating the former account, and heaping up an increase of wrath against the day of wrath. For what say the Scriptures—those books which, at the consummation of all things, the Ancient of Days shall open, and judge you by every jot and tittle therein—what say these sacred volumes? Why, they testify and declare to every soul of man, "That whosoever liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth;" so that, so long as you roll on in a continued circle of sensual delights and vain entertainments, you are dead to all the purposes of piety and virtue; you are as odious to God as a corrupt carcass that lies putrefying in the churchyard; you are as far from doing your duty, or working out your salvation, or restoring yourself to the divine favour, as a heap of dry bones nailed up in a coffin is from vigour and activity. Think, sir, I conjure you, think upon this, if you have any inclination to escape the fire that never will be quenched. Would you be rescued from the fury and fierce anger of Almighty God? would you be delivered from weeping, and wailing, and incessant gnashing of teeth? Sure you would! Then I exhort you as a friend, I beseech you as a brother, I charge you as a messenger from the great God, in his own most solemn words, "Cast away from you your transgressions; make you a new heart, and a new spirit, so iniquity shall not be your ruin."

Perhaps you may be disposed to contemn this and its serious purport, or to recommend it to your companions as a fit subject for raillery; but let me tell you beforehand, that for this, as well as for other things, God will bring you into judgment. He sees me now write, he will observe you while you read; he notes down my words in his book, he will note down your consequent procedure; so that not upon me, but upon your own self, will the neglecting or despising of my sayings turn. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

Be not concerned, sir, to know my name; it is enough that you will know this hereafter. Tarry but a little, till the Lord, even the most mighty God, shall call the heaven from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people; and then you will see me face to face: there shall I be ready, at the dreadful tribunal, to joy and rejoice with you, if you regard my admonitions, and live; or to be——what God prevent, by inclining your heart to receive this friendly admonition.

RULES AND ORDERS

OF THE

ASSEMBLY FOR CHRISTIAN IMPROVEMENT.*

PSALM lxxxix. 7.—"God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints, and to be had in reverence by all that are round about him."

I. THAT this assembly consist of no more than ten or twelve at the utmost, lest an increased number should produce confusion or dissensions; and that each member, in order to prevent any sinister reflections from the inconsiderate or vicious, be cautious of mentioning to any others that he belongs to such† an assembly. And that each member, before he sets out, and on his return, do use the forms of prayer which are specified in the minutes, and particularly adapted to this occasion.

II. That no one shall be admitted a member who has not been proposed by the chairman at the preceding assembly, or who shall be disapproved of by any two members on a ballot, which shall always be taken on such occasions, how unanimous soever the members may seem to be beforehand.

III. That the members shall be registered alphabetically in the minutes of the assembly's proceedings, and that the chairman of the day be appointed regularly according to that list; so that no misunderstanding may arise about precedence; and that a treasurer be elected annually, the first Tuesday in January.

IV. That the assembly meet on the first Tuesday in every month, during the summer season, punctually at twelve o'clock, and on the moonlight Tuesday, during the winter season, exactly at ten, at such inn as shall from time to time be agreed on by the majority; and that dinner be ready precisely at two in the summer, and one in the winter.

V. That as soon as the assembly is met, the names of the present members shall be entered in the minutes, and the forfeits (if there be any due) deposited in the charity purse. After which, the chairman shall inquire if the prayers, as agreed upon by the assembly and entered in their minutes, have been properly used by each member at his own home. Then the chairman shall, in a short charge or exhortation, remind his associates of the importance of such a meeting, and enumerate the good effects which the selected chapters, if rightly improved, may produce.

VI. The chairman shall then read the chapter in the Old Testament in English, and shall pause at the end of every verse, that any one who pleases may make such inquiries and reflections as may occasionally arise; but that no two persons speak at a time; and if two accidentally begin, the chairman shall direct which is to go on. And that every member shall, against the next meeting, send to the chairman whatever observation of his on the chapter of the day the members then present had desired to have entered in their minutes; by which method many useful observations may be preserved: and in case any verse shall not be cleared of its difficulties to the satisfaction of the present members, the said verse shall be reconsidered at the next meeting.

VII. At three o'clock precisely during the summer season (no more than an hour being allowed for dinner,) the chairman shall proceed in reading a chapter in Greek out of the New Testament, to be commented on in like manner as that out of the Old. But in the winter season, when the assembly meet at ten, the chapter, both in the Old as well as the New Testament, shall be read before dinner; and after dinner, no other business than that specified in the ninth article shall be entered on.

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* Referred to in Mr. Hervey's Life.

† As this assembly met at different inns, public prayer would have alarmed the attendants, and caused gross misrepresentation. Besides, the real design of this meeting was known only to a few, and the injunction of secrecy was given to each member, in order to avoid the appearance of religious ostentation, and in compliance with the apostle's precaution, viz. "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Rom. v. 16.

VIII. That the two chapters to be considered by the assembly at their next meeting, be previously appointed before the adjournment of every assembly, either by the succeeding chairman, if present, or in case of his absence, by the majority; of which chapters the absent members shall have timely notice sent them in writing.

IX. That at every meeting (as time permits) each member, in an alphabetical order, shall be desired to give an account of some religious author (which he has read in the preceding month) in as concise and succinct a manner as possible.

X. That at every meeting half a crown shall be given by each member for charitable uses; and that at the end of the year, the money shall be expended in clothing or educating such poor persons, or relieving such incurables, as the members in their alphabetical order shall recommend to the assembly.

XI. That every member who is absent, though occasioned by the most urgent business, or even indisposition, (unless such indisposition shall continue longer than a month,) shall pay half a crown towards the charity purse, and one shilling and sixpence towards the dinner, in the same manner as if he had been present.

XII. That the assembly break* up by seven in the summer, and by four in the winter; and that each member, on his return home, use the form of prayer which is specified in our minutes, and peculiarly adapted to this occasion.

We, whose names are underwritten, have this day (being the seventh of July 1747) subscribed our assent to these rules and orders, as witness our hands.

The Form of Prayer, composed by Mr. Hervey, to be used by each Member before setting out for the Assembly.

MATT. xviii. 20.—"Lord, thou hast said, Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Almighty and immortal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through him the God of all mercies, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to look down upon us thy sinful servants, who are preparing to meet together in thy name, and with an humble desire to build up one another in our most holy religion. Pardon all our iniquities through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and make us and our services accepted through the Beloved. O heavenly Father, unite us to one another by mutual love, and to thy blessed self by faith unfeigned. Enlighten our minds with the knowledge of thy truth, and sanctify our hearts by the power of thy grace. Direct our counsels, and prosper all our endeavours, to the glory of thy divine Majesty, and the salvation of our own, and the souls of others. Grant this, most gracious God, through the precious death and never-ceasing intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Form of Prayer, composed by Mr. Hervey, to be used by each Member when returned from the Assembly.

MATT. xviii. 19.—"Lord, thou hast said, If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

O Lord God of our salvation, thou giver of every good and perfect gift, we adore thy glorious name and beneficence, for the redemption of our souls by Jesus Christ, and for all thy other unnumbered and undeserved mercies. In a particular manner, we praise thy unspeakable goodness for the valuable opportunity we have this day enjoyed, of provoking one another to love, and to good works. Pity our infirmities, most merciful Father, and pardon whatever thou hast seen amiss in the tenor of our conversation, or in the spirit of our minds. Sanctify, we humbly beseech thee, thy holy word which we have heard. Command it to sink deep into our souls, and to be a lively and lasting principle of godliness in our hearts. O let us, by every such conference, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! that through thy infinitely precious favour we may become steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity; and so much the more, as we see the day approaching. And forasmuch as we are now separated into a world where wickedness abounds, preserve us, O God our defence, from the least infection, and from every appearance of evil. Inspire us with wisdom so to order our conversation, that we may give no just occasion of offence in any thing. Endue us with holiness, that we may adorn the gospel of God our Saviour in all things; and animate us with such a steady and well-tempered zeal, that neither the slothfulness of our nature, nor the fear of the world, may withhold us from pursuing such courses as may be conducive to the glory of thy blessed name, the advancement of true religion, and the salvation of our immortal souls. This, and whatsoever else is needful for us, and for carrying on the work which thou hast given us to do, we humbly beg, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator, and all-sufficient Redeemer. Amen.

* Some of the members lived five or six miles from the place of meeting, which was always at public-houses, and as near the centre of each member's residence as could be conveniently contrived.

RULES AND ORDERS OF A RELIGIOUS SOCIETY,

Consisting of Two Classes, viz.—Of Men, into which no Woman can be admitted; and of Married Men, their Wives, and other Women, into which no Unmarried Man can be admitted.

Each Class meets every other week alternately.

RULE I.—As the sole design of this Society is to promote real holiness in heart and life, every member of it is to have this continually in view, trusting in the divine power and gracious conduct of the Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ, to excite, advance, and perfect all good in us.

RULE II.—That, in order to the being of one heart and one mind, and to prevent all things which gender strifes, as well as to remove all occasion of offence from being taken against this society, no person is to be admitted a member, or allowed to continue such, who is a member of any other meeting, or follows any other preaching than that of the established ministry of the Church of England. That none be members but such as attend the sacrament every month; and that no person be at any time introduced, except by request of the director.

RULE III.—That no person be admitted a member but upon the recommendation of the director, with the consent of the majority of members then present: And that the director be the Reverend Mr. Walker.*

RULE IV.—That the members of this society meet together one evening in a week, at a convenient place, and that they go home at nine o'clock. And that all matters of business be done before the sentences begin.

RULE V.—That every member give constant attendance, and be present at the hour of meeting precisely. And that whoever absents himself four meetings together, without giving a satisfactory account to the director, which shall by him be communicated to the society, shall be looked upon as disaffected to the society.

RULE VI.—That, to prevent confusion, no person be removed from this society but by the director, who shall be present on such occasions. That any member do beforehand apply to the director, in case he judges such removal necessary. That a disorderly carriage, or a proud, contentious, disputing temper (the greatest adversary to Christian love and peace,) be sufficient ground for such complaint and removal.

RULE VII.—That all the members, considering the sad consequences of vanity and amusements over the nation, do, in charity to the souls of others, as well as to avoid the danger of such things themselves, look upon themselves as obliged to use peculiar caution with respect to many of the usual amusements, however innocent they may be, or be thought in themselves; such as cards, dancings, clubs for entertainment, play-houses, sports at festivals and parish-feasts, and, as much as may be, parish-feasts themselves, lest, by joining herein, they should be a hinderance to themselves or their neighbours.

RULE VIII.—That, with the consent of the director, the major part of the society have power to make a new order when need requires; but that the proposal for this purpose be made by the director: And that any member may consult the director hereupon before the day of meeting.

RULE IX.—That persons disposed to become members of this society, must first be proposed by the director, in order that the members of the society may observe their conduct for the space of three months before admittance.

RULE X.—That every member do consider himself as peculiarly obliged to live in an inoffensive and orderly manner, to the glory of God, and the edifying his neighbours. That he study to advance in himself and others, humility, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, love to God, gospel repentance, and new obedience, wherein Christian edification consists. And that, in all his conversation hereupon, he stick close to the plain and obvious sense of the holy Scriptures, carefully avoiding all niceties and refinements upon them.

RULE XI.—That these orders shall be read over at least four times in the year by the director, and that with such deliberation, that each member may have time to examine himself by them.

RULE XII.—That the members of this society do meekly and humbly join together in the following offices of devotion.

* This society is very happy in having so accomplished a person at their head. But where such a one cannot be had, perhaps it would be prudent to elect a director annually, whose office might be continued a more or less number of years, as seemed best for the general good.

THE OFFICE OF DEVOTION USED WEEKLY AT THE MEETING OF THE SOCIETY.

The director shall read these sentences, himself and every one standing.

"God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints, and to be had in reverence by all that are round about him." Psalm lxxxix. 7.

"God is a righteous Judge, strong and patient, and God is provoked every day." Psalm vii. 12.

"God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. xii. 14.

"He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." Prov. xxviii. 13.

"If any man sinneth, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 1, 2.

"O come, let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psalm xcv. 5, 6.

Then shall be said these three Collects, all kneeling.

"Prevent us, O Lord," &c.

"Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures," &c.

"O God, for as much as without thee," &c.

All seating themselves, a portion of Scripture shall be read. Then kneeling down, they shall join in this confession of sin.

"Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men," &c.

"Our Father, which art," &c.

After which, the director alone shall say,

"Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, &c.

O most holy and blessed God! the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all! who hatest falsehood and hypocrisy, and wilt not accept the prayer of feigned lips, but hast promised to show mercy to such as turn unto thee by true faith and repentance; vouchsafe, we pray thee, to create in us clean and upright hearts through an unfeigned faith in thy Son, our Saviour. To us indeed belongeth shame and confusion of face; we are not worthy to lift up our eyes or our voice towards heaven; our natures are depraved, and our ways have been perverse before thee. O let not thy wrath rise against us, lest we be consumed in a moment; but let thy merciful bowels yearn over us, and vouchsafe to purify and pardon us, through thine all-sufficient grace and mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ. Since it hath pleased thee to offer him up as a sacrifice for sinners, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to cleanse us from all iniquity through his blood. We believe that he is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto thee by him; and we do earnestly desire to embrace him as our Prince and Saviour. O give us repentance and remission of sin through his name. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one after his own way: Good Lord, reduce us into thy fold through this great Shepherd of souls, and be pleased to lay on him the iniquity of us all. And as we have much to be forgiven, be pleased to incline our hearts to love thee much, who forgivest iniquity, transgression, and sin. Give us that faith that worketh by love, and such love as will constrain us to have regard to all thy commandments. And make us to look carefully to all our ways, that we may never again do any thing whereby thy holy name may be blasphemed, or thine authority despised.

Give us the deepest humility, without which we can never be accepted of thee, our infinitely condescending God: make us continually to tread in the steps of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; being of a meek and quiet spirit, always influenced by the highest love of thee our God, and by the most charitable disposition towards all men.

Vouchsafe to endue us with the saving knowledge of spiritual things, that we may receive all thy truths in the love of them, in all patience, purity, justice, temperance, godliness, and brotherly kindness; that we may adorn our holy profession, and resemble the divine goodness of thee our heavenly Father. And since we are not only weak and frail, but corrupt and sinful, vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us by the power of thy Holy Spirit, that we fall not from our avowed steadfastness in all Christian duty. Preserve us from all the sin and vanity to which our age, condition, and nature are prone, and to which the devil and this world may at any time tempt us.

Glorify, good God, thy strength in our weakness, thy grace in our pollution, and thy mercy in our salvation. May our holy religion be grounded and settled in our hearts, that out of the good treasure of a gracious heart our speech may be savoury, and our conversation exemplary; that we may be fruitful in all good works, even to our old age, and to our last day.

Fit us, we pray thee, for every state of life into which thy providence shall cast us; prosper our lawful undertakings; preserve us night and day, and prepare us for an hopeful death and a blessed eternity.

Be pleased, we beseech thee, to bless all those societies who in truth apply their hearts to thy service and glory: We pray thee be pleased to strengthen, establish, and settle both them and us in thy holy faith,

fear, and love. Let nothing in this world discourage us from the pursuit of those holy purposes which thy Spirit hath at any time put into our hearts and mind; but make us all faithful to thee, our avowed God and desired portion, even unto death, that we at last (with thy whole church) may be partakers of that eternal life and perfect bliss which thou hast promised through Jesus Christ thy only begotten Son, our Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

"Almighty and ever-living God, who, by thy holy apostle, has taught us to make prayers," &c.

Then all standing up, a Psalm shall be sung, and a sermon read, or a charge given by the director. After which, some suitable prayers shall be used, as he shall judge fit. Then all standing up, this exhortation to humility shall be read.*

My brethren, since the great God has often assured us in his holy word, "that he will resist the proud, and give grace unto the humble," James iv. 6, 1 Pet. v. 6, let us consider that all our undertakings, though ever so good, will fail and come to nought, unless we be truly and deeply humble. Luke xiv. 11. Indeed it cannot be otherwise; because the proud person quits his reliance on God to rest in himself, which is to exchange a rock for a reed.

Alas! what are we, poor empty nothings! Gen. xxxii. 10. Yea, what is worse, we are condemned perishing sinners! We have, perhaps, understanding now, but God can soon turn it into madness. Dan. iv. 42. We may have some attainments in grace, but spiritual pride will wither all, and soon reduce us to a very profligate and wretched estate, Isa. lxvi. 2; such as we have seen others fall into, who have begun in the spirit, and ended in the flesh! What have we that we have not received? 1 Cor. iv. 7; and even that, he who gave it may as soon take away.

Ye that are young in years, and younger in grace, 1 Tim. 3, 6, are in danger of self-conceit, and of being puffed up, which is a quicksand in which thousands have been swallowed up and perished. It is not in vain that the apostle requires, "that young men be exhorted to be sober-minded," Tit. ii. 6; Prov. xvi. 18; which he elsewhere explains when he says, "Let no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly," Rom. xii. 3. Isa. xiv. 12, 13.

By pride the angels fell from heaven, 1 Tim. iii. 6; and if ever we climb up to those blessed seats from which they are fallen, it must be by the gracious steps of humility and lowliness of mind, Luke xviii. 14 "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let us walk humbly with our God," and ever have lowly thoughts of our vile selves, Rom. xi. 20, and of our poor attainments, and of our defective performances: and with St. Paul (who was nothing behind the very chiefest apostles) let us always say, I am nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 11.

Let us therefore now sing to the praise and glory of God, to whom alone praise is due.

A Psalm being sung, the director shall say,

"It is very meet and right," &c.

All shall join

"Therefore with angels and archangels," &c.

The director alone.

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. *Amen.*

Considerations laid before the Members of this Society; being the substance of the first charge or exhortation spoke at its opening by the director.

Brethren,—You expect that I lay before you the design of this society, and give you some cautions concerning it. The design is threefold: 1. To glorify God; 2. To be quickened and confirmed ourselves; 3. To render us more useful among our neighbours.

1.—As a society, we shall be better able to glorify God; for hereby we bear a more evident testimony to the cause of Christ, and make a more avowed confession of him and his words, in these evil days, than we could do when separate.

Every one of you desires that the kingdom of Jesus Christ were more established and more honourable in the world than it is, and you join your hand, with others, to promote so desirable an end.

Take these cautions for this purpose:

1. Look upon yourself as one associated with others in vindication of your Master's' honour.

2. Never be ashamed of him, or his doctrine, or of this society.

3. Demean yourself to every one as his disciple, by walking in humility, meekness, heavenly mindedness, charity, after Christ's example.

4. Keep yourself heedfully from all things which may disgrace your Master and this society; such as, Pride in a conceit of your knowledge or attainments, or that you are a member of this society: Valuing yourself upon any distinction in station or wealth Sinking into a worldly frame, or declining into sloth and idleness: Practising the least

* The director, when abroad or indisposed, is to appoint what sermon shall be read, and by whom.

dishonesty, or conniving at the dishonesty of others: Making compliances to avoid shame, or promote worldly interest: Falling into lukewarmness, and forgetting your first love: Slighting public ordinances.

5. Often (especially before and after great trials,) reflect that you belong to a religious society for promoting the glory of Christ.

II.—The second design of this society is, to be quickened and confirmed ourselves. For hereby we shall be better able to maintain the war against our enemies (especially the world) and to grow in grace; seeing, by this association, we have the Spirit to bless our exercises;* shall have the benefit of mutual advice and reproof; shall be more hardy to oppose the temptations besetting us in this wicked world; shall walk under a peculiar restraint, as being members of a religious society; and shall be assisted by the prayers, as of one another, so of all good men in the whole Christian church. To this end,

1. Watch over one another in love.

2. Be willing to hear of your faults, and of the fears and suspicions of these your friends concerning you.

3. Be watchful against any disgust to one another; and if any arise in you, without delay tell the party, and if that avail not, tell the director.

4. Desire the prayers one of another, and pray for one another.

5. Be sure you rest not on your being a member of this society; seeking continually to cast off all self-dependence.

6. Watch the least decay of love to Christ, or zeal for his honour and the good of souls.

7. Confirm continually upon your heart the obligations you lie under as a member of a religious society.

III.—The third design of this society is, to render us more useful among our neighbours. Hereby we are more observable. People will not be so easily quiet in their sins. Good examples carry a brighter and more convincing light, confounding the works of darkness. To this end,

1. Be careful to set a Christian example before the world.

2. Think not to gain any by making compliances.

3. Discountenance all such things as you see prejudicial to others, such as taverns, ale-houses, gaming, and many sports which are destructive to souls.

4. Show all love to men's souls and bodies.

5. Avoid all disputings which proceed from pride, and nurse contention and variance.

6. Do not be angry with those who blame this society, but meekly and silently bear with them.

7. Do not in your heart despise others because they are not members of this society.

8. Nor show any valuing of yourselves because you are. Never speak of yourself as a member, unless with a view of doing good to others.

MOTIVES.

1. Real disciples do more than nominal professors.

2. The Spirit will strengthen and comfort you.

3. You will have the blessing of a quiet conscience.

4. You are engaged in the most honourable service.

5. You will promote the interest of your Master.

6. He will acknowledge your labours in the day of his appearing. Amen. So be it.

N.B.—Whereas too many people are apt to misrepresent every religious society as a methodistical meeting, it was judged necessary to insert the following extract from the celebrated Mr. Dodd's late sermon. "The cry of Methodism is frequently raised by such as are totally ignorant of the nature of the accusation; and many are stigmatized with the name, who are perfectly innocent of the thing. The observations I have made may possibly serve to settle the point in some degree, or at least to stop the tongues of those who very unjustly cast the aspersion, where there is not the least cause; and it deserves, perhaps, to be considered by all serious and sincere Protestants, whether the affixing the charge of Methodism, &c. &c. indiscriminately, upon men of unblamable lives and irreproachable conversation, may not tend greatly to prejudice our holy faith in general, and to bring a reproach upon Christianity itself, through the pretended offence of Methodism: this may be a triumph to the Deist and Papist equally pleasing. And, if so, can we be too accurate in our distinctions, or too cautious in our imputations? Remembering, that while we confound Christianity and Methodism, we are doing discredit to Christianity in the some proportion as we are giving weight and dignity to Methodism." See Mr. Dodd's excellent Sermon, entitled, *Unity Recommended*, preached before the religious societies in and about London, at their annual meeting in the parish church of St. Mary-le-Bow, on Easter Monday 1759; to which is added an Appendix, giving an account of the original design, general rules, and present

* There is a most useful little piece for these purposes, entitled "Regulations and Helps for promoting Religious Conversation among Christians."

state of the religious societies. A farther account of which may be seen in a little piece wrote in Queen Anne's time, by the Rev. Dr. Josiah Woodward, entitled "An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in and about London, and of their endeavours for the Reformation of Manners." The sixth edition. In this little tract the most considerable objections against religious societies are fully answered.

HINTS

CONCERNING THE MEANS OF PROMOTING RELIGION IN OURSELVES AND OTHERS.*

I.—Be always cheerful, as well as serious, that you may win men to Christianity. And in every conversation introduce some religious hints, if it can be done with propriety.

II.—Avoid all controversies; no good can come from disputing; but contend earnestly for the essentials of Christianity.

III.—Heal all divisions among sects and parties to the utmost of your power. And prevail with those who are most fiery, to read Henry's excellent treatise on Meekness.

IV.—Talk familiarly to children about religion, as a delightful employment. Put easy questions to them, encouraging them occasionally by some little presents, and thus teaching them an aimable, cheerful, generous piety.

V.—Make it a constant rule to pray for all who affront or injure you. Christ enjoins us to pray for all who despitefully use us; see Matth. v. 44. Disregard all opprobrious names. Christ himself (as will every one who strives against the corrupt prejudices and vices of mankind) was abused as a wine-bibber, and even a blasphemer.

VI.—Be accustomed to a regular, daily, but moderate course of devout retirement; and recommend intercession for others, both in the family and in private, as likewise frequent attendance on the sacrament.

VII.—Frequent public worship every day in the week, if your business permit, and if you live in a place where it is performed.

VIII.—Secret ejaculations, too, may be used as you are walking or riding, or in whatever company you may happen to be; and, on some particular hour, remember (as, for instance, at morning, noon, afternoon, or evening, when your town-clock strikes, which will be a loud and never-failing memorandum) to set yourself as in the presence of God† for a few minutes.

IX.—Use frequent meditation, than which nothing can be more profitable: Nor can any thing so much awaken and dispose us for that, and for all that is good, as a strong faith in Providence, and a constant cheerfulness* of spirit.

X.—Entertain the highest regard for the word of God, and furnish yourself with a few of the best writers, but particularly with Henry on Meekness, and Worthington on Resignation. Study them thoroughly, and endeavour to make their sentiments your own. Meekness and resignation are the two principal duties of a Christian. Disperse good books occasionally, if your circumstances will permit; and be very careful in the choice of them, and in adapting them to the circumstances of the person to whom they are given.

XI.—Encourage by your influence, and purse too, (if able), societies for promoting the gospel, both at home and in foreign parts; and, in order to be well acquainted with these, read the celebrated Dr. Woodward's Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in London and Westminster.

XII.—Whenever you reprove, let it be tenderly, privately, and with all due humility.

XIII.—For the reformation of swearing,† lying, slandering, Sabbath-breaking,

* Referred to in Mr. Henry's Life.

† This method is strongly recommended by the late Dr. Butler, Bishop of Durham, in his Charge to the Clergy, 1751.

* In order to obtain a proper confidence in Providence, and a settled cheerfulness of mind, the reader, especially the gloomy and dispirited, would be much assisted by Bishop Patrick's Advice to a Friend, which is a most inestimable little piece.

† Hints for the reformation of, or conversation with a swearer.—1. None are so ignorant as not to know it is a breach of the third commandment. 2. He who lives in the fear of God is so far from being capable of it, that it shocks him to hear others offending this way. 3. We are taught by Christ daily to pray, "Hallowed be thy name;" Angels praise it, and devils tremble at it. 4. Christ enjoins us to swear not at all: see Matth. v. 34, and also James v. 12. 5. Give to a swearer Dr. Woodward's Kind Caution to Profane Swearers, or the late Bishop of London's (Dr Gibson) Admonition against Profane and Common Swearing.

passionate,* or unchaste† persons, you may write out (or keep by you some printed) hints on slips of paper, against either of these vices, and place them in the way of such persons, either by putting them into their books, windows, or other places, provided you do not care to give them to the person yourself; or they may be sent by the post‡ from or to the metropolis.

XIV.—Make it a rule to have at least one religious sentence in the letters you write to your relations or friends, when it can be conveniently introduced; as such a sentence, properly interwoven, often strikes a person, and is productive of more real good, perhaps, than a laboured discourse in the pulpit, or formal advice at home.

XV.— Guard people, as much as in you lies, against enthusiasm, and excessive rigours, either as to abstinence, retirement, or conversation; and advise them to take all the comfort that the situation in which God has placed them will conveniently admit of; reminding them at the same time, to acknowledge him in all their ways, and to be discreetly zealous for the honour of Christ; reposing an entire confidence in the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and assuring themselves of the extent of his providence (of which we know not either the value or power) to all his creatures, and to all their actions.

XVI.—But, above all, write down the reasons which at any time make you afraid to die, and then endeavour, by faith, by prayer, and by conversation with experienced Christians, to remove the causes, and thus be properly preparing for death. And, if your time and capacity will admit, keep a diary; particularly note your sins of omission, and, by this method, you will see your progress or declension in religion.

PREFACE

TO

JENKS' MEDITATIONS.§

When I consider the practice of recommending books, as implying some respectable regard to a man's own judgment, I undertake it with reluctance: But when I consider it as exercising an act of friendship to my fellow-students in the school of Christ, I execute it with pleasure.

There are those, I am informed, who blame me for commending the works of others, or, which is much the same thing, for commending them with any degree of zeal and affection, since cold commendation or faint applause is justly reputed an artful slight. To these persons I shall only reply, that if their own actions or their own compositions were concerned, I verily believe they, even they, would "forgive me this wrong," 2 Cor. xii. 13.

Far from obtruding myself into the chair of Moses, Matt. xxiii. 2, far from presuming to dictate, to prescribe, or so much as to direct, I would only imitate the four leprous men at the entering in of the gate of Samaria, 2 Kings vii. 3, 8, 9. Having found silver, and gold, and raiment, they could not forbear proclaiming the news, and communicating the spoil to their fellow-citizens. When I find a treasure incomparably more

* Hints for the reformation of a passionate man.—1. Causeless and immoderate anger proceeds from a proud and haughty temper, and is contrary to gospel-meekness, that meekness and quietness of spirit which St. Peter assures us, 1 Peter iii. 4, is of great price in the sight of God. 2. Christ bids us learn of him who was lowly and meek, Matt. xi. 9. 3. Every passionate tongue is set on fire by hell; see James iii. 6. 4. He who says the Lord's Prayer with an unforgiving temper, curses himself. 5. No one has offended us so often as we have offended God, therefore our anger should be against our own sins. 6. Let all bitterness (says the apostle), and wrath, and anger, be put away. In patience possess ye your souls, Luke xxi. 19. No passion in heaven, therefore no passion in a heavenly mind. Give to a passionate man Henry on Meekness.

† Hints for the reformation of an uncha ste person.—1. Contrary to the seventh commandment of the great God. 2 A sin which defiles the soul, and brings it under the dominion of the fleshly appetites. No spiritual life in such a one; see Rom. xiii. 6. 3. A partaker of other people's sins, making them partakers of yours, thus doubly guilty. 4. All adulterers, fornicators, and unclean persons, are declared to have no inheritance in the kingdom of God; see 1 Cor. vi. 9. 5. You are a servant of sin, and in bondage to the deepest corruption. 6. If you sin in any of these ways, you sin against your own body, and pollute the temple of the Holy Ghost. Being joined to an harlot, the Holy Spirit dwells not there. 7. We must glorify God both in body and Spirit, presenting ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God; see Rom. xii. 1. 8. Purity and chastity required in the gospel; even impure and lustful desires are there condemned; see Matt. v. 28. Give to an unchaste person Jenks' Glorious Victory of Chastity, or Dr. Woodward's Exhortation to Chastity.

‡ The following letter was sent by the post to a Deist, and had a very good effect.

Sir,—Though you disbelieve Christianity, I cannot suppose that you disbelieve a future state of rewards and punishments; please, therefore, to take into serious consideration, whether you think your actions are such as will, upon your own principles, stand the test at the great day of account.

As it highly becomes us to do what good we can while we live in this world, and as I am truly concerned for you, I take the liberty of giving you this friendly hint, and hope you will receive it as a proof that the writer, though unknown, is your very sincere well-wisher. A. Z.

§ Referred to in Mr. Hervey's Life.

precious, when I find a teacher of wisdom, and a guide to glory, why should I hold my peace? why should I enjoy these benefits myself alone? why should I not, like those honest, though calamitous exiles, tell the glad tidings in the city, and invite my neighbours to partake of the blessings?

These blessings, through the divine goodness, I have found in *Jenks' Meditations*, which are, I think, the most distinguished among all his valuable writings. Level to an ordinary capacity, yet capable of entertaining a refined taste. Not void of beauty and delicacy, yet more especially adapted to enlighten the understanding, to impress the conscience, and build up the soul in faith, in holiness, and joy.

The method in which our author proceeds is to me peculiarly pleasing. First, he collects the most weighty and sublime truths; he then forms them into a close and animated address to the soul; and concludes all with a short but fervent supplication to God, which very much heightens the tenderness and solemnity of the whole. It is somewhat like pointing the arrow, not with polished steel, but with celestial fire. Perhaps the reader will recollect, on this occasion, the story of the angel appearing to Manoah. When the sacrifice was laid on the rock, and kindled into a burnt-offering, the seraph mingled himself with the sacred oblation, and ascended to heaven in the flame, Judges xiii. 20.

In the language, we have a noble plainness, and a happy perspicuity; in the sentiments, we have the force of persuasion, quickened by the glow of devotion. If, in some few sentences, we meet with an obsolete expression or inelegant phrase, methinks it is only like a hair adhering to a fine suit of velvet, or like a mote dropped upon a globe of crystal. I will not offer such an affront to the discernment and generosity of the reader, as to suppose him requiring an apology for so small a blemish, which, when magnified by the severest censure, is no more than a speck; when viewed with all the allowances of candour and benevolence, is a mere nothing.

The several Meditations may be regarded as so many striking sermons on the most interesting subjects of our holy religion; or rather as a judicious abridgment of various excellent sermons on almost every branch of Christianity; in each of which we have the spirit and energy of a copious discourse, contracted within the small compass of two or three pages. For which reason I cannot but apprehend they may be particularly serviceable in the family, as well as in the closet,—that one of these short family essays, distinctly or repeatedly read amongst our domestics, may be more advantageous than the hasty perusal of a much larger composition.

There is scarce any circumstance of the Christian life which solicits the assistance of a spiritual physician, but may be accommodated with seasonable and suitable relief from this ample dispensatory of "edification, exhortation, and comfort," 1 Cor. xiv. 3. Here are, if I may pursue the medicinal allusion, cordials to cheer the drooping, restoratives to heal the backsliding, stimulatives to quicken the supine, with lenitives to ease the anguish of conscience, " and make the bones which sin has broken to rejoice," Psalm li. 8. Neither are we clogged with a tedious multiplicity of remedies in any case of distress, nor wearied with a dry detail of all that can be said upon any point of inquiry. On the contrary, the most spirited doctrines, and the most sovereign consolations, are both skilfully selected and pertinently applied, with this well judged design of improving and exhilarating the mind, without overcharging or burdening the memory.

I would submit it, with the utmost deference, to the consideration of my younger brethren in the ministry, whether it might not be a very profitable exercise to pursue the hints, and enlarge the plan of these compendious treatises; whether, by digesting them into proper divisions, and introducing under each division a more full and circumstantial display of the subject, we might not form popular and useful discourses for the pulpit. Such a practice, I persuade myself, might considerably facilitate our preparations for the public service, would stock our own minds with a set of the most important and affecting truths, and render our ministrations more acceptable to others, yet in no respect dishonourable to ourselves; as such a transformation is very different from a theft; and the most likely way to commence originals, is to work upon such excellent models.

Let me only add, that I know one person to whom these books have been highly delightful, and eminently beneficial; have very much contributed to exalt his apprehensions of divine grace, and to establish his faith in the divine Jesus. That they may be equally, or rather more abundantly, beneficial and delightful to the public, is the wish, the hope, the prayer, of their obliged servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

October 30, 1756.

A

COLLECTION OF LETTERS,

WRITTEN

BY MR. HERVEY,

FROM 1733 TO 1758.

PREFACE.

It has been already observed, in the account of Mr. Hervey's Life prefixed to this work, that he frequently wrote religious letters to his acquaintance, according to their different circumstances, in the most amiable and convincing manner; and that he seemed to make it almost an invariable rule not to write a letter, on any occasion, without at least one pious sentence in it; and that not introduced in a forced and awkward manner, but interwoven so as to appear naturally to arise from the subject.

The reasons for publishing this collection of Mr. Hervey's letters were the strong solicitations of those who knew and valued the author and his writings; a desire of contributing to the interests of religion, which was the great scope of all his labours; and a persuasion, that such a collection would give a peculiar satisfaction to every intelligent and pious person; especially as, to be thus introduced to partake of the entertaining and instructive intercourses of his friendship, may possibly be the means of encouraging others to "go and do likewise." Nor will it be, it is presumed, necessary to bespeak the candour of the reader, or deprecate the petulance of criticism, whatever defects or inaccuracies may be found in a work of this kind, not intended for, though well worthy of the public eye.

As the following letter to the editor is so truly characteristical of Mr. Hervey, it is to be hoped that it will not be altogether unacceptable to the reader. When writers like him, of distinguished superiority, have gained our admiration and applause, we are fond of penetrating into their more retired apartments, and associating with them in the sequestered walks of private life; for here these great geniuses appear in an undress, the intrinsic excellence of their characters shines out with genuine lustre; and although, as authors, their talents are beyond our imitation, yet the several milder graces and virtues of their more common and ordinary behaviour are in some measure attainable by every one.

Sir,—It was with no small satisfaction I saw an advertisement in the public papers, desiring the correspondents of the late Mr. Hervey to furnish the editor with some of his letters for publication; and glad I am it is in my power to send you so large a number, since in many of them will be found such traces of an upright heart, as no stranger can otherwise be made acquainted with. There will be seen the deepest humility. Ever unconscious of his own shining abilities, he was always desirous of improving by the meanest in the church: in lowliness of mind, he would prefer others to himself; he would frequently be the humble querist, and make his friend the respondent. There will be seen the greatest love to mankind; a love which he has strongly expressed on every occasion, not only in words, but in the most important acts of benevolence, both temporal and spiritual. There will be seen the most zealous attachments to truth. He was extremely desirous that every sentiment of his should be strictly examined; and wherever he found any thing capable of the least improvement, he immediately acquiesced with the greatest thankfulness. In a word, there will be seen the utmost serenity of mind under the pressure of very grievous afflictions. As his joy was not of this world, no worldly calamities could take it from him: nothing could ruffle, nothing could discompose him. He was indeed, what his Master says of the Baptist, a burning and a shining light; and as such he was a guide for our feet. As a burning light, he warned many by his example: he had received the grace of God in abundance, which he had long and most earnestly implored; and the fruits of which, in his life and conversation, the world have seen, and his friends will tell with pleasure. As a shining light, he instructed many by his doctrine. He was a most strenuous assertor of the free grace of God. He taught men to be rich in good works, without placing the least dependence on them. Christ was all to him; and it was his whole business to publish his Redeemer's unsearchable riches. It was St. Paul's faithful saying, viz. That "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and it was Mr. Hervey's constant employment to bring sinners to him empty-handed, "to buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

He was also a most strenuous assertor of evangelical holiness. While he published the free grace of God, he was solicitous that none should abuse it to licentiousness. Herein also he imitated St. Paul in an

other faithful saying, viz. That " they who believe in God, should be careful to maintain good works."

Such was the friend I have lost. God grant we may all " be followers of him who, through faith and patience, now inherits the promises." He rests from his labours, and my correspondence with him is for ever at an end; but by the letters I here send, he will, though dead, yet speak, and spread wide that valuable instruction, and those ingenious remarks, which were originally designed only for the private inspection of, sir, your humble servant, &c. &c.

P. S.—Mr. Hervey's zeal for his great Master, and his eminent abilities to advance the interests of religion, will, it is hoped, secure the good opinion of the community in behalf of the publication of his private letters and life; especially when it is considered, that it was in some measure necessary to be done; not only as they exhibit in their purport, composition, and various tendencies, a striking, amiable, and true picture of the ingenuity, learning, candour, and piety of this excellent man, but as his character has been injured by some through misrepresentation, and as his writings have been censured by others through misapprehension: all such will now see how far Mr. Hervey is deserving of blame or of applause, since there is nothing that expresses a man's particular character more fully than his letters to intimate friends.

In this edition, care has been taken to arrange the letters in the same order in which they were wrote, as far as was practicable. But there is no possibility of doing it exactly, for this plain reason, that in many letters written to those with whom he kept a frequent correspondence, Mr. Hervey was accustomed to express neither month nor year, but only to write Monday morning, Tuesday night, &c., and that several letters were transmitted to the editor, with the dates as well as names erased.

There are a few things inserted in this collection, such as the cottager's letter,* Mr. Boyse's,† the letter to Dr. T——,‡ which were introduced, not only for the great propriety of such an introduction, but at the particular desire of some of Mr. Hervey's friends, in order to fulfil his intentions, and render him, though dead, as extensively useful as possible.

" I would by all means," says one of his most judicious and favourite correspondents, " have that letter of mine, addressed to Dr. T——, printed in the collection; as I think this may in some measure be fulfilling the will of my deceased friend, who appears, by his own* letter to me, to have judged something of that nature highly necessary; and he would certainly have attempted it himself, as he declared, had not a certain church preferment brought him very unexpectedly into a connexion, which made such a publication at that juncture ineligible. Mr. Hervey is now dead, and that reason is no longer in force; and, therefore, now seems to me the fittest time for such purpose. I wrote that letter to Dr. T—— at Mr. Hervey's express desire; and I gave him full power to make what use of it he pleased, hoping that, after correcting it to his mind, he would have sent it to Dr. T—— himself, or else that he would have wrote in another form (perhaps in an introduction to his Fast Sermons) something far more valuable, extracting from my letter what best answered his ends. But that not being done, the publication of my letter in this collection, immediately after what Mr. Hervey says in his to me about Dr. T——'s sermon, may, with the same divine blessing, be of use; and, though of little worth, yet, like the widow's mite, when it was her all, it may be acceptable. There are thousands of preachers who think in the same way with Dr. T——, and very likely many of these may be the readers of Mr. Hervey's letters; and if some of them reflect and reform, the unjust anger of the rest is very little to be regarded. Therefore, upon the most serious consideration, it is my earnest request, that the letter to Dr. T—— should be printed just as I sent it to Mr. Hervey."†

It must be acknowledged, that some of his first letters, written from college when he was not more than twenty years of age, either speak a language different from free grace, for which we find he was afterwards so powerful an advocate, or at least they treat very confusedly of it; and perhaps some may say, Why then were they printed? For these two plain reasons—That the reader may see and know what early and strong impressions he had of piety—what love to God, and to his fellow-creatures. Though we say not, that, like John Baptist, he was sanctified from his mother's womb, yet his early labours for his Saviour, when too many others of his age and standing were captivated by their passions, and swallowed up by their lusts, prove to a demonstration the doctrine he afterwards taught, viz. the power of redeeming love: they show how early the seeds of grace were sown in his heart; and when they look forward, they may observe from what small sparks of light and grace the Holy

* Letter 83. † Annexed to letter 166.
‡ Letter 158.

* Letter 157.
† It is so printed as here desired. See Letter 158.

Spirit had gradually taught him, Isaiah liv. 13. John vi. 45. and led him, as it were by the hand, into the full and holy liberty of the children of God. When but twenty-one years of age, we find him afraid of and flying from praise, when others would be courting it: for, having wrote some verses to a relation, which were greatly commended, he heartily wishes* he never had wrote a line of poetry in his life; and he wrote upon another occasion,† expressly blaming a friend for praising him; and again‡ he says, "You have paid me an obliging compliment; beg of the blessed God, dear sir, that I may not be puffed up with vain conceit of myself or my writings."

From the reading of these familiar letters, which is in a manner listening to and hearing the thoughts of the writer, we may learn, that by nature "his heart was as hard as the flint, and his hands tenacious even to avarice;" these are his words.§ Yet (see the power of that free grace, which living and dying he adored) he became a bright example of universal charity.‖

His great humility and diffidence of his own judgment and learning appear in many of his letters: in one, which is far from being contemptible either for style or argument, he enjoins his friend to return his letter immediately to him, that it might never appear; yet his friend got the better of that modesty, and obtained leave to keep it; to which is owing the publication of that now, which Mr. Hervey, at the time of writing it, desired might never see the light.¶

Another instance, and a striking one, we may meet with, Letter 53, where, answering the objections of a lady to the miracle which Christ wrought at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, he says, "I have neither strength of mind, nor solidity of judgment, sufficient to conduct the procedure of an argument," &c.

As the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, it produced an ardent desire to promote the cause of Christ Jesus and of his religion. And when he found himself bowed down with the spirit of weakness and infirmity, he was apt to fear lest he should disgrace the gospel in his languishing moments;** he earnestly prayed to God, and desired others to unite in the same petition, that he might not thus dishonour the cause of Christ. And his and their prayers were heard; for, notwithstanding his lingering weakness and depressed spirits, which at length gave him up into the hands of death, yet he triumphed over his fears, he triumphed over the grand tempter and adversary of souls.

His willingness to have his writings corrected by every judicious friend, and his thankfulness in receiving their criticisms, appear throughout all his letters written to his learned correspondents;—a specimen of it you may see in Lett. 61, 101, 181. His earnest desire to prefer his friend's opinion to his own, or, in other words, his humble opinion of his own judgment and powers in argumentation, makes him ever requesting, "Pray use freely the pruning hook," &c. It may seem a wonder, therefore, that he should ever, under these discouraging thoughts of himself, write at all, especially so much as he has done; considering he was no more than five-and-forty when he died, and that the first of his works was published when he was thirty-three. Perhaps the reader might be almost tempted to suspect that his humility was affected, and that pride lurked under that fair garment; but hypocrisy dwelt not in him: he wrote under all that weakness, and under all those fears, because he dared not be silent: The cause of God and truth was publicly attacked; the cause of his Master was opposed; and he, as a faithful watchman, was compelled, however weak in body, however unequal he thought himself to the task, he was compelled to cry aloud, and spare not; and therefore he wrote, not from pride or from avarice, but from conscience and a sense of duty; and this the intelligent and candid reader will easily perceive from many of his letters.

At a time when infidelity and depravity prevailed, and when it has become almost fashionable to slander and speak evil of persons, depreciating another's reputation, in order to raise and establish our own, we find Mr. Hervey making it a rule to single out the best things he had heard of his neighbour, and carefully avoiding even to hint any thing which might be the cause of propagating a rumour* to his detriment, or to disclose a secret which might be injurious to him: thus careful was he to carry into his own practice the doctrine he taught, the religion he professed; and thus far was he from espousing either the principles or practices of Antinomians. Some of his pretended friends of that stamp, as well as his adversaries, have taken much pains to make the world believe that he in all things agreed with them, that, if possible, they might be thought not to differ from him; but they will find it as impracticable to raise their reputation upon his, as it will be to reduce his character to a level with their own, so long as his works shall live to proclaim his principles, and a friend shall remain to declare his truly Christian practices, his holy life and conversation.

* Letter 3. † Letter 52. ‡ Letter 60.
§ Letter 53. ‖ See his Life, and Letter 51, 60, &c.
¶ Letter 24. ** Letter 60.

* Letter 58.

It cannot but be observed, that Mr. Hervey, in two of his letters,* has repeated the same argument, in pretty near the same words; and perhaps this repetition may disgust the delicate and curious reader, especially as it returns so soon as within the compass of thirty pages; but it is to be considered that they were written at different times, the one to a clergyman at Bath, in 1743, and the other, for the satisfaction of a lady, five years afterwards; and as the objections were the same from both, Mr. Hervey had a right to return each of them the same answer.

I must once more trespass on my reader's patience, as I cannot conclude without expressing my hopes that every person of candour and judgment will make the necessary allowances for those different states both of body and mind, which one of Mr. Hervey's weak constitution must have undergone in the space of five-and-twenty years, during which these letters were wrote. A manifest inequality of judgment, of accuracy, and of style, in familiar letters wrote at such distances, with more or less attention and care, according to the variety of circumstances which occur, and without the least thought of their publication, will appear; nor can it be otherwise expected indeed from any one. Some of the greatest geniuses of the age, such as Pope and Swift, have made their apology in the same case; and no one, I am sure, is more justly entitled to the indulgence of the public, than he whose letters are here collected.

* Letter 17, and 53.

LETTERS

OF THE

REV. MR. JAMES HERVEY.

LETTER I.

Lincoln College, Oxon. Sept. 16, 1733.

DEAR SISTER,—WAS there any occasion to apologize for the serious purport of this, it would be sufficient to direct you to the date, and the time of its inditing; but I promise myself that to you any thing of this nature will be unnecessary. For though we are in the very prime and spring of our years, strongly disposed to admire, and perfectly capacitated to relish the gaieties of youth, yet we have been inured to moderate the warmth of our appetites, accustomed to anticipate in our minds the days of darkness, and incessantly disciplined into a remembrance of our Creator. For my part, I find no season so proper to address one of the principal sharers of my heart, one of my nearest and dearest relations, as that I have at present chose and made use of, when either an universal silence composes the soul, and calms every turbulent emotion, or the voice of joy and gladness, speaking through celestial music, invites to adore the wonders of our Redeemer's love, touches upon the strings of the softest passions, and inspires the most sweet, most tender sentiments.

As I was the other day traversing the fields in quest of health, I observed the meads to have lost that profusion of fragrant odours which once perfumed the air —to be disrobed of that rich variety of curious dyes which surpassed even Solomon in all his glory. Not a single flower appears to gladden the sight, to bespangle the ground, or enamel the barren landscape. The clouds that ere long distilled in dews of honey, or poured themselves forth in showers of fatness, now combine in torrents to overflow the lifeless earth, to bury or sweep away all the faint footsteps of ancient beauty. The hills that were crowned with corn, the valleys that laughed and sung under loads of golden grain; in a word, the whole face of nature, that so lately rejoiced for the abundance of her plenty, is become bare, naked, and disconsolate. As I was continuing my walk, and musing on this joyless scene, methought the sudden change exhibited a lively picture of our frail and transitory state; methought every object that occurred seemed silently to forewarn me o my own future condition.

I dwelt on these considerations till they fermented in my fancy, and worked themselves out in such like expressions: "What! must we undergo so grievous an alteration? we, whose sprightly blood circulates in briskest tides? we, who are the favourites of time, on whom youth, and health, and strength, shed their selectest influence? we, who are so apt to look upon ourselves as exempt from cares, or pains, or troubles, and privileged to drink in the sweets of life without restraint, without alloy? Must we forego the sunshine of our enjoyments for anything resembling this melancholy gloom? Must the sparkling eye set in haggard dimness? the lovely features and glowing cheeks be obscured by pale deformity? Must soft and gay desires be banished from our breasts, or mirth and jollity from our conversation? Must the vigour of our age fall away like water that runneth apace, and the blissful minutes of the prime of our years vanish like a dream? If this be our case, in vain, sure, do we boast of our superior felicity, in vain do we glory in being the darlings of Heaven. The inanimate creation droop indeed, sicken and languish for a time, but quickly revive, rejoice, and again shine forth in their brightest lustre: It is true they relinquish, at the approach of winter, their verdant honours, but rest fully assured of receiving them with interest from the succeeding spring. But man, when he has passed the autumn of his maturity, when he has once resigned himself into the cold embraces of age, bids a long, an eternal adieu to all that is entertaining, amiable, or endearing: no pleasing expectations refresh his mind; not the least dawnings of hope glimmer in to qualify the darksome looking-for of death."

I had not long indulged these bitter reflections before I espied a remedy for those sore evils which occasioned them. Though I perceived all our passionate delights to be vanity, and the issue of them vexation of spirit, yet I saw likewise that virtue was substantial, and her fruits joy and peace; that though all things came to an end, the

ways of wisdom were exceeding broad. The seeds of piety, if implanted in our tender breasts, duly cherished, and constantly cultivated, will bud and blossom even in the winter of our days; and when white and red shall be no more, when all the outward embellishments of our little fabric shall disappear, this will still flourish in immortal bloom. To walk humbly with our God, dutifully with our parents, and charitably with all, will be an inexhaustible source of never-ceasing comforts. What though we shall sometimes be unable to hear the voice of singing men and singing women; though all the senses prove false to their trust, and refuse to be any longer inlets of pleasure, it is now, dear sister, it is now in our power to make such happy provisions as even then, in those forlorn circumstances, may charm our memories with ravishing recollections, and regale all our faculties with the continual feast of an applauding conscience. What sweet complacency, what unspeakable satisfaction shall we reap from the contemplations of an uninterrupted series of spotless actions: No present uneasiness will prompt us impatiently to wish for dissolution, nor anxious fears for futurity make us immoderately dread the impending stroke; all will be calm, easy, and serene; all will be soothed by this precious, this invaluable thought, that, by reason of the meekness, the innocence, the purity, and other Christian graces which adorned the several stages of our progress through the world, our names and our ashes will be embalmed, the chambers of our tomb consecrated into a paradise of rest, and our souls, white as our locks, by an easy transition, become angels of light. I am, with love to my brother, dear sister, your most affectionate brother.

LETTER II.

Lincoln College, Oxon. March 28, 1734.

Dear Sister,—It is now a considerable time since I enjoyed the true and real pleasure of your company. I say true and real, because my fancy has often took its flight to Hardingston, and delighted itself with the imaginary conversation of you and my other dear relations. I have frequently recollected, and, as it were, acted over again in my mind, the many pleasing hours we have spent together in reading holy and edifying books, or discoursing on pious and useful subjects. And methinks I should have been exceeding glad to have had the satisfaction yet more improved, by receiving a letter from you; which, I am sure, would have been full of the most tender endearments of love and affection, and, I hope, would not have wanted expressions of true religion and virtue; and could I but once see that—could I but observe ourselves not only dwelling together in unity, but travelling hand in hand towards the heavenly Jerusalem, mutually encouraging and assisting one another to fight the good fight, to lay hold on eternal life—then should I greatly rejoice, then should I begin to live.

I hope I may now congratulate your perfect recovery; however, I am certain there is great reason for congratulation, on account of your being so choice a favourite of Heaven, as your frequent sicknesses, and often infirmities, speak you to be. Our gracious Father, though an indulgent lover of all mankind, seems to watch over you with more than ordinary care and concern, to be extremely desirous, nay, even solicitous, for your salvation. How does his goodness endeavour, by the repeated, though lightest strokes of his rod, to cure whatever is disordered, to rectify whatever is amiss in you! How studiously does he seek, by laying you on a sick-bed, to make you see yourself, and all things else, in a true and proper light; to point out to you your frailties and follies, your darling lusts, and the sins that do most easily beset you; to convince you that you are only a sojourner here upon earth, your body a poor frail and corruptible house of clay, your soul a bright, glorious, and immortal being, that is hastening to the fruition of God, and to mansions of eternal rest; to discover to you the vanity, meanness, and contemptible littleness of this world; and the worth, the importance, and amazing greatness of the next! Do not then hold out against these kind calls to repentance and amendment; do not resist such earnest importunities, such sweet solicitations; but suffer yourself, by this loving correction, to be made great—great in humility, holiness, and happiness. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and, by a hearty sorrow for your past faults, and a firm resolution of obedience for the future, let this fatherly chastisement bring forth in you the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Oh! let us dread, let us tremble, to reject any longer the tenders of grace, lest we awake at length his justice, and draw down vengeance upon ourselves; lest our visitation be not in love and with kindness, but in heavy displeasure, and with fury poured out; lest his next dispensation be not a merciful severity, but indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish.

Sure I cannot but admire that adorable wisdom, which has contrived all things so evidently and so directly to your advantage! Your late illness has, I doubt not, begot in you serious thoughts and holy dispositions; and these, I flatter myself, will be

nourished by the reception of the blessed sacrament the following Easter. Let us, dear sister, break off our sins by repentance; let us amend our lives, and begin, from this very instant, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. So shall we answer the good ends of our sickness; so shall we be meet partakers of those holy mysteries here, and enjoy an inheritance amongst the saints in light hereafter. And now I cannot but acquaint you how earnestly I wished that you and others of my neighbours (with whom I have discoursed upon this subject) were giving devout attendance to the prayers and praises that were offered up last Monday in your church; as likewise how I should rejoice, with exceeding great joy, to hear that both you and they continue steadfast, or rather abound more and more, in the practice of this and such other religious duties. And if you think the desire of my heart, and the longings of my soul, are of any weight with any of them, pray let them know how I hope, desire, and pray, that we may be worthy communicants, by an immediate forsaking of all wicked ways, and a thorough amendment, as well as an unshaken resolution, to persevere and advance in that amendment.

My kind respects to all that you shall show or read this letter to; desire them not to forget me in their prayers; let ——— and ——— know that I often think of them, and hope they sometimes remember me, and the words that I have often spoke to them. I am, &c.

LETTER III.

Lincoln College, Oxon. May 2, 1734.

Dear Sister,—Finding myself in a writing humour, and remembering that I had formerly promised you an entertaining present, and being sensible of the decency of introducing it with an epistle; upon these accounts I again set pen to paper, and address you, notwithstanding you have so very lately received a letter from me. By an usefully entertaining present, I mean such a one as will improve and edify, at the same time that it diverts and delights; as will not only make you easy to yourself, and agreeable to others, but also good, and holy, and wise unto salvation. Now, I scarce know any human composition more likely to promote these excellent purposes than this poem on the last day.* For, being in verse, and set off with all the graces of speech and thought, it cannot fail of charming as well the nice ear as the sound judgment. And as for the subject, sure nothing can be more prodigiously pleasing than to read of that happy time which shall be the beginning of a blissful eternity; when our Redeemer, by his mighty power, shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like unto his glorious body, and translate us from a state of corruption in the grave, to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. And every one must own, that the most engaging persuasions to piety and holiness of conversation are drawn from the recompense of a future invaluable reward; and that the most sovereign preservative against all ungodliness and worldly lusts, is the terrors, the insupportable terrors of the Lord. If, therefore, you would please yourself, refine your taste, or have the practice of religion pleasing, instead of plays, ballads, and other corrupt writings, read this almost divine piece of poetry; read it (as I have done) over and over; think upon it, endeavour to digest it thoroughly, and even to get by heart the most moving passages; and then, I trust, you will find it answer the ends I purpose in sending it.

You will excuse me from exercising my poetical talent, since there are already two copies of recommendatory verses, and because I perceive such an attempt will be either very absurd, or very dangerous. For should I tack together a few doggerel rhymes, this would be an affront to you; whereas, should I succeed so well as to gain the applause of my readers, this, I am sure, would portend very great harm, if not to you, yet most certainly to me. For what can portend greater harm than the words of praise, which, though smoother than oil, yet be they very swords? What can be more destructive of that humble mind which was in Christ Jesus, that meek and lowly spirit which is in the sight of God of great price? I am so far from carrying on my versifying designs, that I heartily wish I had never conceived any; that those lines I sent to my cousin, had either never been made, or that I had never heard them commended. Pride and vanity are foolish and unreasonable in dust and ashes, and, which is worse, odious and detestable before infinite perfection and infinite power. Oh! let you and me then dread whatever may administer fuel to these worst of tempers, more than the poison of asps, or the pestilence that walketh in darkness. Let us pray against seeking, desiring, or taking pleasure in the honour that cometh of men. And if at any time the flattering tongue, that snare of death, shall overtake us, let us instantly fly unto our Saviour, and complain unto our God; then let us remember, and remembering, let us acknowledge, that

* By Dr. Young.

we are nothing, and have nothing, and deserve nothing, but shame and contempt, but misery and punishment.

I hope you was so happy as to receive the holy sacrament this Easter; and I beg of you to be so wise as well to understand and often to consider what you then did. We gave up ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice to God; so that we must look upon ourselves as having now no longer any right or title to ourselves, but as our heavenly master's sole property; we may not follow our own, but must do his will in all things. We undertook to lead a new life, to follow the commandments of God, and to walk henceforth in all his holy ways; and this, and whatever else we promised at that sacred altar, we must endeavour to perform, if we hope to enter into heaven. Let, therefore, no day pass without reflecting on the solemn engagement we have made, and without examining whether we have acted up to it. Let us not imagine that we did the whole of our duty, when we took the consecrated elements into our mouths; but be convinced, that we only, as it were, listed ourselves afresh under our Captain's banner, and that the service, the fight against his and our enemies, is to be hourly renewed, and constantly maintained, even unto death. I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

Oxon. March 11, 1735.

Dear Sister,—Yesterday the Judge came hither, and to-day the assizes begin. I shall go to hear the assize sermon presently. This cannot but put us in mind of that great account we must all give before the judgment-seat of Christ. How melancholy a sight is it to see a poor criminal go up to the bar! All he has is no longer his own; his very life is in the power of the magistrate, and he is in great danger of a speedy death. And if this be so dreadful, how infinitely more dreadful will it be to appear before a more strict and awful tribunal! The good Lord grant, that you and I may not be cast in that tremendous trial! A trial that will be undergone before angels and God; upon the issue of which our eternal life will depend. Was I to wish a wish for the dearest friend in the world, it should not be for gold, or jewels, or apparel; these things are fading, and the fashion of them passeth away; but it should be for a favourable sentence in that last and great day. Will not the archangel shortly sound the trump? Will not all the dead come forth of their graves, and the Ancient of Days sit? How valuable then will an humble and holy life be! If you and I be found with the wedding-garment on, we shall doubtless enter into the joy of our Lord, never to die, never to grieve, never to be parted more. But if we should either of us be negligent in this matter; if we should be surprised without oil in our lamps, Oh the fearfulness and trembling that will come upon us! the horrible dread that will overwhelm us! to think that we must be for ever shut out of heaven, banished eternally from the presence of God, the society of saints, and the fulness of joy! If you or I were to be torn from our kindred, and our father's house, and hurried away captive into a foreign country, there to be chained to the galleys, or condemned to the mines: how would this grieve both us and our dear relations; how would it pierce our souls as a sword! If this be sad, (as certainly it is), alas! what will it be to be everlastingly separated by the impassable gulf? for one to be caught up to heaven, and there to be ever with the Lord; and for the other to be thrust down into torments, and dwell with wailing and gnashing of teeth? Dear sister, let us consider this, and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure; that when the changes and chances of this mortal life are over, we may meet and live together in glory everlasting. Which is, and shall be, the hearty prayer of your, &c.

LETTER V.

Dummer, May 7, 1737.

Good Madam,—Pray be pleased to cast your eye to the bottom, and observe who it is that desires to bespeak you. It is one who knows himself to have been guilty of the most slighting behaviour, and to have deserved, in return, your greatest disdain. If, after you perceive his name to be Hervey—that Hervey who was so lately and so long in London, without ever waiting upon Mrs. ———; without paying his respects to her who merits so much the esteem of every Christian; without any thankful acknowledgment for her kind wishes so often conceived, and her prevailing prayers so often put up in his behalf; if, madam, after you are informed of all this, you can bear to give the remainder of the paper a favourable reading, I shall not only account myself highly obliged to your good nature, but when I have an occasion to put up with an affront, and to exercise forgiveness, I will think upon it as a pattern.

On Sunday I was called out by Provi-

dence from my own flock, to preach at two strange churches. They lay at a considerable distance from each other, and from Dummer; so that in passing to them, and repairing again to my own parish, I travelled a good many miles. All the way I went along, I was entertained in the finest manner imaginable; far more finely than mine, or, I may venture to say, than any words can describe. I wish I had the glowing colours, the accurate pencil, and the masterly genius of some first-rate painter, that I might draw out, with as little injustice as possible, the lovely landscape, and make a present in some degree worthy of your acceptance.

The air was in its best temperament, neither so hot as to enfeeble or dispirit, nor so cold as to cause any uneasy chillness. It was fit to recommend and set off the most agreeable objects, and to be the vehicle of perfumes, not much inferior to myrrh, aloes, and cassia. I was in company with a gentleman of a clear understanding, and a tolerable share of reading; he had seen much of the world, and had a very deep piercing insight into things; he could talk judiciously upon most topics, and would sometimes bestow hints upon religious ones. So that, when I was disposed for conversation, I could have immediate recourse to one that would refine my taste, and improve my judgment, if not minister grace to my heart. The face of the skies also conspired to render every prospect completely pleasant; it was decked and diversified with silver-like clouds; not such as were charged with heavy rains, but such as prevented the annoyance of one continual glare, and changed the sunshine frequently for a welcome shade; such as served for a foil to the unsullied ethereal blue. Thus did God order all circumstances, so as to render our ride exceedingly delightful.

At our first setting out, we went over strong ground, where no seed was sown, and so no fruit could grow. Its uselessness was not owing to any defect in point of fertility, but to a want of being manured. Is not this the case of many immortal souls, who are born with blessed dispositions, and bid fair for becoming eminent saints, but are lost and spoiled for want of care and instruction? O for faithful shepherds to seek them, for industrious husbandmen to cultivate them! Send, Lord, a plenty of such to work in thy vineyard, and to watch over thy sheep! This coarse beginning, though it had no form nor comeliness in itself, yet tended to give an additional verdure to the succeeding scenes. So the bottomless pit, and the unquenchable fire, though infinitely formidable, will create in the elect a more tasteful relish and enjoyment of their heavenly felicity. We made more haste than ordinary to get away from this barren spot. For why should any one tarry in such a place, or frequent such acquaintance, where all that occurs is vain and unprofitable? where nothing truly beneficial can either be imparted or acquired? The sooner we are delivered from such a situation, the better; no departure can be abrupt, no flight precipitate.

When we were advanced a little farther, we entered upon a large enclosure. Here were all the footsteps of a commendable and successful industry. The wheat was in the blade, and sprang up with a plenteous increase, and in goodly array. It was not choked with weeds, nor embarrassed with thistles, but, like a clean and even mantle, covered the plain; a present credit, and likely to be a future comfort to its owner. This suggested to me the value of a diligent hand—that portion which it is in every one's power to bequeath to himself. All the affairs of the slothful are like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there was no dew, neither rain, nor fields of offerings. But where there is prudence and discretion to contrive, and a steady fervour to execute, there whatsoever is undertaken will, in all probability, prosper. By a spirit of management, even the wilderness may be brought to bud and blossom as a rose; and was there such a spirit in the professors of religion, it would prompt them to be, like Dorcas, full of good works; or like the great apostle, continually aspiring after fresh and higher measures of perfection. We should be frugal of our time, careful of all our talents, and most laudably covetous of every grain of improvement in piety.

We held on our course, admiring still as we went the teeming earth, the infant corn, and the pregnant promises of a prodigious harvest. This led me to muse upon one of the most distinguishing doctrines of Christianity, I mean the general resurrection. It convinced me how perfectly possible it is with God to raise the dead; it gave me also a glimpse of that perfection of beauty to which the bodies of the just shall rise. For a little while ago I beheld, and lo! the whole vegetable world was naked and bare, without any ornaments, or so much as one amiable feature, like some withered, wrinkled, deformed hag. But now, how charmingly it appears, and smiles, and shines! No virgin is more gay and blooming, no bride is better arrayed, or more sparkling. And if God so enlivens and clothes the grass of the earth, and the tenants of the field, how much more shall he quicken and ennoble our mortal bodies, which, we hope, are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Several of our dear friends we have accompanied to the grave; we saw, with weeping eyes, their poor bones de-

posited in the dust. But henceforth let us dry up our sorrows; they are not to perish, but to be purified in those gloomy chambers. The hour is coming, when the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. Then shall they hear the almighty summons, and spring from their confinement, "like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices," Song viii. 14. Then will they look forth from their dark abodes as the morning, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun," Song vi. 10; never more to return to corruption, but to flourish in immortal vigour and youth. This is a pleasing meditation, and deserves to be indulged; but at this time it must give place to others.

Our next remove was to a lane, set on either side with lofty trees and humble shrubs. Here the prospect was contracted, and we had nothing left to contemplate but our branching and leafy mound. The little boughs clad with a cheering green were refreshing to the eyes; and it was curious to observe how every different plant was decked with a different livery. Here the twigs were gemmed with buds just ready to open and unfold; there they were already opened into blossoms, and garnished the pointed thorns; so that they were very delicate to look upon, though dangerous to touch. O the adorable efficacy of the divine voice! how powerfully and how lastingly it operates! God said once, "Let the earth bring forth;" he spake not twice, and yet how punctually does nature obey this single command! Several thousand years are gone about, nor is its force evacuated, impaired, or at all diminished. It endureth in full authority to this day, and is still a most binding law to all the material world. O that men would lay this to heart, and learn a lesson of obedience from the inanimate creation! All other things continue according to their Maker's ordinance; and shall man be the only rebel in the kingdom of nature? shall man alone make the word of Omnipotence to be of none effect?

While our sight was regaled in this manner, a set of chiming bells saluted our ears with a solemn and serene harmony. It had no great diversity of stops, nor artful mixture of notes; but sure it was most gladdening music, and spoke a heavenly meaning. It was calculated to inspire such a joy as the royal Psalmist felt, when he heard the acceptable invitation of going up to the house of the Lord. On a sudden, when we were least apprehensive of it, the wind wheeled about, and bore away the silver sounds. But it was only to bring them back again as unexpectedly, with the fresh pleasure of a grateful surprise. Here I thought of the sweet influences of grace, and wished for that happy time when the visits of the blessed Spirit will be uninterrupted.

Quickly the lawns and plains disappeared again; we dived into a wood. Numbers of sprightly birds, hopping and singing among the branches, solaced us as we passed. We thanked the pretty songsters, and bid them go on to supply our lack of praise. But what most of all affected us, being altogether new, was the warbling of the nightingale. What a tuneful throat has that charming creature! and what an unwearied use does she make of it! I myself heard her melody in the day-time, and I am told in the night-season she also takes no rest. How sovereign and undeserved is the goodness of the Lord to the children of men! The pipe of this wakeful chorister, though now so incessant in thanksgiving, must soon be sealed up in endless silence; while the mouth of dull and ungrateful mortals will be filled with everlasting anthems. The air was impregnated with sweets; and, without money or without price, we breathed in such a delicious fragrance, as far excelled "the powders of the merchant," Song iii. 6. This put me in mind of some beautiful lines of the great Milton:

> ——Now gentle gales,
> Fawning their odoriferous wings, dispense
> Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
> Those balmy spoils.——

The other recalled to my memory part of a divine description, vastly superior to Milton's; "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land," Song ii. 11, 12.

Two of our senses being so exquisitely gratified, we were in no haste to leave the place, though it was narrow, and afforded no other prospect but the shining canopy over our heads. But as soon as we were emerged from this sylvan path, what wonders presented themselves to our view! I think I was scarce ever more agreeably startled in my life. We stood upon the brow of a hill, and underneath were tracts of level ground of an immense circumference. The labouring eye could hardly discern its utmost bounds. The whole scene being parcelled out among a variety of tillers, and producing variety of fruits, was like a noble piece of chequer work. The nearer parts, and those distinctly discernible, were replenished with rural riches. The folds were full of sheep, and of lambs, frisking by the side of their fleecy dams. The valleys stood so thick with corn, that they even laughed and sung. One spot was not

sprinkled, but seemed to be overlaid with a profusion of flowers, as the roof of the temple was with gold; another was as it were enamelled, like an embroidered carpet, with a well proportioned distribution; some of them yellow as oranges, some white as snow, some tinged with a border as red as blood. The towns and villages, interspersed here and there, looked like the tiny tents of the fabled fairies. Numberless other beauties glanced upon my sight: but as I had not then leisure to examine them, so neither have I now room to relate them. O that these, and all the charms of the delightful season, may lead up every spectator's thoughts to the inimitable glories of heaven! And while the eye feasts upon them, let every tongue acknowledge, to the honour of the all-creating God,

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair: Thyself how wondrous then!

LETTER VI.

Dummer, June 27, 1737.

Dear Brother,—I find you are at London looking out for a trade and a master to set yourself to. I hope you pray earnestly to God to guide you in your choice by his infinite wisdom. He only knows what kind of employ will be best for you; in what family or neighbourhood you will have the most helps and encouragements to holiness; where you will be most exposed to temptations, to evil company, and to an early corruption. Therefore, remember what you have learned in the third chapter of Proverbs, and now, above all other times, put in practice: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Beseech the all-wise God to go before you in this weighty undertaking, and to lead you to such a master, and to settle you in such a place, where you may, the most advantageously, work out your salvation. Desire also your honoured mother, and mine, to have a great regard to your soul, and the things that make for its welfare, in putting you out. Let it be inquired, not only whether such a tradesman be a man of substance and credit, but whether he be also a man of religion and godliness? whether he be a lover of good people, a careful frequenter of the church? whether his children be well nurtured and educated in the fear of the Lord? whether family prayer be daily offered up in his house? whether he believes that the souls of his servants are committed to his trust, and that he will be answerable for the neglect of them at the judgment-seat? It will be sadly hazardous to venture yourself under the roof of any person who is not furnished with these principles, or is a stranger to these practices. But if he be quite contrary to all these, a despiser of God and goodness, wholly devoted to carnal pleasure and worldly gain; if he not only omit the religious care and oversight of his household, but also set them a wicked and corrupt example; let nothing induce you to enter into his service. A lewd, drinking, swearing, cheating master, will be sure to disregard the sobriety and purity of your behaviour, and very likely to corrupt it. To have his disorderly carriage daily before your eyes, will be as dangerous as to lodge in a plague-house. Therefore, let no consideration of profit or advantage, or of any other sort, prevail with you to become an apprentice to such a one. If you do, depend on it, you breathe tainted air, and it is much but you catch the deadly infection. After you are bound to a master, you must be as diligent in doing your duty to him, as you should be of examining into his character before you are bound. As I have given you my advice concerning the latter of these particulars, I fancy you will not take it amiss if I give you some directions concerning the former. As soon as you are bound, you are at your master's, and not at your own disposal; he has then a right to your hands, your strength, and all that you can do. He becomes a sort of parent to you; and though not a natural, yet a civil father. You are also obliged, not only by the laws of your country, and the tenor of your indentures, but by the fifth commandment of God, to pay him all due submission and honour. To do this, is a most material part of your duty as a Christian, as well as your undeniable debt as an apprentice. It is required of you by God in holy Scripture, and you must not once imagine that you do what is pleasing to him, unless you conscientiously perform it. Now, that you may know what it is that your master will expect from you, and what it is that the Lord has enjoined you with regard to him, remember it consists, first, In reverence of his person; secondly, In obedience to his commands; and thirdly, In faithfulness in his business.

First, In reverence of his person. You must esteem him very highly for his superiority's sake, and the resemblance he bears to God. For God who made you, and has an uncontrollable power over you, has communicated some of that power to your master; so that you are to look upon him as the representative, in some sort, of the divine Majesty, and invested with some of his authority. Accordingly St. Paul says, 1 Tim. vi. 1, You must count him worthy of all honour; all, *i. e.* internal and external, that of the actions and words, as well as that of the heart. It is not enough to maintain a worthy estimation inwardly, but

you must let it appear on all occasions outwardly, by behaving yourself very obligingly to him before his face, and by speaking very respectfully of him behind his back. Suppose you should discern failings and infirmities in him, you must by no means divulge them, or make yourself merry with them, much less must you dare to set light by any of his orders. Whatever you have reason to think will grieve or displease him, will be prejudicial or offensive to him, that you must cautiously forbear.

Secondly, Obedience to his commands. See how fully the apostle speaks to this purpose, Col. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." Observe likewise, from this passage, not only the necessity, but also the compass and latitude of your obedience, how large and extensive it is. It reaches not barely to a few, but to all and every instance. If you should receive orders that are ever so much against the grain of your own inclination, you must force yourself to comply with them; receive them as you used to do nauseous physic; though they may be unpleasant at first, they will do you good, and be comfortable to you afterwards; your own pleasure must always stoop, and give way to your master's. If he sets you such a task as is mean and ignoble, and such as (according to the expression of the world) is beneath a gentleman's son, do not scruple it, dear brother, but despatch it cheerfully. Remember who hath said, Servants, obey your masters in all things. And oh! remember, that be as well born and bred as we will, yet he that was higher than the highest of us all, even the most excellent and illustrious person that ever lived, condescended to the lowest and (such as our fine folks would account the) shamefullest offices: The Lord Jesus Christ, though the brightness of his Father's glory, disdained not to wash his disciples' feet. Neither be dejected because you are treated in an unworthy manner, or set to do some mean and low office for him or his family; but rejoice rather in that you are made like unto your Redeemer, and in the happy prospect you will have of becoming great in heaven, by being so little on earth. I am aware this piece of advice is not so unexceptionable as the rest; it may possibly be adjudged the mark of too yielding and sneaking a spirit; but never forget, that the things which are most highly esteemed by God, are held in least repute by men. I know, and am sure, that if any apprentice would make such a compliance for the sake of preserving peace, and out of conscience to the command of God, and with an eye to the example of Christ, there is a day coming when he will not repent of it; when it will not be deemed a blot to his character, but be an ornament of grace to his head, and more comely than chains about his neck, Prov. i. 9. Well, you see your obedience must be universal; you must come when he calls you, and go where he bids you; do all that he commands you, and let alone all that he forbids you. This must moreover be done not grudgingly, or of necessity, but readily and gladly; For hear what the Scripture saith, Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, Col. iii. 23; and again, With good-will doing service, Eph. vi. 7; so that we must not creep, but be quick and expeditious in our business, howsoever disagreeable. You must not go about it with grumbling words, and muttering in your mouth, but with so satisfied an air as may show that you are pleased with whatever pleases your master.

Thirdly, In faithfulness in his business. This is the last branch of your duty to your master; and since Moses has obtained an honourable testimony on this account, be you also faithful in all his house, Heb. iii. 5. You may find this, as indeed all the qualifications of a good servant, described by St. Paul, Tit. ii. 10. Not purloining, says he, but shewing all fidelity. You are charged not to purloin, *i. e.* not to keep back from your master, not to put into your own pocket, nor convert to your own use, any of that money which, in the way of trade, passes through your hands. You were taught from your childhood to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and I hope you abhor such abominable practices from the bottom of your heart. You must not sell at a cheaper, and buy at a dearer rate, in order to have some valuable consideration made you privily in your own person. These differ from robbing on the highway (they are flagrant acts of dishonesty, and will cry to heaven for vengeance) only in being less open and notorious. Such tricks and villanous devices do the same thing by craft and treachery, as housebreakers do by force and violence. Therefore, dear brother, renounce, detest, and fly from them as much as from fire, arrows, and death. Besides, you are not only to abstain from such clandestine knavery, but also to shew all good fidelity. What is meant by this you may understand by reading how Joseph conducted himself in Potiphar's service. Your master, it is likely, will commit the management of some of his affairs to you; and you must endeavour, by a discreet behaviour, and a pious life, to bring the blessing of the Lord upon all that you take in hand. You must lay out your time and your labour, and give all diligence to answer the trust reposed in you. You must not delay the business which is urgent, nor do your work by halves, nor transfer that to others which is expected you should

do yourself. The slothful man, says Solomon, is brother to him that is a great waster; therefore you must avoid idleness, and carelessness. In a word, you must do nothing knowingly and wilfully that is likely to impoverish your master, but seek by all lawful and laudable means to increase his substance. All this you must observe, not only when he stands by you, and inspects you, but when his back is turned, and you are removed from his view; otherwise your service is nothing but eye-service, such as will prove odious to man, and is already condemned by God. For if you appear to be industrious, and in earnest, before your master, but to loiter and trifle when out of his sight, you will be chargeable with hypocrisy; a sin extremely hateful to Christ, and grievously pernicious to the soul. But I am afraid I tire you; this one sentence, therefore, and I have done. You must carry yourself, throughout the whole course of your apprenticeship, so respectfully, so obediently, so faithfully, that at the end of it you may truly say with Jacob, with all my power I have served your father. I had more to write, but will send you (if you care to accept it,) the remainder some other time. May God bless you all, and your affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER VII.

Dummer, June 29, 1737.

My dear Friends, the inhabitants of Collingtree, near Northampton,—

I received the letter wrote in your name, and signed with your hands, and was very well pleased with its contents. I am glad that you are all in good health, and am obliged to you for retaining so honourable a remembrance of an unworthy youth. Your desire to have a careful clergyman settled among you, is perfectly right and laudable. But I fear you make an over-favourable and mistaken judgment, when you imagine me to be such a one, and pitch upon me for that purpose. However, letting this pass, it is, I say, well and wisely done of you, to be solicitous in this matter. For a minister is a person of the greatest importance imaginable; his office is of the most universal concernment; and his demeanour therein of the most beneficial or prejudicial tendency. Beneficial, if he be able, faithful, and watches for his people's souls, as one that must give account. Prejudicial, if he be unskilful, inactive, and unconcerned about the spiritual welfare of his people. The things that pertain to salvation, and the means of obtaining everlasting life, are lodged in his hands. He is the steward of the mysteries of Christ, and so the guardian (under divine grace) of your best and most abiding interests. If through ignorance he mismanage, or through idleness neglect this weighty trust, it may be the ruin of immortal souls; whereas, if he be both discreet and diligent in his holy vocation, he may be the instrument of the richest benefits to those committed to his charge. His praying to God, and his preaching to them, may be attended with such a blessing from on high, as will fill them with heavenly wisdom, form them to true holiness, and fit them for the future glory. Benefits these, not inconsiderable or momentary, but such as are great beyond all expression, and lasting to eternity. For these reasons, it will be your wisdom and your happiness to procure a pastor whose life is exemplary; whose doctrine is sound, whose heart is warm with zeal for God; and whose bowels yearn with compassion for men. If your bones were broken, or if you were brought to death's door by the force of some violent disease, you would not be content with the prescription of a quack, but seek out for the best advice. If your wives were in hard labour; if the children were come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth, you would not spare to ride for the most experienced midwife. Oh! be as prudent and careful for the salvation of your souls, which endure for ever, as you are for the life of your bodies, which is but as a vapour. Remember that you are sick of sin, sadly disordered by sundry corruptions, and must necessarily be cured before you go hence and are no more seen. Remember that you must be regenerated and born again, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. And be not willing to trust such matters, which are of infinite and everlasting moment, to the management of any that comes next.

Now, that you may be the better able to make a right choice in this important particular, I will lay before you two or three of the distinguishing characters of a true minister. First, He has a tolerable stock of knowledge: Though not enough to explain all mysteries, or to answer every perplexing question, yet enough to make himself and his hearers wise unto salvation. He may be ignorant of many things, without much disparagement to himself, or prejudice to his people; but he must be acquainted with, and able to teach others, all that is necessary for them to know. Secondly, He has not only some understanding, but some experience also, in the way of godliness. He has learned to subdue, in some measure, the pride of his nature, and to be humble in his own eyes, and not fond of applause from others. He has broke the impetuosity of his passion, and generally

possesses his soul in patience; or if, upon some very ungrateful and provoking usage, he cannot calm his temper, yet he can curb his tongue; and though his spirit be ruffled, yet his words will be gentle. He is most commonly meek, after the manner of his blessed Master, and will always return blessing for cursing, according to his holy command. He has often looked into the shortness of time, and the length of eternity; he has weighed the greatness and richness of heaven, with the insignificant and despicable meanness of earth; and discovers such a mighty difference, as helps him to live above the world, even while he is in it. So that he is no lover of filthy lucre, no hunter of carnal pleasures, but his hopes, his desires, and all his views of happiness, are hid with Christ in God. He is courteous and condescending, and will stoop with the utmost cheerfulness to the lowest person in his parish. He will be affable and kind, and seek to please, not himself, but his neighbours, for their good to edification. But you must not expect to find him trifling or ludicrous; he will not preach to you on the Sunday, and play with you on the week-days, but carry the spirit of his sermons into his ordinary conversation. He will maintain an uniform gravity of behaviour, without suffering it to be frozen into moroseness, or thawed into levity. He will love his parishioners, not for their agreeable persons or amiable qualities, but because they are redeemed by the blood of Christ. It will be his business and constant endeavour, I had almost said his meat and drink, to set forward their salvation; that, by their being made meet for the inheritance of saints in light, his crucified Lord may see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. He will never forget the importunate request of his Saviour, but those winning and commanding words, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs," will be engraven upon the tables of his heart. To fulfil this earnest request, and execute this last charge of his dearest Redeemer, will be the fixed and invariable scope of all his designs. If at any time he hits this desirable mark, by bringing home to the fold any that have gone astray, he will be as glad as one that findeth great spoils. To see the people of his care persisting in profaneness, sensuality, and an unconverted state, will be the greatest grief that he feels: but to see his children walking in the truth, mortifying their evil affections, and growing up in goodness as the calves of the stall, this will be his joy and crown of rejoicing; better to him than thousands of silver and gold. It is his work to win souls; and by the former of these qualifications he is fitted for it, by the latter he is wholly devoted to it. And, in order to prosecute it with the greater success, he will first take heed to himself, that his life be a fair and beautiful transcript of his doctrine, such as may remind men of, and be daily reinforcing his instructions. He will not bind the yoke upon your shoulders, till he has wore it himself; and should the paths of religion prove never so thorny, he will go first, and beat the way. As far as human infirmities permit, he will strive to be unblamable and irreproveable, that he may renew the apostle's challenge, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." Secondly, his preaching will be plain; full of such useful sense as may be edifying to the better learned, and yet delivered in so easy a manner as may be intelligible to the ignorant. It will not only be plain, but powerful also; if preceding prayers and tears; if words coming warm from the heart, and accompanied with an ardent desire of being attended to; if to feel himself what he speaks, and to long that it may be felt by others, can make it such, he will declare the whole will of God, without withholding or mincing any. Be the truth never so disagreeable, contrary to your profits, or contrary to your pleasures, you will be sure to hear it. He will indeed show it in as lovely a light, and make it as palatable as he can, but nothing will prevail upon him to conceal or disguise it. Thirdly, he will not confine his teaching to God's day or house, but will exercise his care of you every day, and will bring it home to your own houses, whether you invite him or no. He will frequently visit you, and for the same end as he meets you at church. Now, shall you like this part of his duty, or bid him welcome when he comes on such an errand? Nay, he will think himself bound to proceed farther, and to inquire into the state of your souls, and your proceedings in your families; whether you are competently furnished with saving knowledge, and are careful to increase it daily, by allowing a daily portion of your time for reading the Scriptures? what virtues you are deficient in, what vices you are subject to? what evil tempers, what vile affections, what unruly passions are predominant in you, and want to be suppressed? whether your children are catechized, and your servants instructed? whether you are constant in family-worship, and at your closet devotions? how you spend the Sabbath—whether you squander it away in impertinent visits, idle chat, or foolish jesting; or whether you consecrate it to the better exercises of prayer, praise, holy discourse, reading and meditation? These, and other points of the like nature, he will examine into; and exhort you to amend what is amiss, no less than encourage you to persevere in that which is good. Nor will he exhort you once or twice only, but again

and again, and hardly leave off till he has won your consent. In things that relate to himself, he will be easily said nay; but when the great God insists upon obedience, and a blessed immortality will be lost by disobedience, he will be instant in season, and out of season; he will solicit with unwearied applications the important cause, and press you to perform your duty, as the poor widow importuned the unjust judge to avenge her of her adversary; he will add to his exhortations reproofs. His eye will be open, and his ears attentive to what passes in his parish; and when any one walks disorderly, he will meet him as Elijah did Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 20, with a rebuke in his mouth. This I can promise, that he will not rail at, nor accost you with reproachful words, but he will certainly set before you the things that you have done. He will not defame you behind your backs, but whether you be rich or poor, whether you be pleased with it or not, he will bear in mind the commandment of the Lord, and show his people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins, Isa. lviii. 1. He will tell you with tenderness, but yet with plainness, that such courses are a sad and too sure a proof, that grace has not had its proper work on your souls; that ye are carnal, and have not the Spirit of Christ. So that a true minister of the gospel will be a constant inspector of your actions, a faithful monitor of your duty, and an impartial reprover of your offences. He will guide you by his counsel, and animate you by his example, and bless you by his prayers. If you be willing and obedient, he will conduct you safely through a troublesome and naughty world, and bring you to the land of everlasting felicity; but if you be perverse and obstinate, he will be a standing terror to your consciences here, and a swift witness against you hereafter; he will be the unhappy means of increasing your guilt, and aggravating your future account, and of making it more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you.

And now, my kind and dear friends, are you, upon second thoughts, desirous of having such a pastor placed amongst you? shall you be glad to have the aforementioned vigilance and diligence exerted in the holy function? Can you willingly submit to an oversight so narrow, to admonitions so incessant, to corrections so close and particular? If, after due consideration, you are willing, give me leave to inform you how you may procure such a man of God to come unto you, and take up his abode with you. He is an exceeding great and precious blessing to any people; too precious to be purchased with money, and is the free gift of God; so that the way to obtain him is to address yourselves to Heaven, and make supplication to the Almighty. What cannot prayer, fervent and believing prayer, do? I scarcely know any thing that is above its power, or beyond its reach. Prayer has locked up the clouds, and opened them again, made the earth as iron, and the heavens as brass; prayer has arrested the sun in his race, and made the moon stand still in her march, and reversed the perpetual decree; prayer has fetched down angels from above, and raised up the dead from beneath, and done many wonderful works. In like manner, prayer will get for you an useful and worthy teacher; if he be ever so far off, this will bring him near; if he be never so averse, this will overrule his inclination. Do you doubt of this? I own you would have good reason if you had nothing but my word to support it; but what if God, who cannot lie, has testified, and given you assurance of the same? Why, then, I hope ye will be no longer faithless but believing. Hear, therefore, what he himself hath said by his own beloved Son, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find," Matt. vii. 7. Again he saith, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," John xiv. 14. Here you see the Almighty has passed his word, and he, to whom all things are possible, has pawned his veracity, that he will not deny you the request of your lips. And dare you not trust in the Allpowerful? Can you have a better security than his, whose title is faithful and true? The divine promises are all immutable, stronger than the strong mountains; and heaven and earth shall pass away, sooner than one jot or tittle of them shall pass unfulfilled. When you desire a pious and able minister, ye desire a good thing, such as will be for the honour and glory of God to grant. Therefore, encouraged by this, and confiding in his most sure promise, beg of the Most High to give you a true pastor and shepherd for your souls; one that may love you like St. Paul, rule you like David, teach you like Samuel, and lead you like Joshua to the heavenly Canaan, that blessed and blissful country, where we all would be!

O God, great and glorious, infinite in thy wisdom, and incontrollable in thy power! thy providence is over all thy works; thine eyes run to and fro through the earth, to behold the condition, and supply the wants of thy servants: Thou sentest Moses to deliver thy children out of Egypt, Philip to instruct the ignorant eunuch, and Peter to preach to the devout centurion. O blessed Lord, who art the same yesterday, and today, and for ever, vouchsafe the same mercy to us of this parish, that we also may have a teacher come from God: Grant us, O thou

Giver of every good gift, a faithful shepherd for our souls, who may feed us in a green pasture, and lead us forth beside the waters of comfort; one that may be wholly devoted to thy service, and intent upon nothing but the due discharge of his important office; who may be a light to our paths by his godly directions, and as salt to our corrupting souls by his unblamable conversation. Let such a minister, we beseech thee, be placed over us as will watch for our spiritual welfare, that will love us with an affectionate and parental tenderness, that will cherish us as a hen cherisheth her chickens under her wings; one that may be able as well as willing, to instruct us in our duty; to whom thou hast revealed the wondrous things of thy law, and the glorious mysteries of thy gospel; whose lips may preserve knowledge, whose tongue may be continually dealing it out, and whose mouth may be unto us a well of fire; whose discourses may be milk to the babes, meat to the strong, and medicine to the sick; who may have a skilful as well as a compassionate zeal, and know how to divide rightly the word of truth; who may be an example as well as an exhorter, a pattern as well as a preacher, of every charitable action, and every devout temper; under whose guidance we may walk in the ways of peace and piety, of meekness and humility, of righteousness and salvation, till we all come to the city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. O grant us such a priest, and clothe him with such qualifications, and make thy chosen people joyful. Hear us, most merciful Father, for his sake whose sheep we are, who bought us with his blood, who died for us on earth, and maketh intercession for us in heaven, even Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

LETTER VIII.

Dummer, July 5, 1737.

Dear Sister,—I hope London does not disagree with the health of your body, and I dare say it may be made serviceable to the health of your soul. There are precious opportunities of going to church, and worshipping the divine Majesty every morning and evening, which I hope you do not slight, but embrace with all thankfulness, and prefer before every other engagement. If you were grievously sick, and even hard at death's door, you would be glad to have recourse to any physician; but if you heard of one that could not possibly mistake your case, and would infallibly cure you, how eagerly would you fly to him? Sister, believe me, our souls are sick of sin, sick of worldly-mindedness, sick of pride, sick of passion, and sundry other disorders, which, if not speedily healed, will bring us down, not only to the grave, but to the torments of hell. We have almost as little taste or relish of holy and devout exercises, as a sick and languishing man has for the strong meats he loved when he was well, which is a plain and too undeniable a proof, that our better, our immortal part, is sadly out of order. Now, at church you may find a sure and never-failing remedy for your spiritual disorders. God's grace is a sovereign medicine, and in his house it is to be obtained. There he, like a most bountiful and beneficent prince, stands ready to dispense the help and assistance, the enlightening and purifying influences of his Spirit. Sure, then, we who have such urgent and immediate need of them shall not be backward to go, and with an humble earnestness seek them. I say immediate; for since our life is so uncertain, and we know not what a day may bring forth, we ought to get our work despatched and our accounts ready without delay. It is evening now I write this, and I cannot tell whether this may not be the night in which I am to hear that amazing cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh. I intend to direct my letter to my dear sister ——, and hope she will receive it safe; but have no certainty whether she be yet alive or no. For ought I know, her soul may be standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, and going to be fixed, if not already fixed, in an unchangeable eternal state; her body may be pale and cold, and stretched out in the coffin; my dear mamma and my brothers taking their last farewell, and giving her the parting kiss; the joiner just about to nail on the lid, and hide her face for ever from mortal view; nay, she may already have been carried upon men's shoulders, and committed to the dust, so that what I am inditing may find her in the grave. She may be sleeping in some church-yard that I know nothing of, among thousands of dead bodies, never to awake, never to arise, till the archangel's trumpet sounds, and the heavens are no more. The very imagination of this sudden change strikes a damp upon my heart; I hope it is not a presage of what has really happened; if it be, and if my dear sister is a departed spirit, I will henceforth labour to dress my soul with holiness, that it may be ready to go forth at a minute's warning, and give her the meeting in another world. There, if my sister and I shall be found to have minded, above all things, the one thing needful, and to be full of heavenly, spiritual, and divine tempers, she will be to me better than a sister, and I shall be to her better than a loving and affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER IX.

My Dear Friend,—I received your kind letter, and thank you for your affectionate wishes. I endeavour not to be behind-hand with my people in this exercise of love. You are always on my heart, and often, often mentioned in my prayers. Especially, that you may be partaker of the Holy Ghost, and feel all those saving convictions which are described by our Lord, John xvi. 8—11; that you may be interested in the new covenant, and enjoy all those precious privileges which were purchased for us by our dying Saviour, and are recorded by his apostle, Heb. viii. 10—12.

Yesterday, in the evening, two gentlemen of the city came to visit me. Our conversation was such as I would have yours be; such as was suited (if God vouchsafe his blessing) to edify one another, and minister grace to the hearers. We talked of that infinitely condescending and gracious Friend of sinners, who came from heaven on purpose to be crucified for us, and is returned unto heaven on purpose to intercede for us. The intercession of our blessed Lord was the chief subject of our discourse, and is a most comfortable article of our faith. Because

His intercession never ceases; he sitteth at the right hand of his Father in an abiding posture. Other high priests are removed by death, but he ever liveth to make intercession for us. We resign part of our time to sleep, and then lose all attention to our own interests; but he is the Keeper of Israel, who never slumbereth nor sleepeth. We too frequently forget our God, and neglect to carry on communion with him; but Christ has written our names, (worthless as they are,) upon the palms of his hands; and a mother may forget her sucking child much sooner than he will discontinue his kind concern for the weakest believer.

His intercession always prevails. If Moses was heard, when he made supplication in behalf of Israel; if Job was not denied, when he petitioned for the pardon of his three friends; if Elijah's prayer entered into the ear of the Lord God of hosts, when he requested for rain upon the parched earth—surely God's dearly beloved Son will not be rejected, when he maketh intercession for the saints. The Father loves him, infinitely loves him, and therefore hears him. He has purchased whatever he asks, purchased it by his obedience and death, and therefore cannot but obtain his suit.

Perhaps you will inquire, What it is that Christ prays for? We are informed of this in John xvii. He prays that we may be kept from the evil that is in the world, verse 15: That we may be sanctified through the truth; sanctified through the word of Scripture, verse 17: That we may be united to Christ, and have fellowship with the Father by faith, fellowship with one another by brotherly love, verse 21: That we may be made perfect in his righteousness, presented without spot through his blood, and, at last, be with him where he is, to behold his glory, and partake of his joy, verses 23, 24.

Should you be desirous of knowing whether you are in the number of those for whom Christ intercedes, you may determine this important point by the following questions:—Do you value above all things the blessings for which Christ intercedes? Do you join your own repeated and earnest supplications to his intercession? And do you rely wholly upon Christ's unspeakable merits for the acceptance of all your prayers? If so, be not discouraged; Christ is your Advocate with the Father. He died for you on the cross, and pleads his meritorious oblations for you on his throne.

Is not this an inestimable blessing? If Hezekiah desired the prayers of Isaiah, if Darius desired the prayers of the godly Jews for himself and his sons, how should we rejoice in having the prayers of the exalted Jesus! If we are tempted, let this be our security, Luke xxii. 31, 32. If we fall into sin through the infirmity of the flesh, let this be our refuge, 1 John ii. 1, 2. If under apprehensions of death, or eternal judgment, let this be our consolation, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

I do not write out the Scriptures, because I would have you look them out, or even write them out with your own hand. And may the blessed Spirit of God write them upon all our hearts! This will come to you, I hope, on Christmas eve. You will talk of this letter, and its contents, to your harvest-men. I should be glad to be with you, and converse, as we used to do, on Christ and the kingdom of heaven. None of my flock, I hope, will be filled with liquor, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. My kind love to your family, and all your neighbours, particularly to your brother William, whose letter I shall answer by the first opportunity.—Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

Stoke-Abbey, June 19, 1738.

Dear Sister,—Will you accept of another letter from your loving brother, who loves your better part, and would fain be helpful to your immortal interests? I think I wrote to you when at London; I know not what acceptance that letter found, but

I can assure you it meant nothing but good, spiritual benefit, and everlasting advantage to you.

I hope my —— and —— are more easy with regard to me and my welfare. My disorder is a languor and faintness, a feebleness and inability for action, which is increased or lessened according to the various temperature of the weather. I bless God Almighty I am not deprived of my appetite to food, neither are my bones chastened with pain; so that many impute all my complaints to a hippish and over timorous turn of mind, to a distempered imagination, rather than a disordered body.

I write this in a pleasure-house of Mr. ——, situated upon a high cliff, on the very edge of the sea. On one side a vast track of land extends itself, finely diversified by stately trees, floating corn, and pasturage for cattle. On the other side rolls the great and wide sea, where go the ships, and where is that leviathan whom the Almighty Creator has made to take his pastime therein. Which way soever I look, I meet with footsteps of the divine immensity; I view thy great and marvellous works, O Lord God omnipotent; I am encountered with ten thousand arguments to fear thy tremendous power, and love thy diffusive goodness. O how safe are they who have so infinite and mighty a Being for their guard! How happy are they who have so inexhaustibly rich a God for their portion! But how wretched, dear sister, how miserably and emphatically wretched, who have such a one for their enemy and avenger! Oh! how can our feeble frame, that shrinks at a little light affliction, that is but for a moment, how can it bear the never-ending vengeance of that prodigious arm which stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, and poured out the waters of the mighty deep!

I have been about twenty or twenty-six miles into Cornwall, and seen wondrous workmanship of the all-creating God; ragged rocks, roaring seas, frightful precipices, and dreadfully steep hills. At Biddeford, a market town about fourteen miles off, I am pretty well known, and am a little esteemed. It is strange to tell, but let it be to the glory of God's free and undeserved goodness, though I am worthy of shame and universal contempt, yet I find favour and good understanding almost wherever I go.

Mr. ——'s house is situated in a fine vale. It is an ancient structure, built for the use of religious recluses, and has an antique, grave, and solemn aspect: before it is a neat spot of ground, set apart for the use of a garden, enriched with fruits, and beautified with flowers. This leads into a curious sort of artificial wilderness, made of elms and limes, planted in rows, cut into form, and uniting their branches. In the midst is a fountain large enough to swim in, and a little engine playing the waters. On each side are arbours for shade, in various parts seats for rest: on the right hand runs parallel to it a clear purling brook, replenished with trout; on the left, a thick grove hanging from the side of a hill: the one serves for a watery mound, the other is a leafy shelter from the north wind; and both, I think, greatly ornamental. This, you will say, is pleasant; but how unworthy to be compared with those blissful mansions fitting up for the righteous in the heaven of heavens! This, and if there be any other spot a thousand times more delicate, is no better than a howling wilderness, if compared with the regions of paradise. I wish my dear sister would earnestly seek for God's grace to draw off her affections from earthly delights, and fix them there, where real, substantial, and eternal joys are to be found, viz. on the blissful vision of God, and the fulness of joy that is in his presence for evermore.—Your, &c.

LETTER XI.

Biddeford, Dec. 10, 1740.

Dear Sister,—Though I am so backward in my compliments, I am most hearty in my wishes, that your spouse and yourself may enjoy abundance of happiness in the married state. I congratulate late, but I shall ever pray that you may find blessings twisted with the matrimonial bands, and not only live lovingly together as one flesh, but live holily together, as fellow-heirs of the grace of life.

I hope you will both remember the eternal world, which must very shortly receive you: That, ere long, the nuptial-bed must be resigned for a lodging in the grave; and the ornaments of a sparkling bride be exchanged for the dressings of death. And if, under the frequent view of these serious truths, you study to further each other in faith and holiness, then will you be true help-meets one to the other; then will you come together, not for the worse, but for the better; then may you trust, that, when death shall dissolve the union below, Christ Jesus will bid it commence again above, and continue to endless ages in the midst of unspeakable delight.

Please to present my humble service to the several Mr. —— and Mrs. ——, that still remain in your town; to Mrs. —— and her daughter; Mr. —— and his spouse, and Mr. ——. Remember me also in the kindest manner to your poor neighbours, particularly those who have Mr. ——'s books. May God Almighty give them grace to

make a proper and practical use of them! May he sanctify the attentive and diligent reading of them, to their increase in godliness, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

When you see my Collingtree relations and acquaintance, salute them affectionately in my name. I suppose you will soon see my —— and ——; present my duty to them. I should rejoice to see them again in the flesh, before any of us go hence, and are no more seen. May the Father of our spirits, and the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ our righteousness, prepare us for a happy meeting in the regions of glory, and for the blissful vision of his own adorable self.

There is at Biddeford, and has been for a considerable time, a townsman of mine, a middle-aged man, born at ——; his name is ——. I little thought to find such a person in these remote parts. It puts me in mind of heaven, where people of every kindred and tongue, of all nations and languages, will form one general and glorious assembly. May you and I, dear sister, one day be numbered with those children of God, and have our lot, our delightful and everlasting lot, among the saints. I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

June 2, 1747.

Reverend and dear Sir,—Can you accept the will for the deed? It was in my heart, long before this, to have made you my best acknowledgments; and not in my heart only, but actually attempted. In Buckinghamshire I remembered my kind and obliging friend, and was with delight set down to give vent to my grateful thoughts. But company on a sudden coming in arrested my pen, and engaging me till I returned from that place, prevented the execution of my design. Now, sir, my heartiest thanks for your welcome assistance desire your acceptance; and if the utmost sincerity can atone for the delay, my conscious heart assures me they will not be rejected. My father is wonderfully recovered. Had he lived in the times of superstition, for ought I know, his uncommon disorder might have been ascribed to witchcraft, and his speedy recovery passed current for a miracle. The grave seemed to have opened her mouth for him. We thought him to be on the very brink of death.

> Quam pæne furvæ regna Proserpinæ,
> Et judicantem viderit Æacum,
> Sedesque descriptas piorum!——

But now God has turned and refreshed him; yea, and brought him from the depth of the earth again. He lives, and regains his strength daily. Last Sunday he read prayers in his church, and intends next Sunday to fill the pulpit.

Mrs. ——, I hope, is very well; to whom I beg my humble service may be acceptable. Your dear little ones too, the olive plants about your table, I trust are in a flourishing state. May the good Lord fulfil his precious promise to them, and the children of your honoured neighbour. May he pour his Spirit upon your seed, and his blessing upon your offspring, that they may grow up (in knowledge and grace) as willows by the water-courses. I am just now going to our visitation, held at Northampton. I shall appear as a stranger in our Jerusalem! knowing few, and known by fewer. Methinks there is something august and venerable in a meeting of the clergy; especially if one looks upon them as so many agents for the invisible God, and envoys from the court of heaven. I hope to be put in mind of that awful day, when the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, and Bishop of souls, will make his entrance in the clouds of heaven. Then, at that great, final, and decisive entrance, may my dear friend receive the approbation of his Judge. May he then be rewarded, for his kind offices to myself and others, in everlasting honour and joy. I am, &c.

LETTER XIII.

Biddeford, July 7, 1741.

Dear Sister,—After a very sultry journey, I arrived safe at Biddeford. Here I have been one whole week. At Bath and Bridgewater I made a considerable stay. I tarried at each place a couple of nights; was entertained with abundance of civility.

There is a general prospect of a plenteous harvest. The valleys stand so thick with corn, as makes the traveller rejoice, and the husbandman sing. There is great want and scarcity of many things, but there is plenty of fish. Now the dry land is so barren, the waters yield the larger increase. It is observed, to the glory of God's good providence, that, now flesh is so dear, fish is uncommonly cheap. Thus graciously does the Almighty, when he locks up one, open another fountain of his beneficence. During my absence from Biddeford, a lusty man, in the prime and vigour of life, was carried off by my father's disorder. It is therefore a distinguished mercy that our father has enjoyed; such as has been withheld from others, while it has been vouchsafed to him.

I am now far from my dear relations. Friends I have indeed, but not one of my kindred near me. O that God may be my guide, my protector, and my portion here and for ever. If the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ be my shepherd, I shall lack nothing. Unworthy, altogether unworthy of such an inestimable favour, I desire to lie at the feet of his free unmerited grace; seeking what he is ready to give, though I, alas! am most undeserving. And surely we have good reason to hope, and the very best encouragement to seek. For if he gave his life, and spilt his blood for us, will he not much rather give us pardon of our sins, and justification through his righteousness?

I hope my brother —— is in perfect health. I wish him a seasonable and kindly harvest; and wish you both abundance of happiness; and am, dear sister, his and yours, &c.

LETTER XIV.

My Dear Friend,—I find you have had Mr. —— among you lately. Many, I hope nave found abundant benefit from his preaching, and you in particular. He is a shining light, a choice and illustrious ambassador of Jesus Christ. What a savour of his divine Master does he shed abroad whenever he preaches; such a savour as many corruptions cannot overcome, nor all the world suppress. Biddeford, I hope, has experienced this savour. Methinks I now see him in the pulpit, and hear him lifting up his compassionate voice like a trumpet, and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. Methinks I see him displaying the gospel standard, and his tongue touched from the heavenly altar, inviting sinners to flock under his shadow: crying, Come, ye simple ones, whom Satan has beguiled, and Christ shall give you light; come, ye wicked ones, whom Satan has enslaved, and the gracious Redeemer shall set you free; come, ye that have been righteous in your own eyes, forsake this refuge of lies, and enter into the ark before the rains descend, and the floods come, which will sweep away every false hope. O lean not upon a broken reed! build not upon the sinking sand, but upon the Rock of Ages, the foundation laid in Zion by the hand of Heaven itself. Come unto Jesus ye ruined and undone sinners, for he has a tender heart that is ever open to receive you, and an arm that is omnipotent to save you. Indeed, my friends, those that know Christ's name will seek no other Saviour, nor desire any other good; all their bones will cry out, Lord, unto whom shall we go, but unto thee? thou only hast the words of eternal life. They that know Christ's free goodness, will put their whole trust in him, and seek no other way to the Father of mercy but through his merit. This is the only claim they have to make for their acceptance—Christ died; but for whom did he die, my dear friends? He gave himself a ransom for all; he was lifted up upon the accursed tree, and out of his side came a fountain of blood and water, where every sinner may bathe, and be made clean. The awakened sons of Adam, that feel their miseries, see a fulness of merit in one drop of that blood, sufficient to atone for the guilt of ten thousand worlds. This fills them with great comfort, although they are vile sinners. What though they are loathsome beggars, taken from the dunghill of uncleanness, that are but now returning from the highways and hedges of every abominable practice? What though they are as beasts before God, very dogs, like that poor Syrophenician woman? yet Christ's saving kindness is so great and unbounded, that he casteth out none who come to him. Here is consolation for the trembling sinner; though he has not a grain of worthiness in himself, yet his Lord has infinite treasures of unmerited grace. They who believe that Christ shed his precious blood for guilty sinners, will cheerfully put their trust in his atonement for pardon. They will say, O! they will often say, with gratitude glowing in their breasts, and tears in their eyes, Be it that my sins are of the deepest crimson dye, and more in number than the hairs of my head, yet the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and washeth a filthy polluted conscience whiter than snow. With him there is no scanty, but plenteous redemption. Be my debts ever so great, ten thousand times ten thousand talents, yet the agonies of the once slaughtered Lamb has paid it to the very uttermost farthing. They who know his righteousness will put their trust in it alone for justification. If I had the righteousness of a saint, says one, O how happy I should be: If I had the righteousness of an angel, says another, I should fear no evil. But I am bold to say, that the poorest sinner that believes in Christ has a righteousness infinitely more excellent than either saints or angels. For if the law asks for sinless perfection, it is to be found in my divine Surety. If the law requires an obedience that may stand before the burning eye of God, behold it is in Jesus my Mediator. Should the strictest justice arraign me, and the purest holiness make its demands upon me, I remit them both to my dying and obedient Immanuel: with him the Father is always well pleased; in him the believer is complete. They who know Christ's power, will put their trust in him for sanctification

of heart, and newness of life. Though sin is rooted in my soul, and riveted in my constitution, yet Christ can purge it out. Though it were twisted with every nerve of my flesh, yet he can make the rough tempers smooth, and the crooked dispositions straight: the vile affections, like legions of devils, he can root out, and fill every heart with the pure love of God. To which happy state of soul may both you and I be brought while here below; that we may be made meet to ascend to that habitation of God, where nothing unclean can enter. I am yours sincerely, &c.

LETTER XV.—To his Father.

Biddeford, Oct. 1, 1742.

Reverend and Honoured Sir,—Your last, containing the melancholy account of the death of both my aunts, I received. I hope they died in the Lord, and sleep in the bosom of Jesus; and then, truly, they are the happy persons, and we the objects of pity. They rest, and have cast anchor in the harbour; whereas we are still beating on the ocean, and tossed in the storm. If we consider things impartially, this world is our grave; nor do we really live, till we burst the fleshly prison, and get beyond the visible skies.

In the grave is darkness. It is called the shadow of death. And what else is this wretched world? what but a state of gloominess, a valley of the thickest darkness; where poor mortals grope in spiritual ignorance, and wander up and down, not seeing the things that belong to their peace?

In the grave, and among the tombs, we look for phantoms and apparitions. And what else do we meet with here below? A thousand sorts of happiness present themselves to our wishes, but are unsubstantial and fantastical all. They are a gay delusion, and mock our expectations, as one of those vanishing forms would baulk our embraces.

The grave is the land where all things are forgotten. The ideas of friendship are obliterated, and the dearest relatives are remembered no more. And is not this too true a description of our present state? Do we not unaccountably forget Jesus Christ, our almighty friend, and everlasting glory, our invaluable heritage? Where is the man that remembers his bleeding Saviour on his bed, and thinks upon him when he is waking? No; the Redeemer's inconceivable love, and the precious benefits of his passion, are buried in a deep oblivion. This world then of darkness, apparitions, and forgetfulness, is the grand dormitory; flesh and blood the tomb of our immortal minds,

Nascentes morimur.

I fear I tire you, honoured Sir; but because I have no news that you can apprehend or relish, I allow my pen in these excursions. This week I was sent for to visit a lady of this parish, in the same disorder that proved so fatal to my two aunts. She lay, poor gentlewoman, most terribly afflicted, and is now released. It put me in mind of the Psalmist's penitential acknowledgment, which I think is never more applicable than in the case of the small-pox: "When thou, Lord, with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment." I shall rejoice to hear that you and my mother continue well under all your trouble and fatigue, and remain, Reverend and Honoured Sir, your most dutiful Son.

LETTER XVI.

Biddeford, Oct. 12, 1742.

Dear Sister,—I received your kind letter. It was a pleasure to hear from Hardingstone, the place which gave me birth, and the place which preserves my sister. I am obliged to the Reverend Mr. Rose for remembering me, and desire him to accept my best compliments: I hope he will be an instrument of doing much good in your parish. To save souls is the noblest acquisition in the world; infinitely more desirable than to find great spoils. May this be his honour and happiness, and may it be my continual aim!

My poor aunts are no more, they are gone the way of all flesh; eternity has received them; their state is now become unchangeable. Oh! that we may be alarmed by their departure, and labour while we have time, to make our calling and election sure!

My mother tells me you have been much indisposed; I shall rejoice to hear that you are better. Sickness and afflictions are God's call; they are divine admonitions, and warn us not to be fond of the world, but set our affections on things above. May the blessed Jesus make them effectual to our souls!

I wish I had any news to write that you can understand and relish. The small-pox is marking many, and carrying off some among us: it is a privilege of no small value to be past that infectious disorder: I have often thought that it is too lively an emblem of the condition of our souls, by corrupt nature and evil practice. So polluted, so loathsome is our better part in the eye of uncreated purity, till we are washed, till we are cleansed in redeeming blood. May we earnestly long to be wash-

ed in that fountain, opened in our Saviour's side, for sin and for uncleanness.

See how our judgments and inclinations alter in process of time! I once thought I should make less use of the Spectators than you; but now I believe the reverse of this is true, for we read one or more of those elegant and instructive papers every morning at breakfast: they are served up with our tea, according to their original design. We reckon our repast imperfect without a little of Mr. Addison's or Mr. Steele's company. I wish Miss Becky K—— an increase of happiness in the change of her state; marriage should augment our joys, and diminish our sorrows. My humble service attends Mrs. K——, Mr. C——'s family, and Mr. V——. My love to my brother, and to yourself, concludes all at present to be communicated by, dear sister, your affectionate brother.

LETTER XVII.

Bath, August 27, 1743.

Reverend Sir,—Sunday last I happened not to be at the Abbey-church in the afternoon. But conversing with a gentleman who was one of your auditors, I desired to have a summary account of your sermon. And truly he gave me such an account as both astonished and grieved me. You dignified worldly prosperity at so extraordinary a rate, and almost canonized the prosperous man. On the other hand, you vilified the glorious Jesus in so scandalous a manner, and set the incarnate Godhead to one of the most ignoble and abominable offices. This made me encourage my friend to draw his pen, and send you a word of admonition. And when he declined the task, I could not forbear undertaking it myself. For it would be unkind to you, sir, to perceive you under such grievous mistakes, and not to warn you of the error of your ways. Nor would it be less unfaithful to your Master, and my Master, to be informed of such preaching, and suffer it to pass current without any animadversion.

If I misrepresent you in any particular, I am ready to retract. And if I have truth on my side, and you, reverend sir, have spoken unworthy of your sacred office, have dishonoured the divine Redeemer, and perverted his everlasting gospel, I trust you will also be so ingenuous as to condemn that offensive sermon to the flames, and such doctrines to silence and darkness. For I assure you, it is from no ill-natured spirit of criticism, no moroseness of temper, or fondness for contradiction, but from a sincere concern for the interests of true religion, and the honours of our common Lord, that I take leave to suggest the following hints.

I think you first exhorted people to rejoice, when their circumstances were affluent, and their worldly affairs prosperous; you enforced this palatable advice by the precepts of Scripture; and, lest it should not be received with a proper welcome, you further urged it upon your hearers by the example of our blessed Saviour. In opposition to this strain of teaching, permit me to observe,

1. That worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for a Christian to rejoice.

2. That it is often one of the sorest evils that can befall a person.

3. To sketch out the true nature of scriptural prosperity; or discover what is that solid ground for rejoicing, which the oracles of God recommend.

1. Worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because worldly things are empty and unsatisfactory. That which is lighter than vanity itself, cannot possibly give substantial joy. If we build for contentment on sublunary things, we rear our edifice upon the sinking sand. You can no more bring satisfaction out of any thing created, than you can carve an image out of the rising smoke, or fill your belly with the east wind. Those that rejoice only (and you, dear sir, assigned no other cause for rejoicing), because they have abundance of earthly things richly to enjoy, are like some bewildered and benighted traveller, pierced with cold, dripping with wet, that leaps for joy because he finds a glow-worm under the hedge. Alas! this is nowise able to direct his wandering feet, to light him through the dismal gloom, or to warm his benumbed limbs; no more than it is able to supply the place of the sun, and dart its faint glimmer through the universe. The pleasures which a superior fortune furnish out, O how soon do they become stale, and pall upon the appetite! How easily may a thousand accidents snatch them from our embrace, or dash them to pieces in our arms! How certainly must we forsake them in a very little time; and when we have taken a few more pleasant morsels, a few delicious draughts, eat and drink again no more for ever! And what a wretched disproportionate delight is this for an immortal mind, that is to survive the dissolution of the globe; that is to live unnumbered ages, when all that our eyes have seen is passed away and gone?

Again: Worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because a person may possess this, and have neither faith nor grace. There is no manner of connexion between faith and wealth. The poor frequently receive the gospel, while numbers

of the rich reject their own happiness. And without faith it is impossible to please God; it is unreasonable and unwarrantable to rejoice. The believer, indeed, has a permission, has a privilege, yea, has a patent for rejoicing. The Christian has all joy and peace in believing. All: you see here is a monopoly; faith has engrossed this precious commodity. None is to be procured but from her. And as for grace, talents of gold may be in the coffers, and not one grain of grace in the heart. Those that call whole lordships their own, cannot, perhaps, say that they have received the Holy Ghost. And while they are destitute of this divine principle, I can call them nothing but wretches. You may add illustrious, right honourable, and worshipful, if you please; but still they are miserable wretches, unless Christ, the hope of glory, be formed in their souls. The Holy Ghost, you know, sir, is called the Comforter, because it is his amiable office to administer consolation to his people. He giveth joy, and who can make sadness? But, alas! if he withdraw his benign influences, who or what can create satisfaction? Silver shoes may as well charm away the racking pains of a goutified foot, or golden dust quench the thirst of a parched throat, as any worldly abundance, as all worldly plenty, beget real joy, without the communications of the comforting Spirit. You forget, sir, the prayers which you daily offer up in the congregation. In them you acknowledge that the world cannot give peace; and if not peace, surely not joy; if not the fruit, surely not the blossom. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. And all are wicked who are void of faith, and unrenewed by grace. All run counter to the divine declaration, who bid such persons rejoice, though they should have every kind of prosperity that a carnal heart can wish.

Once more: Worldly prosperity is no sufficient cause for rejoicing, because a man may possess this, and be a child of wrath notwithstanding. Providence often scatters temporary things among the tents of his enemies. They have children at their desire, and leave the rest of their substance for their babes. These are husks which the swine are permitted to eat. God's dearest servants, those who are heirs of glory, are frequently seen to be without any share of them, while the most abandoned sinners have them to the full. Lazarus has not a house to lay his head in, while the voluptuary dwells in apartments ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermillion. Lazarus has not enough to purchase one morsel of meat, must be beholden to charity for the least crumb of provision; while his hard-hearted neighbour drinks wine in bowels, and eats the choicest of the flock; is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fareth sumptuously every day. Who then can rationally rejoice in that which is no pledge of the divine acceptance, which carries with it no proof of our reconciliation to that eternal Majesty, whose smile is inconceivable bliss, whose frown is insupportable wo? A wealthy and successful person, if he be considerate as well as fortunate, must go home from such a sermon, arguing in this manner: "The preacher solicits me to rejoice in my worldly goods; but how can I find complacency in such perishing possessions, when, perhaps, I may be an outcast from heaven, and have no place in that kingdom which endureth for ever? how can I take pleasure in those dainties which replenish my table, when perhaps the heavy wrath of God may fall upon me, while the meat is yet in my mouth? This sumptuous furniture, this glittering equipage, these delicious treats, how can I take real satisfaction in them, when, for ought I know, a hand-writing upon the wall may be denouncing my doom? If God would lift up the light of his countenance upon me; if I was sweetly ascertained of his good will, then I could rejoice unfeignedly. But as for these large revenues, and tides of success, that are so much extolled by the preacher, they may prove like the rich pastures that fatten the ox for the knife."

Will you have patience with me, sir, if I proceed to prove,

2. That worldly prosperity is so far from being an adequate cause for our rejoicing, that it is frequently one of the sorest and most mischievous evils? This, I am sure, was the opinion of Archbishop Usher. That most renowned and excellent prelate, in his younger days, had a continued series of prosperity; health impaired by no attacks of sickness, credit sullied by no breath of scandal, and success interrupted by no disappointment or disastrous turn. And what emotion did this occasion in that devout and judicious person's mind? Did his heart dance within him for joy? did he bless himself on this behalf? No; but he was under sad apprehensions lest God had forsaken him, and given him over to a reprobate course. He feared that his heavenly Father, because he spared the rod, hated the child; that not being brought under the discipline of providential correction, he was a bastard, and not a son of the Lord Almighty. How diametrically opposite was this way of thinking to your way of preaching! And, whether it was not a very sober and just method of thinking, let the following considerations determine.

Worldly prosperity is apt to attach men to earthly things. When success swells their sails, and all proceeds according to their wish, O how prone are we to disregard

Jesus, and everlasting ages! Many are immoderately fond of the world, because they have swam sweetly down the stream of prosperity, who probably would have been weaned from its delights, and indifferent to its goods, in case they had toiled upon the craggy cliffs of some intervening adversity. When they walk always upon roses, and meet with no thorns in their paths, the consequence is an acquiescence in their present station, and remissness in seeking the joys of an invisible world. A contentment in the things that are seen, without any aspiration after the things that are not seen, is the most unhappy condition imaginable, and is generally the offspring of worldly prosperity; and when this worldly prosperity is so highly rated in the calculations of the pulpit, what other effect can possibly attend such lectures, but to glew our affections more closely, and rivet them more inseparably to these trifles of a day?

Again: Worldly prosperity is frequently a mischievous evil, because it is apt to make men proud. They come in no misfortune like other folks, says the Psalmist; and this is the cause that they are so holden with pride. Prosperity is often a luscious poison. It bloats and puffs men up with an overweening opinion of themselves. It intoxicates the mind, and makes it drunk with self-conceit. It prompts people to idolize themselves, and contemn others. The intolerable arrogance of the Babylonish monarch, what was it owing to but his vast and uninterrupted successes? He measured his merit by the length of his purse, and challenged a veneration proportionable to the extent of his dominions. This vile rank weed thrives in the hot-beds of honour, wealth, and carnal pleasure; whereas it might never have reared its head in the colder climate of tribulation or scantiness of circumstances.

Once more: Worldly prosperity is frequently a pernicious evil, because it renders men carnally secure. It case-hardens the mind against all the threatenings, and makes it deaf to the invitations of heavenly wisdom. It is a stupifying potion, and lulls the soul into a fatal forgetfulness of everlasting things. Those that were lusty and strong in our Saviour's days, joined with the impious multitude in despising the veiled Divinity. But those who were diseased in their bodies, or disordered in their minds, with eagerness fell prostrate at his sacred feet, and implored his healing hand. *Periissent nisi periissent.* You cannot but have observed various proofs of this remark in the course of your ministry; you must have seen many persons that rejected all your counsel, and would none of your reproof, while they washed their steps in butter, and the rock poured them out rivers of oil. But how teachable were these once refractory worldlings, how willing to hear the consolations of the gospel, when their sensible delights were perished and gone! How desirous to be informed of a happiness in the heavens, which fadeth not, when their carnal pleasures had made themselves wings, and were flown away! In the gaiety of their health, and abundance of their plenty, they were settled upon the lees of supineness. But when the scene was shifted, they cried out with vehemence, What must we do to be saved? This I myself have frequently remarked in the short compass of my experience. Men who were like an iron sinew in their flourishing condition, have been impressible as melting wax in a reverse of fortune.

We see, then, that the prosperity of this world is always dangerous, often pernicious, and too frequently destructive. It yields pleasures that infatuate, sweets that are impoisoned, delights that stupify, insomuch, that a heathen could say, *Nihil infelicius illo, cui nihil infelix contigit.*

Here, it may be asked, Are we to take no comfort in our portion on earth? must we become gloomy and melancholy, and go mourning all our days? Far, far from it. Religion allows us, religion enables us, religion requires us to be joyful. Yea, it gives its faithful adherents to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But then, it is founded on a principle vastly superior to that which you, sir, thought fit to single out and display. It springs from a source, and rests on a basis, that has no manner of dependence on worldly circumstances. Which reminds me of another point I am engaged to clear up, viz.

The true nature of scriptural prosperity. The scripture is a spiritual scheme. Spiritual goods are what it chiefly recommends, and from spiritual evils it chiefly deters. Christ's words are spiritual; tending to make men not carnally minded, but spiritually minded; to render them spiritual in their understandings, their affections, their conduct. Insomuch, that one need not scruple to affirm constantly, That the holy Scripture never calls that state a state of prosperity which is not grounded on the favour of God; nor ever encourages people to rejoice in any thing till they are reconciled to God, interested in Christ, and renewed by the Holy Ghost; which, I think, constitute the scriptural prosperity; I am sure are the groundwork of all happiness. First, for reconciliation to God. His favour is better than life. Life itself is worthless, and consequently all its enjoyments, without this prime fundamental blessing. For this cause the Prince of Peace bled to death, that the handwriting of guilt might be blotted out; that the wrath of

God might be appeased; and that we who were enemies might be brought near through his blood. This is the door to all good. Enter in by this gate, O ye sons of men, or else you will inevitably miscarry in your search after felicity. If you seek for bliss, and bottom not your expectations on this rock, you are sure to be disappointed of your hope. I can no more have true comfort in any possession, till I have redemption through my Redeemer's passion, than that unfortunate captive could rejoice in the royal banquet that was before him, when a ponderous sword, edged and unsheathed, was hanging by a slender thread, and shaking every moment over his head. An interest in Christ: This is another pillar to support our felicity. Therefore our blessed Lord, directing us in the way of our true good, says, "Seek ye the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." The everlasting kingdom of heaven as the end, and the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ as the way. Till the one is our actual possession, and the other our certain reversion, we may look for real satisfaction, but shall find none. Apply to all the creatures, rifle all their charms, taste all their sweets, you will perceive them to be altogether lighter than vanity itself, without an union with Christ, and an establishment in his merits. Renovation of mind is another ingredient of the prosperity delineated in Scripture. Till the soul be sanctified, it is in a state of grievous disorder; like a body, all whose bones are out of joint. And oh! what joy can be tasted in such a condition? Till divine grace have the ascendant within us, till the kingdom of God be set up in our hearts, we are in bondage to corruption. Vile affections domineer over us. The devil and our own lusts play the tyrant in our breasts. We are like slaves under a galling yoke, and like lepers under a noisome distemper. Therefore the Psalmist says, When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it. Till thy image be restamped upon my heart, I never expect to see good. While we are in the bond of iniquity, we must infallibly be in the gall of bitterness.

This is the prosperity celebrated in the Scriptures. Of this every believer is a partaker; and you will please to remember, that every exhortation to rejoicing, which we meet with in those inspired books, is addressed to such persons only. They give not the least invitation to any one, no, nor the least license to rest satisfied, much less to rejoice, till they are brought into such circumstances of reconciliation with Heaven, and renovation of mind. Nor have you, sir, any warrant to say to yourself, or your people, Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, because thou hast much goods laid up for many years. This is the epicure's creed. The lively oracles bear their testimony against such conclusions. They style all the unregenerate, fools; and to such, worldly abundance is not matter for mirth, but matter of ruin: for the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. Be they grand as Nebuchadnezzar, in as much affluence as Ahasuerus, honoured as Herod was by the applauding multitude, yet every page of Scripture says to them, as Jehu to Joram's messenger, What hast thou to do with peace? And however some smooth-tongued preachers may flatter and cajole them in their pomp, however they may prophecy smooth things, and solicit them to rejoice on such a footing as the Lord has not made a ground for rejoicing, yet an apostle bespeaks them in very different language: Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl. The Teacher sent from God has other tidings to tell them: Wo unto you that are rich, that are full, for ye have your consolation, ye shall hunger hereafter. And, in another world, they may hear this awful admonition sounding in their years, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things: thy good things, those which thou accountedst good, not that really were good, but only appeared so to thy distempered judgment and vitiated taste.

Surely, sir, it must have been perfectly prudent, or rather absolutely necessary, to caution your audience against so fatal a mistake; especially since they consist of the gay, the grand, the pleasurable. A vigilant minister would certainly give them to understand, that wealth and plenty is by no means the prosperity which the Spirit of God commends; that joy, without the loving-kindness of the Lord, is a mere chimera; that none are entitled to this medicine of life but those who can lay their hand upon their hearts, and say, with a faith unfeigned, My sins are all forgiven through the atonement of the slaughtered Lamb; my peace is made with the eternal God, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells in me. This is that which justifies, which produces joy. Then, indeed, and not till then, the wise man's advice may be thy practice, Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth both thee and thy works. Then thou mayest take comfort in thy earthly accommodations, as so many little appendages of thy bliss; not as the essence which constitutes it, but as the cement which serves to fill up some little interstices, and renders the whole somewhat more compact. And even in this case, our blessed Master (who bid his disciples not to rejoice because the devils were subject unto them, but because their names were written in heaven) would probably caution us not to rejoice because

we have all worldly things copiously to enjoy, but because we are pardoned, we are justified, we are sanctified.

Upon the whole, suppose worldly prosperity was not oftentimes a most mischievous evil, which it undoubtedly is; suppose it was a substantial ground for Christian rejoicing, which it really is not; suppose this was the scriptural prosperity, which notion is, I trust, sufficiently disproved; in a word, suppose the whole tenor of your doctrine to be true, whereas it seems to be palpably false; yet what good, in the name of wonder, can you possibly propose by such preachments? You cannot but be sensible that we are all strongly addicted to inferior things. We are already too fond of worldly goods, too impetuous in our pursuit of sensual gratifications. We want, we extremely want a curb, to check our career, and you clap a spur on our sides. You employ your eloquence as a provocative in a case that cries aloud for restrictives. Alas! sir, you have no occasion to push the headlong torrent! But I have done with this point; have nothing more to add upon this head, unless it be to recommend to your serious consideration that alarming verdict pronounced by infinite wisdom, He that liveth in pleasure is dead while he liveth; dead to God, dead to grace; a dead Christian, though a living animal. Compare, reverend sir, this declaration with the tendency of your doctrine. Then, I assure myself, you will not redden with indignation at these plain remonstrances; but rather (as I should in your case) turn pale with grief at your past teachings, and tremble with fear for the consequences of them.

Thus much for your divinity: Now, sir, if you please, for your logic. We have canvassed your doctrine; let us next consider the argument with which you establish it. This is, if possible, ten thousand times more exceptionable than the tenet itself. For, after having told your audience, that the carnal delight which you so earnestly press to take, is agreeable to the reason of things, is consonant to the designs of Providence, you think proper to add, that it is also countenanced by our Saviour's example; since, at a certain marriage-feast, when the wine fell short, he wrought a miracle, and furnished them with a fresh supply, on purpose—that the mirth might not die. This was your expression. And, surely, a more shocking one never came from a preacher's lips. Was ever so abject and scurvy a reason assigned for one of the most illustrious actions? Could any debauched libertine, at a drunken club, have derogated more contumeliously from the dignity of our Lord's behaviour? Jesus, the mirror of purity, the fountain of wisdom, of whom it is testified that he did all things well; this wise and glorious Being is represented, not by an abandoned sot, but by a minister of the gospel, as exerting his omnipotence to prolong a merry bout. O that it might not be told in Gath, or published in the streets of Askelon! But, *fugit irrevocabile verbum;* you cannot revoke the words. The only reparation you can make to the injured Jesus, or the offended Christian, is to give us a sermon of recantation, and antidote the poison that has been propagated.

But I would hope it is too gross to spread. That the mirth might not die, is an assertion that must startle every hearer. Why, this a common vintner might have prevented, as well as an Almighty Being: a few flasks from the tavern would have answered this end. Most ignoble purpose! unworthy, altogether unworthy so august, divine, and admirable a person. Oh what a handle does this yield to infidels for profane banter! That Jesus should descend from the heaven of heavens, and come into the lower world, vested with incontrollable power, on so poor, grovelling, and sordid an errand! That part of his business in the state of humanity should be to guard against the extinction of such idle mirth as owes its birth to a bottle! The soldiers that stripped our Lord of his apparel, and mocked his sacred person; that spit upon his blessed face, buffeted his divine head, and loaded him with all manner of scurrilities and indignities, did not commit, (in my opinion) so flagrant an abuse, as a modern preacher in one of his studied solemn harangues. They took him to be a mere man; they pronounced him a vile man; and therefore offered him such opprobrious affronts. But you, sir, acknowledge him to be God; you know him to be infinitely wise; and yet make him a lacquey to the most errant trifles, a drudge to men's carnal indulgences. Suppose both our houses of parliament, after the maturest deliberation, should employ the whole army of the nation to clear away all obstructions for a butterfly in her flowery range, or to see that a silly kitten goes on unmolested in her sportive gambols; would you extol the wisdom of our senators; would you not cry shame upon their conduct? Now, your assertion is full as depreciatory to the consummate prudence and exemplary purity of our divine Master; since you set them both on work, joined with irresistible might, only to furnish out a little more gaiety, a little more laughter, to a set of carousers, whom you describe as pretty well in for it already.

That the mirth might not die! That is, that those who were already made merry with liquor might go on in their jovial delights, till they added drunkenness to their thirst. For when people are thus exhilarated, to take fresh draughts, and pour down more wine, must indeed make them,

as a professed scorner profanely expresses himself on this very occasion, more than half seas over. So that, when you give an evasive flourish or two, and would have your hearers to believe that you are no advocate for intemperance, it is plain you are only complimenting the cause of sobriety. This interpretation put upon our Lord's conduct, knocks all such sham pretences on the head. For if he wrought the miracle with such a view, and for such sort of people, all the world cannot clear him from being a promoter of excess; and, if he did not, all the world cannot acquit you, sir, from the most abusive misrepresentations of your Redeemer.

That the mirth might not die! What could a lewd rake have done, at his riotous table, worse than that which you ascribe to the pattern of all perfection? My blood grows chill; my thoughts recoil at so horrid a position. Any gentleman of tolerable seriousness, when he perceives his friends are got merry with his drink, would rather withdraw the glass than add fuel to the flame. For my part, I should think myself an abettor of excess, and little better than a pimp for debauchery, if, when men are merry in their cups, I should supply them with means of driving on the wanton humour. And yet, be amazed, O ye heavens, and be horribly afraid, O earth! a minister, in the midst of a thronged congregation, charges this very practice upon the most immaculate Lamb of God! O sir, how could he who came to be our sanctification, administer to our inordinate gratifications? how could he, who has enjoined us not to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, be instrumental to continue a luxurious revel? O blessed Jesus, surely that is fulfilled which was spoken by thy prophet, "Thou art wounded in the house of thy friends." Thy character is debased, thy doctrines adulterated, by those who profess themselves adorers of the one, and expounders of the other. Oh! that ever the Christian pulpit should become a porch to the temple of Bacchus! and a Christian preacher act the part of a purveyor for the tippling-house!

Do you intend to please, sir, or to profit your audience by these admonitions? You can please none but men of corrupt minds, whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things. You can profit none but those whose heaven is to be found in the juice of the grape. They can serve no other end but to give a sort of sanction to their extravagancies. Your lectures, perhaps, may be recollected with applause on an ale-bench, and pleaded among a circle of jolly topers. But I assure you, sir, they are heard by the serious and devout with the utmost sorrow, and with equal detestation. Their ears are wounded, and their hearts bleed under the sound of such bacchanalian doctrines.

May I now be permitted to declare my sentiments with regard to that passage of Scripture which you have so unhappily perverted?

As to the mirth you seem so fond of, there is no mention of it in the sacred narrative. For Christ went not about to spread the laugh among his company, but to make them serious, sober, and wise unto salvation. If he vouchsafed his presence at entertainments, and sat at the tables of sinners, it was with a gracious design of instructing and converting them in their own houses. He came to feasts in the same spirit, and for the same purposes, as he came into the world; to turn poor mankind from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; so that none can imagine, when he was in the room, that there could be any thing like that licentious diversion which too generally prevails in our merry-meetings. If they did rejoice, they rejoiced doubtless after a godly sort: They rejoiced in the precious and instructive words that dropped from Christ's lips, as sweets from an honeycomb: They rejoiced to have so divine a prophet raised up unto God's people, and to have the honour of so illustrious a personage amongst them: They rejoiced, without all peradventure, to see, and hear, and handle the word of life.

As for that expression, which we translate well drunk, μεθυσθωσιν, profane wits, I know, raise mighty triumphs upon it; but in truth, they are Babel buildings, and proofs of nothing but their own folly. They thereby give us to understand, that their want of sense is as unquestionable as their malignity to Christianity. For surely they must be full as errant idiots, as they are shameless sots, who can offer to fetch the least shadow of a plea for riotous indulgencies from this passage; since, let the meaning of the word be ever so loose and exceptionable, yet nothing can be concluded from thence against the economy and decorum of that entertainment, because the governor speaks only of the usual custom at other treats. He says not a word, good or bad, of the guests that were present at that bridal festival. It must, therefore, be not only precarious, but ridiculous and absurd, to infer the disorderly proceedings of those people, from what the ruler observes concerning others. I once was acquainted with a worthy gentleman, who frequently invited to his table the young persons of his neighbourhood, and would take a pleasure in instilling or cultivating in their minds the principles of sobriety, industry, and piety. Now, in case he had said, after supper was removed, "I know

very well, my honest neighbours, it is customary with some persons of fortune both to please and pride themselves in making their visitants drunk. They push the glass briskly round, and press one bumper upon another, till they send their guests staggering to bed." But now, would any one be so stupid as to infer from this acknowledgment of the practice of others, that this was also the practice of my friend? Yet this they may do with as much justness and solidity of reasoning, as deduce any maxim in favour of excess from the speech of the Architriclinus, or master of the feast.

Evident, I think, it is, that this expression, whatever be its exact import, is in no wise referable to the condition of those guests; so that we allow our adversaries too much advantage, by admitting any of their remarks upon its signification. We should wrest this weapon out of their hands, which they brandish so formidably, rather than guard against its strokes. But in case it was applicable to them, yet it is most monstrous to suppose it significant of the least deviation from temperance. For had we not known the company to be of the most exemplary behaviour and heavenly-minded spirit; had they been a parcel of irreligious and lewd fellows, instead of the virgin-mother and the Redeemer's disciples, yet it would be impossible to conceive, that any thing which had the least approach towards surfeiting and drunkenness should be tolerated, when Jesus himself was in the midst of them. Before so venerable and divine a person, they would not dare to allow themselves in any misbecoming indulgences, or indecencies of carriage. Besides, had their inclinations been ever so abandoned or impetuous, his eternal power and Godhead would have restrained them. He that intimidated the sacrilegious rabble when they profaned the temple, and drove them before his single scourge; he that struck prostrate to the ground a whole band of armed men only with his word; he that had all hearts in his hand, and could manage them as he pleased,—would doubtless have forbid, at this juncture, whatever bordered upon dissoluteness.

Should any one inquire, for what cause, then, did Christ work this miracle, if not to revive the dying mirth? I answer, several noble reasons are assignable and obvious.

One, To furnish a supply for fresh guests, which on those occasions were continually pouring in; that the feast might be prolonged to its usual period, and all that came might be moderately refreshed. For I can by no means imagine that this fresh supply was intended for those who had cheered themselves already with a sufficient quantity. This indeed is what your sermon takes for granted, or else your application of this fact is frivolous and impertinent. But I promise myself, when you give it a second consideration, you will wonder how so unworthy a thought should come into your mind, and be sorry that it should ever proceed from your lips, since it is so entirely repugnant to the whole character, conduct, and preaching of our Lord Jesus.

Another reason might be, To reward the married pair for their hospitality to himself and his followers; To give early notice to the world that none should be losers by showing kindness to him or his: That every piece of respect paid to Jesus, and every kindness exercised towards his family, should meet with a full recompense of reward. Thus did he prepare an extensive fund for those who had forsaken houses, lands, relations, and their earthly all for his sake; prepare a fund for their subsistence, by disposing people to entertain and accommodate them, when they should be sent forth without staff, or scrip, or money in their purses.

Another cause, and that which is remarked by the holy historian, was, to manifest forth his glory; to give a most conspicuous display of his Messiahship. He opened, as it were, his commission, and showed his divine credentials; which was done with perfect propriety, in a public manner, before more spectators than his own attendants: and whatever effect it might have upon others, it confirmed the faith of his disciples. Seeing this incontestable proof of his mission, it is said, they believed on him; and were thenceforth inviolably attached to his person and ministry.

Other reasons may be suggested, and those exceeding sound and useful, such as point out a noble and deep significancy in this miracle; make it rich with divine and spiritual meaning; and upon this footing, a more delicious feast for our souls, than wines of the finest flavour, and most generous quality, are to our animal nature.

For instance, it might signify the superior richness of those comforts which his gospel was introducing into the world; that they exceeded those broached by Moses and the law, as much as the pure blood of the grape excels the water of our common wells: That his flesh and blood would be a sovereign source of alacrity and consolation to his people; gladden and revive their hearts, like some exquisite cordial; strengthen and invigorate their minds like the best-bodied wines.

This particular season of a marraige ceremony was probably chosen, in order to intimate the necessity of being espoused and united to Christ, before we can be partakers

of these evangelical delights. Divorced we must be from our old husband, the law; divorced from the covenant of works; and no longer wedded, by self-opinionativeness, to our own righteousness; but married, by the bond of a lively faith, to that everlasting Bridegroom, in order to taste those comforts, and have our share in those joys.

A reason fixed upon by our church is, That Christ would hereby put an honour upon the matrimonial state, by gracing the solemnity with his sacred company, and performing his first public miracle on this occasion. A fine admonition this, to render us more than ordinarily solicitous to have the favourable concurrence of Jesus, both when we devise, and when we take so important a step; because the tranquillity and happiness of our subsequent life depends very much on this alteration of our condition. That we should, by all means, marry in the Lord, and implore his spiritual gracious presence at the wedding, which will improve the advantages, and sanctify the enjoyments of that comfortable state; will, as it is delicately figured out in the metaphor, turn our water into wine.

It might also be intended to remind us, that the comforts, even of animal life, were recovered by the second Adam, as they were forfeited by the first Adam. When our first parents were guilty of rebellion against their Maker, they lost all right to the valuable productions of nature. This indeed was their dowry originally settled upon them, but by their disloyalty it became confiscated. Justice seized upon their inheritance, and vengeance said, Cursed be the ground for your sakes. Christ, in this exigency, immediately interposed; took off the attainder, and restored to poor Adam and his posterity the precious fruits of the earth. These blessings, derived from Christ's mediation, were very properly recognised at a wedding; because, straightway after the marriage of the first couple, they were alienated and sequestered.

This, sir, is a way of expounding our Redeemer's miracles, well worthy your consideration, if not your imitation. In this light they appear, not barely so many witnesses of his being the Messiah, but so many living mirrors of his mediatorial mercies, in which we discern a most expressive figure of those spiritual good things which we extremely want, and may fully enjoy through Jesus Christ. The marvellous things brought to pass by the agency of prophets, apostles, and holy men of old, were indisputable vouchers for their being sent of God. But our Redeemer's works had a farther excellency, and answered a diviner end; They held forth and presented, even to the senses, a most striking pattern of those spiritual blessings which sinners may enjoy through their Saviour. Thus, when he cured the man born blind, what did this signify but his healing the blindness of our understandings, and pouring the day of his glorious gospel upon our internal sight? When he made the poor paralytic strong and vigorous, that was not able to turn himself on his bed, or to use his limbs, what a lively emblem was here, both of our disease, and of his sovereign help? Of our disease, whereby we are utterly impotent to do a good work, or think a good thought; of his sovereign help, whereby we are enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening us; enabled to believe through his grace, and to mortify our corruptions through his Spirit. Was not the filthy leper a true picture of our loathsomeness, through original defilement, and actual transgressions? And when our Redeemer disdained not to touch this noisome creature, and make him perfectly clean, how appositely did this image point out the condescension of his goodness in undertaking our redemption, and the efficacy of his blood in accomplishing our purification? I might go through the whole series of our Lord's miracles, and discover in them a most significant and complete portraiture of all manner of spiritual blessings; but the foregoing instances shall suffice. From these hints, we may discern an adorable depth of design; unsearchable treasures of contrivance, as well as beneficence, in those operations of his mighty power. Which noble peculiarity gives them a vast pre-eminence above all the miracles in Egypt, and the wonders in the field of Zoan: renders them so many fine representations of the deliverances and privileges enjoyable through our ever-blessed Immanuel; in a word, renders them a kind of gospel that addresses itself even to our eyes; and so most wisely calculated, both to direct our hopes, and strengthen our faith in the incarnate God. I am, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Bath, 1743.

Dear Madam,—At Bath I have tarried thus long, but purpose to set forward for my father's house, if I live till next week; and if I have as good a journey thither, as I had to this place, I shall have cause to be very thankful to that gracious Providence, which blesses our going out and our coming in; which protects us from wrong and robbery, from evil accidents and dangers, as with a shield. I hope you, madam, and Mr. ——, are well, and should rejoice to hear of you both being partakers of that which I wish you to enjoy; and none can

be said truly to enjoy health, but those who improve it to the purpose: all others waste health, embezzle it, squander it away; all but those who use it as a precious opportunity of making their calling and election sure. We have had most delicate weather for the harvest; a blessing which I do not doubt has been vouchsafed to you as well as to us: an universal blessing! and such as will prove very extensive. We shall feel the good effects of it all the year round, when winter freezes the air, and turns the earth into iron, or buries it under heaps of snow. We shall be refreshed even then with the productions of the fruitful season. O that our hearts may be filled with gratitude, as our barns are with plenty! The harvest puts me in mind of the end of the world: then our bodies shall arise out of the dust of the earth; having lain a while under the clods, and seen corruption, they will then spring up incorruptible and immortal, an amazing multitude, like the blades of grass, or the ears of corn, innumerable.

The husbandman, in harvest, receives a reward for all his toil. The labours of the preceding year are amply recompensed by the rich fruits of increase. And the consummation of all things will be the great retribution-day: then the Christian receives the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul; then the riches he has coveted will be bestowed in the favour of seeing him who is immortal, invisible; whose loving kindness is better than life. He will see the desire of his soul, and the fruits of his Saviour's sufferings, and sit down everlastingly satisfied. The husbandman rejoices in harvest; this is his time of festivity and delight. They joy before thee, saith the Scriptures, according to the joy of the righteous: they will look up, and rejoice to behold their Redeemer coming in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him: then will they look down, and rejoice to see the wicked world burning, in which they were tempted; rejoice to see all their enemies put under their feet; and when the doors of heaven are left open, then shall they enter triumphantly into the city of the living God, and everlasting joy will be upon their heads, and reign with Christ for evermore. Into this exceeding great and eternal bliss, I wish you, madam, and your husband, an abundant entrance; and remain his and your, &c.

LETTER XIX.

Weston-Favell, 1744.

DEAR ——, —I PROMISED —— to send the remainder of her letter in a few lines to you. Either she may transcribe from you, or you from her, in order to complete the little essay. I left off, I think, somewhere hereabouts, "But spiritual interests are infinitely more valuable." For those, therefore, Christ will provide more abundantly: If they want knowledge, he will not only give them his divine word, but his enlightening Spirit, to lead them into all truth. If they are poor, he will give them the fine gold of his obedience; he will say to them as the father said in the parable, Son, all that I have is thine. Are they wounded? he will give them the healing balm of his precious blood; this will cure the wound which sin has made in the soul, and make the bones which have been broken to rejoice. Are they naked? he will clothe them with the robe of his own righteousness; they shall appear before the God of gods in the garments of this their elder brother. Are they weak? his strength shall be made perfect in their weakness; he will work in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. When they die, he has provided a flight of angels to attend their departing souls, and conduct them to his own compassionate arms: he has provided mansions of glory, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, for their future reception: he has provided a fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, for their final portion and inheritance.

O what ample provision is here! this is indeed good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. What can needy creatures want which Jesus does not supply? Justly was it once said by an eminent believer, Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide. Let this be the language of our hearts in all our needs.

The hen comforts her tender brood; she screens them from the inclemencies of the weather. She spreads out her wings, and forms a canopy over them; this affords them a house to lodge in, and a bed to sleep on. No velvet is softer, no blankets are warmer. Here they are cherished and refreshed; here they find heat when they shiver with cold, are dried when they come dripping with wet.

Jesus also comforts his poor people: he is called the consolation of Israel. Come unto me, says the merciful Redeemer, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; all ye that are weary, and I will refresh you. He is afflicted in all their afflictions, and is as ready to succour them as a man is to allay the anguish of his own smarting flesh. He is the good, the inconceivably good Shepherd, whose bowels yearn with the tenderest compassion when his lambs are fatigued or distressed; he even lays them in his bosom. Every thing but Jesus speaks terror, and creates

dismay to his little flock. But this compassionate Shepherd leads them forth beside the waters of comfort. The world lays many a snare for their feet; the world persecutes and hates them. In the world they must have tribulation; but Christ says, Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and will make you partakers of my victory; because I have conquered, ye shall conquer also. The law lays dreadful things to their charge; the law is the ministration of condemnation; the law thunders out threatenings. They are rebels, says that righteous law; they have transgressed my precepts; they deserve to suffer all the curses denounced against the disobedient and ungodly. But Christ gently whispers, Be of good courage, my people; take sanctuary in your Mediator; I have answered all the demands of the law: If it requires punishment, I sustained torments unutterable; if it insists on blood, I satisfied it with divine blood; with every drop of my heart's blood; so that there is no condemnation to them that are interested in me. If it called for righteousness, I submitted to its authority; I performed every jot and tittle of its commands, and thereby brought in a perfect and everlasting righteousness. Lay hold on my obedience, receive this from my free grace, and the law has nothing more to charge against you; for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them that believe, though the devil tempts and distresses the children of Jesus. He not only tempts, but accuses them, aggravating and calling aloud for vengeance; cries, Down with them, down with them, even to the dust. But Jesus graciously steps in, baffles the accusation, arrests the judgment, and says, I have died to save them from going into the pit, for I have found a ransom: if they have sinned, I have taken them upon myself; if they have multiplied transgressions as the stars of heaven, my Father hath laid on me the iniquities of them all. They are my redeemed ones; they are bought with my blood; I cannot lose my purchase: if they are not saved, I am not glorified.

Such sweet truths, sent home upon the poor soul, must be very comfortable and restorative to the drooping sinner; more refreshing and gladdening to the conscience, than the feathers of the hen are to her feeble starving brood.

Upon the whole, let us imitate the chickens, by trusting in Jesus for all we want or wish; let us lean upon our Beloved in all our progress through this wilderness; expect to be furnished entirely out of his fulness; look for protection from his almighty arm; depend upon provision from his inexhaustible treasures; and for comfort, from a growing sense of our interest in him.

Let this be the habitual language of our hearts. Blessed Lord, I am weak and wretched, surrounded by a multitude of dangers, and defiled by a thousand corruptions; O defend me by thy eternal power. Let thy almighty arm be over me; let thy Holy Spirit be ever with me; never leave me to my enemies; never give me up to my own blindness and impotency, for I flee unto thee to hide me; on thee I depend to break every snare of temptation that endangers me from without, to mortify every seed of corruption that pollutes me from within. I am poor and needy, blessed Jesus, do thou provide for me. Since I must one day give an account of myself to God, let thy blood wash away my guilt, and drown all my transgressions. Since I must, ere long, stand before him whose eyes are as a burning fire, O clothe me with the robes of thy righteousness, the garments of salvation, that I may be holy and blameless in his sight! Since I must quickly die out of this miserable world, provide me an entrance into thine own everlasting kingdom; and while I continue in this world, provide me with grace sufficient for me, that I may live like thine elect, and adorn the gospel of God my Saviour.

I am often distressed; misgiving thoughts, and anguish of mind, make me hang down my head like a bulrush. Through fear of death, and dread of eternal judgment, my joints are sometimes ready to smite one against another; but, O holy and most merciful Saviour! be thou my support. Pour the oil of gladness into my inner man; give me the joy of thy salvation: the law condemns me, but do thou justify me; my own conscience writes bitter things against me, but do thou whisper to my soul, Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. The roaring lion often terrifies me; but, O thou good and faithful Shepherd! let thyself comfort me. Let me know and feel that I am thine, and then nothing shall pluck me out of thy hands.

This was wrote before my late illness. You see from hence, that you my friends at Biddeford have been on my thoughts, though they have not of late been addressed by way of letter; and I shall always pray, that whether we are sick or in health, the Lord Jesus Christ may be the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever.—I am, &c.

LETTER X^V.

Dear ———, It is our duty continually to sing hosannah to the King of Israel, who treadeth all enemies under his feet. He

can tread them down like clay in the streets, or cast them out as lightning from heaven. Nothing is impossible to him: they who know Christ's faithfulness and truth, will put their trust in him; they will hang upon him every moment, as the feeble child in the arms of the indulgent mother, for grace to strengthen and enable them to withstand the devices of that enemy of souls, who is seeking every moment to destroy the weak believer, the babe in Christ. Satan says, with that wicked one in Exodus, I will pursue them with inconceivable malice and rage; I will overtake and tear them in pieces like a lion; I will lay ten thousand snares in their way, and, if it be possible, bring them under the dominion of sin, and after that into the damnation of hell. The believer replies, Thou wouldst effect this, O thou enemy of all godliness, I know thou wouldst effect this with as much ease as a feather is borne down by a sweeping whirlwind, was I left a moment to myself; but my strength do I ascribe unto my incarnate God. The blessed Jesus has undertaken for my security; he watches over me every moment, and nothing can pluck me out of his hands. He hath said (who shall disannul it?) that sin shall not have dominion over me: he will preserve me by his almighty power unto salvation. Let all my adversaries know assuredly, that my safety is not in myself. But as the hills stand round about Jerusalem, even so standeth the Lord round about his people, from this time forth for evermore.

Whoever attempts the ruin of a soul that is staid on Jesus, must wrench the sovereignty from the hand of Omnipotence, and cause unshaken faithfulness to fail. So long as all things in heaven and earth, and under the earth, do bow, and obey the Lamb that was slain; so long as Christ is a God unchangeable and faithful, that cannot lie, so long shall a poor feeble worm, that trusts in him, be secure from apostasy and perdition. O the blessings, the comforts, that spring from a right knowledge of Jesus! Richer blessings I cannot wish! greater treasures I cannot enjoy nor possess! This, this alone, is that knowledge which St. Paul valued above all other accomplishments or acquirements; in comparison of which he counted all things else no better than dross or dung. O let my dear Biddeford friends beg of the Father of lights to send out the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may be filled with the knowledge of him, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; and, in return, both they and you, my friends, may be assured of the most hearty and repeated prayers of your sincere friend, &c.

LETTER XXI.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 16. 1745.

Sir,—It is not easy to express the satisfaction I received from your agreeable and useful conversation this afternoon. I rejoice to find that there are gentlemen of genius, learning, and politeness, who dare profess a supreme value for the Scriptures, and are not ashamed of the cross of Christ. I congratulate you, dear sir, on this occasion; and cannot but look on a mind so principled, and a heart so disposed, as a very choice and distinguishing part of your happiness. Was I to frame a wish for the dearest and most valued friend on earth, I would earnestly desire that he might grow daily in this grace, and increase in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And when my pen begs leave to assure you, that this is my unfeigned wish for ——, it only transcribes what is deeply written on my heart.

This brings the dedication and the preface, which are to introduce a little essay, entitled Meditations among the Tombs, and Reflections on a Flower-Garden, in two letters to a lady. I hope, sir, in consequence of your kind promise, you will please to peruse them with the file in your hand. The severity of the critic, and the kindness of the friend, in this case will be inseparable. The evangelical strain, I believe, must be preserved; because, otherwise, the introductory thoughts will not harmonize with the subsequent; the porch will be unsuitable to the building. But if you perceive any meanness of expression, any quaintness of sentiment, or any other impropriety and inelegance, I shall acknowledge it as a very singular favour, if you will be so good as to discover and correct such blemishes.

I hope, sir, my end in venturing to publish is an hearty desire to serve, in some little degree, the interests of Christianity, by endeavouring to set some of its most important truths in a light that may both entertain and edify. As I profess this view, I am certain your affectionate regard for the most excellent religion imaginable will incline you to be concerned for the issue of such an attempt, and therefore to contribute to its success, both by bestowing your animadversions upon these small parts, and by speaking of the whole (when it shall come abroad) with all that candour which is natural to the Christian, and will be so greatly needed by this new adventurer in letters, who is, &c.

LETTER XXII.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 19, 1745.

DEAR SIR,—I CANNOT forbear making my grateful acknowledgments for your most obliging letter. You could not possibly have imagined any thing more agreeable to my inclination, than the proposal you are pleased to make of admitting me to your acquaintance and conversation. I accept your kind offer, sir, with thankfulness, with joy; and shall most gladly cultivate a friendship, which is not only perfectly innocent, but remarkably elegant and improving; especially, since you are pleased to permit the discourse to turn upon those points, which it is my duty to study, and my delight to contemplate. Nor shall I forget how much I am indebted to your condescension for this favour; but shall always bear a respectful sense of the distinguished rank and superior abilities of my worthy friend.

Indeed, I am particularly delighted with such interviews as serve to enlarge our knowledge, and refine our affections; such as have an apparent tendency to render us more useful in our present stations, and to ripen us for future happiness; such was that which I lately enjoyed in your company. This is a feast of reason, a feast of truth; and I must own, has charms for me, infinitely superior to all the impertinent amusements of modish chat, or the mean gratifications of the bottle.

When I have been asked to spend an afternoon with gentlemen of a learned education, and unquestionable ingenuity, I have fancied myself invited to take a turn in some beautiful garden, where I expected to have been treated with a sight of the most delicate flowers, and most amiable forms of nature; when, to my great surprise, I have been shown nothing but the most worthless thistle, and contemptible weeds. To one who has so often been disappointed, it must be peculiarly pleasing to find the satisfaction which he has long sought in vain. This I make no doubt of obtaining, if I may be permitted to be a third person in the interview, when you and Mr. —— sit together in social conference.

I beg leave to return my thanks for your ingenious remark upon a sentence in the essay towards a preface; and also to express my entire satisfaction in your motion for considering more attentively the spiritual interests of the poor patients in the hospital. At present, it is undeniably plain, that much more assiduous and effectual care is taken of their temporal than of their eternal welfare. With pleasure I shall join in concerting some proper method to rectify this misconduct, and with a real alacrity shall execute (as far as I shall be enabled) any expedient which you shall judge conducive to the recovery and health of their souls.

I almost repent that my pen has intruded, perhaps in the midst of important business, and stole so much of your valuable time. But now I have done; and shall only repeat what agreeable views I form from the prospect of your future acquaintance, and what an addition it will be to my happiness to be owned and regarded as, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 17, 1745.

SIR,—I ADMIRE your remarkable regard for the truth, and that noble greatness of soul which scorns to sacrifice conscience to interest, and cannot stoop to receive temporal honours on such ignoble terms. Your conduct reminds me of a most amiable peculiarity in the upright and religious man's character, as it is drawn by the inspired writers; with which you cannot but be particularly pleased, as it so exactly corresponds with your own: Such a one, says the royal preacher, feareth an oath; such a one, adds the sweet singer of Israel, speaketh the truth from his heart.

The Thirty-nine Articles I have more than once subscribed; and as I continue steadfast in the belief of them, as you are pleased to ask my opinion relating to some seemingly exceptionable tenets contained in them, I most readily submit it to your consideration; not, sir, in the capacity of a casuist, who would attempt a satisfactory answer to your questions, but only under the notion of a sincere friend, who would freely disclose his whole soul, and entertain no one sentiment but what should be communicated to a valuable acquaintance.

"You are a good deal puzzled about the equality of the Son with the Father, in Athanasius's sense." I own it is no wonder that we should be somewhat staggered at this mysterious truth, especially if we indulge a wanton curiosity, and inquire after the quomodeity of the doctrine: if nothing will content our busy minds but a clear comprehension of this particular, they will never be brought to acquiesce in this article. But if they dare venture to believe the express declarations of Infinite Wisdom, and wait till a future state for a full evolution of the mystery, their assent will soon be determined.

I once thought a very striking proof of this scriptural doctrine might be derived from the known properties of a mortal child, considered in comparison with the parent. Is not the son as perfect a partaker of all the constituent parts of the human nature as the father? Are not the children

of this age possessed of the same endowments of body and mind as their fathers in the preceding age? Whatever essential excellencies belong to the one, may, with equal truth, be predicated of the other. And if the son, in this our inferior world, be in all points equal to his progenitor, why should we not suppose that the glorious Son of God is equal, in all respects, to his Almighty Father?

But I choose to forbear all such fond endeavours to explain what, to our very limited comprehensions, is altogether inexplicable. I rather receive Scripture for my teacher, and give up my sentiments to be formed and conducted by that infallible guide. In Scripture there are abundance of texts which, in the most explicit terms imaginable, assert the Son to be God. Now, if he be God, he cannot have any superior; inferiority evidently destroys divinity; inferiority, in any instance, is inconsistent with the notion of a Supreme Being. So that every text in Scripture, which ascribes a divine nature to the blessed Jesus, seems to speak all that Athanasius maintains concerning the absolute universal equality of the Son with the Father.

In what respects can the Son be supposed inferior? Are not the same honours given to the Son as are paid to the Father? The Psalmist mentions two of the incommunicable honours which are due to the Supreme Majesty; both which he declares are, and shall be, addressed to the Son: Prayer shall be made ever unto him, and daily shall he be praised. This adorable Person is the object of our worship throughout the whole Litany. In the Doxologies of our Liturgy, the same glory is ascribed to all the three infinitely exalted Persons of the Trinity. I take notice of this, not as a conclusive argument, but only to hint at the uniform judgment of our reformers on this important head; and to point out their particular care to inculcate, with incessant assiduity, this belief upon the members of their communion. Are not the same works ascribed to the Son as are ascribed to the Father? God, the sovereign and supreme God, (according to the periphrasis of a heathen poet, *Cui nihil simile aut secundum,*) often declares his matchless perfections, by referring mankind to his astonishing works of creation. And is not the Son the Creator of the universe? All things were made by him, is the testimony of one apostle; and, He upholdeth all things by the word of his power, the deposition of another. Is not the same incommunicable name applied to the Son? Jehovah is allowed to be a name never attributed, throughout the whole Scripture, to any being but only to the one living and true God, who only hath immortality, who hath no superior, none like him in heaven or earth. But this title is the character of the incarnate Son. If we compare Moses and St. Paul, we shall find that Christ is Jehovah, Numb. xxi. 6, with 1 Cor. x. 9. This argument, I think, is not common, and, I must own, has had a great influence in settling my judgment ever since I was apprized of it. Another proof was suggested in the morning lesson for the day, Isa. xlv. 23, compared with Phil. ii. 10. It is the Lord, in the prophet, that infinitely wise God, who manifesteth, even from ancient time, the dark and remote events of futurity, who peremptorily declares, that there is no God besides him, consequently none superior in any degree to him; yet this most sacred Person, who, in the prophet's text, has the attributes of incomparable perfection and unshared supremacy, is, in the apostle's comment, the Redeemer.

I fancy all those texts of Scripture which seem to you, sir, so diametrically opposite to this doctrine, will, upon a renewed examination, appear referable only to the humanity of our Saviour. If so, they cannot affect the point under debate, nor invalidate the arguments urged in its support.

After all, I believe, here lies the grand difficulty:—Sonship, we take for granted, implies inferiority: Sonship implies the receiving of a being from another; and to receive a being is an instance of inferiority. But, dear sir, let us repress every bold inquiry into this awful secret, lest that of the apostle—"doubting the things which he did not see," be the lightest censure we incur. What is right reasoning when applied to the case of created existence, is little less than blasphemy when applied to that divine Person who is, from everlasting to everlasting, the great I AM. The generation of the Son of God is an unfathomable mystery. A prophet cries out with amaze, Who can declare his generation? and if we cannot conceive it, how can we form any conclusions, or determine what consequences follow from it? Here it becomes us not to examine, but to adore. If we know not how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, how shall we be able to state the nature, or explain the effects of a generation inexpressibly more remote from our finite apprehensions?

Upon the whole, since the Scripture has given us repeated and unquestionable assurances that Christ is God; since common sense cries aloud against the absurdity of supposing a God who has a superior; shall we reject such positive evidences of revelation, and be deaf to the strongest remonstrances of our reason, merely because we cannot conceive how the Sonship of the

Redeemer can be compatible with an absolute equality, in all possible perfection, to the Father?

It need not be hinted to ——, that this doctrine of the divinity, consequently of the equality, of the sacred TRI-UNE, is not merely a speculative point, but has a most close connexion with practice, and is admirably fitted to influence our lives in the most powerful and endearing manner: That it is no less inseparably connected with the grand blessings of acquittance from the guilt, and delivery from the bondage of sin—blessings of unutterable and infinite value, without which the children of men are of all creatures most miserable; which yet we cannot reasonably hope to enjoy, if any of those illustrious persons, concerned in accomplishing the great redemption, be supposed less than divine.

The 18th article, you add, is another objection to me, which begins thus, They also are to be held accursed, &c. This, as you observe, seems harsh. Yet the harshness is not ours, but the apostle's. I imagine this is no more than a transcript of St. Paul's awful and solemn declaration, transmitted to the Galatian converts, and denounced against their corrupting teachers. Be pleased, sir, to peruse attentively that whole inspired letter, and especially to consider chap. i. verses 6—9. Then permit me to appeal to yourself, whether our article professes any doctrine which is not clearly established in that most excellent epistle? or whether our church uses more severe terms than the apostle thinks proper to thunder out in that memorable passage? But might not this doctrine have been palliated a little, or the tremendous sanction somewhat softened? No: we must not add to, or diminish from, our inviolable rule. A faithful steward of the divine mysteries must declare the whole will of God in its full extent and latitude, together with the fearful consequences of presumptuously opposing it, as well as the blessed effects of cordially receiving it.

I am not surprised that this procedure startles some, offends others. St. Paul seems to have foreseen this event, and therefore apologizes for himself, shall I say? rather declares his unalterable resolution of persisting in this practice; *q. d.* I am sensible that such teachings will be far from palatable to too many of my hearers; I am aware, also, that to threaten the divine anathema on every opposer of this doctrine, will be still more offensive. But shall I desist on these considerations? shall I accommodate the standard doctrines of heaven to the depraved taste of the age; or be solicitous to make them square with the favourite schemes of human device, only to avoid creating disgust in some minds? No, verily; I preach what unerring wisdom has revealed, not what capricious man has dreamed; and therefore dare not vary one jot or tittle from my high orders. My business is principally to please God by a faithful discharge of my commission, not to ingratiate myself with men, by modelling my doctrine in conformity to their humours; and therefore I must, I must deliver it, just as I received it.

But why do I offer to illustrate these texts? Your own meditations, I persuade myself, will discern, much more clearly than I can represent, that the compilers of our Articles are no other than the echo of St. Paul; or rather, that they only set their seal to the doctrines of Christ which he taught; and approve that verdict of heaven which he has brought in. This consideration will acquit them from the charge of harshness of expression, or uncharitableness of sentiment.

Your objections thus proceed:—I believe that every one will be saved who acts up to the best of his knowledge. I almost durst venture to join issue with my friend upon this footing; and undertake to prove, from this very position, the universal necessity of believing in Christ for salvation. Because, I think, it is indisputably certain, that there is no man living who has in all points acted up to his knowledge; and if he has swerved, in any instance, from his known acknowledged duty, how shall he escape punishment without an atonement? *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, is what the most vigilant and upright of mortals have, at some unhappy moments, felt to be true. If so, how shall they stand before that righteous God, who will not acquit the guilty without an interest in the great expiation! But, I presume, your proposition is to be taken in a more qualified sense. It means, that those who sincerely, though not perfectly, in the main course of their life, and as far as the infirmities of a frail nature admit, act up to their knowledge; that these shall be saved, even without their application to the merits of a Saviour. If this opinion be true I own it must be very unsafe to subscribe our Articles.

When this point is in dispute, I apprehend we are to confine it to those who live in a gospel land, where opportunities of knowing the good-will of God present themselves every day, every hour. As for the heathens, who lie under unavoidable and irremediable ignorance of the blessed Jesus, they are out of the question. They, I think, should be remitted to God's unsearchable wisdom and goodness. There may be uncovenanted mercies for them, which we know nothing of. It seems to be a daring and unjustifiable rashness for us to determine one way or the other with re-

gard to their final state. This, however, is plain, from the oracles of revelation, that it will be more tolerable for those poor Gentiles in the day of eternal judgment, than for those inexcusable infidels who have heard and disobeyed the glorious gospel. The controversy then concerns those only who have the Bible in their hands, or the voice of the preacher sounding in their religious assemblies every Sabbath-day. These, dear sir, I cannot think will inherit salvation, though they act with ever so much sincerity, according to their knowledge, unless they add to their knowledge faith.

Perhaps what we call their knowledge is no better than downright and wilful ignorance; the light that is in them is darkness. Perhaps they never took any pains to get themselves informed in the glorious peculiarities of the gospel. If so, their conduct is one continued disobedience to the divine commands, which require us to seek for wisdom as for hid treasures; which charge us to search the Scriptures as narrowly, as industriously, as the sportsman searches every spot of ground, beats every tuft of grass, in order to start the latent game. In this case, what we call their knowledge is really blindness itself; and their want of true knowledge cannot be their plea, because it is evidently their neglect and their sin.

But suppose these persons have searched the Scriptures, and yet are persuaded that there is no such need of a Saviour's merits; shall we condemn them in these circumstances? We do not presume to sit as their judges, or to scatter at our pleasure the thunders of eternal vengeance; we only declare what sentence is passed upon them by the supreme Dispenser of life and death. He has made it an adjudged case, he has passed it into an irrepealable law, That whoso believeth not in the Son of God, whosoever perversely persists in seeking some other method of salvation, and will not fly to that Redeemer whom infinite Wisdom has set forth for a propitiation, this man is condemned already.

Will it be said, That a man cannot help assenting to what he is thoroughly persuaded to be right? And if a deist, from his very soul, believes that morality alone is the way to life, and that the notion of a Redeemer, to make satisfaction and procure justification, is a religious chimera, shall we blame such a one for following the genuine dictates of his mind? I answer, still I answer, that we must abide by the determinations of that sovereign God, whose judgment, we are sure, is according to truth. He has said, nor can all the cavils and sophistry in the world supersede the decree, He that believeth not shall be damned. Be not shocked, sir, at the seeming severity of the doom, rather let us be shocked, be greatly astonished, at the prodigious hardiness of those more than steely hearts, which can attend to such terrors of the Lord, and not be persuaded to come to Christ; nay, what is enough to make heaven and earth horribly amazed, can hear of these terrors, and yet regard them no more than a puff of empty air.

Nor will it extenuate the crime of unbelief to allege, in behalf of the infidel, that he is actually convinced in his own conscience that his sentiments are right. He may be so, and yet be inexcusably guilty notwithstanding; for is it not owing to his own fault that he has imbibed such sentiments? Is it not through his own criminal misconduct that he has contracted such a perverse habit of thinking? Has he not indulged some darling vice, which has clouded his understanding? Or, instead of obeying the great mandate of heaven, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him, has he not attended solely to the arguings, deductions, and discernment of his own reason, as his only guide to heavenly truth? A drunkard verily thinks, (if he thinks at all,) that he does nobly in committing insults on quiet harmless people. But will his bare thinking that he acts gallantly acquit him at the bar of equity? Perhaps, in his present condition, he cannot help fancying that his actions are becoming, and that he does well to be turbulent and outrageous; but, though he cannot help the effect, might he not have avoided the cause of his frenzy? Methinks this comparison will hold good if applied to the case of many scorners of the gospel, who think contemptuously of Jesus Christ, and who really apprehend they do nothing amiss in depreciating his obedience and death. But I fear they have brought upon themselves this deplorable delirium, or intoxication of their understandings, either by voluptuousness and debauchery, or else by self-conceit, and the most odious arrogance of mind; which, in the estimate of the Holy One of Israel, is no better than spiritual idolatry.

For my part, I am assured that God has vouchsafed us the means of obtaining the knowledge of himself, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; it is equally certain that he has commanded us to acquaint ourselves with him, and be at peace; it is no less undeniable, that whosoever seeks this inestimable knowledge, by a diligent application to the Scriptures, by a child-like dependence on the teachings of the divine Spirit, by humble prayers to be led into all truth, and by doing the will of God, so far as he is acquainted with it; whosoever seeks, by using these means, shall find, shall come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. If, therefore, persons are so negli-

gent as not to use these methods, so audacious as to contemn them, so haughty as to imagine they have no need of them, they may justly be given over to their own delusions, and yet be most righteously punished as suicides of their souls.

But still it is pleaded, in vindication of the good-natured civilized infidel, That there is no turpitude in his life, that his behaviour is every way irreproachable. As to the turpitude of his life, when compared with the conversation of other men, I have nothing to say; but surely there is the highest iniquity in his principles and conduct when compared with the revealed will of God, which is the only criterion of truth, the only standard of excellence. God has commanded all men to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. But these people protest against the divine edict, and say, with those insolent subjects in the gospel, We will not have this Jesus to reign over us. God has solemnly declared, That all mankind are become guilty before him; that, by the works of the moral law, no flesh living shall be justified; that there is no Mediator between God and men, but the man Christ Jesus. But these people maintain, in defiance of this declaration, that they themselves are able to make up matters with their offended Creator, and can, by their own honest behavour, secure a title to everlasting felicity. God, of his superabundant and inconceivably rich goodness, has given his Son, his only Son, to suffer agonies, to shed blood, to lay down an infinitely precious life for them; yet these people, like those impious wretches that crucified the Lord of glory, deride his agonies, trample upon his blood, and, though he has redeemed them, they speak lies against him, Hosea viii. 13. Let us see, then, a little part of the evidence summed up against the spirit of unbelief. It implies stubbornness, which is as the sin of witchcraft; rebellion, which is as iniquity and idolatry; it implies the most assuming pride, which is an abomination to the Lord; it implies the vilest ingratitude, even amidst the most unbounded beneficence; and the voice of nature has proclaimed, *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris.* Let the impartial considerer decide, whether the heart of these persons be right before God: or whether their conduct, when brought to the test of that word which is to judge them at the last day, be so unblamable as is frequently pretended.

Enough has been said of the two first points; I fear, more than enough to fatigue your attention. However, I now draw in the reins, and promise not to put your patience upon doing such tedious penance any more.

There is another expression in the paragraph relating to the 18th article, which, since you expect my undisguised opinion, I cannot dismiss without a remark. When the Scriptures say that men shall be saved through the name of Christ, you suppose, sir, they mean that Christ made a general atonement for origial sin; whereas, I apprehend, that such texts import abundantly, I had almost said infinitely, more. Thus much, I think, at least, they must amount to in their signification, That if we are saved from the guilt of our offences, it shall be only through the all-atoning blood of the Lamb of God. If we are made acceptable to that awful Majesty who dwelleth in light inaccessible, this our justification shall be in consideration of the obedience and righteousness of the beloved Son: if we obtain the Spirit of sanctification, are enabled to deny all ungodliness, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world, it shall be through the intercession of Jesus, our great high-priest, by whom alone the Holy Ghost is vouchsafed to unworthy polluted sinners. All this I take to be included in that word, of most rich and comprehensive meaning—salvation; and since it is affirmed that we are saved by Christ, I should think it must signify, that we obtain all these glorious and invaluable benefits through that all-sufficient Mediator.

As to Christ's making an atonement for original sin, that surely was but one single branch of his important undertaking: Wo, wo be to the inhabitants of the earth, if he did no more. Our actual sins, the sins of our heart, the sins of our life, our sins of omission and sins of commission, and all those sins which are more in number than the hairs of our head, heavier with horrid aggravations than the sand of the sea, he bore in his own body on the tree. He was wounded for our offences, he was bruised for our trangressions, and the Lord laid on him (not only the innate depravity,) but the actual iniquities of us all.

Your next objection lies against the 13th article, namely, Works done before the grace of Christ are not acceptable to God. Is the meaning of this tenet, you ask, that men are made with a natural incapacity of doing any thing but sinful actions? I answer, this is not so properly the meaning of the article, as a most cogent reason to establish it. Only let it be stated a little more clearly, and it is no inconsiderable argument in proof of the doctrine. Men were not made by their Creator with this incapacity, but they have brought it upon themselves by their own fault. By their original sin they have contracted a most miserable depravity, and have made themselves "to every good work reprobate." Since, therefore, we can do no good work before we are renewed by the

grace of Christ, it seems to follow, that we can do no work acceptable to God till this renovation take place. This, you observe, does not seem so agreeable to charity as one could wish. Worthy sir, our notions of charity are not to be the rule of the divine acceptance, either of persons or things. If the doctrine be agreeable to the declarations of unerring Wisdom, we are to admit it with all readiness, and rather conclude that we mistake the nature of charity, than that the Scripture mistakes the terms of the Almighty's acceptance and favour. You know, sir, it is the express voice of Scripture, that without faith it is impossible to please God, and, till the spirit of Christ be shed abroad in the soul, it possesses no such sacred principle as true faith. It is a favourite apophthegm of our divine Master's, That a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. And are not all that spring from the stock of fallen Adam corrupt trees, until they are ingrafted into the true olive-tree, and partake of his meliorating and generous juices? I shall only mention one more scriptural oracle, an oracle delivered, not from Delphos, no, nor from Mount Sinai, but immediately from Heaven itself; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. I have always thought these words are to be taken in an exclusive sense, as though the everlasting Father had said, I am well pleased with the apostate race of Adam, only as they are reconciled through my beloved Son: uninterested in him, no persons are the objects of my complacency; unrecommended by him, no actions are the subject of my approbation. If this be the genuine sense of the passage, it will serve at once to confirm the article, and to obviate the objection derived from the deficiency and remains of pollution, that cleave even to the performances of a believer.

I am glad you have satisfied yourself with relation to the article which touches upon predestination and election. These are sublime points, far above the solution of our low capacities. But, for my part, I am no more surprised that some revealed truths should amaze my understanding, than that the blazing sun should dazzle my eyes. That such things are mentioned in the inspired writings as real facts, is undeniable. I should renounce my very reason, if I did not believe what Omniscience attests, even though it should imply what is altogether inexplicable by my scanty conceptions. And why should the incaverned mole—whose dwelling is darkness, whose sight is but a small remove from blindness—why should such a poor animal wonder that it cannot dart its eye through unnumbered worlds, or take in at a glance the vast system of the universe?

Your sense of the 20th article is exactly mine. The authority you mention is, in my opinion, all the authority which the church, the rulers and governors of the church, can reasonably claim, or regularly exercise, in matters relating to faith. These rulers have power, as you justly observe, to settle, in conformity with what they conclude to be the meaning of Scripture, the nature and extent of their own creed; and none, I think, can fairly deny them a right to determine what points of belief shall be the indispensable terms of enjoying communion with their society. But as for I know not what privilege of interpretating Scripture in such a manner as that it shall be contumacy to examine before we credit, or heterodoxy and heresy to controvert their exposition, this is an authority which I cannot allow to any man, or body of men, now in the world. At this rate our faith would be built upon the decisions of the church, not on the determinations of the inspired word; and, consequently, be not of God, but of men.

Could I have imagined, when I set pen to paper, that it would have run such extravagant lengths? Bear with my prolixity, dear sir, and excuse my freedom; or, rather, if I have said any thing in too free a style, you must charge it upon your own condescension and candour, which have imboldened me to deliver my sentiments without the least cloak or reserve.

But I must not, I dare not close without acting as becomes a minister of the gospel, without reminding my valuable friend, that the inspiration of the Almighty giveth wisdom; that a man can receive nothing, much less an acquaintance with the mysteries of the Redeemer's kingdom, unless it be given him from above. To this Fountain of wisdom, and Father of lights, let us make humble, earnest, daily application. Then shall we see the things that belong to our peace, and, as it is most emphatically expressed by the sacred penman, know the truth as it is in Jesus.—I am, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

Weston-Favell, Jan. 10, 1745-6.

Dear Sir,—How arduous, and how momentous, is the task you have assigned me! A sense of its difficulty and importance almost deterred me from venturing so much as to attempt it. A cordial friendship instigated, and a consciousness of my own incapacity checked, for some time, my fluctuating mind. At length the bias inclined to the side of the former; my reluctance, urged by the request of a friend, gives way; and now I am fully determined. Determin-

ed to what? To enter the lists against the adversaries of the Trinity? more particularly to appear as the champion for the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost, with a view of resting the grand debate on the dexterity of this pen? No, sir; I form no such romantic schemes; I renounce any such undertaking; I am only determined to lay before you the thoughts which have occurred since I have received your last letter; and this, on the condition of having them returned to the secrecy of my closet after you have passed your judgment, and bestowed your corrections upon them.

In managing this controversy, shall I say? or rather in pursuing this inquiry, it behoves us humbly to apply to the great Father of lights for direction. They shall all be taught of God, says the prophet: This promise we should humbly plead at the throne of grace, and, in cheerful dependence on its accomplishment, proceed to examine, with a modest and reverential awe, the mysterious points before us. Whoever rejects this key, and yet hopes to be admitted into the treasures of heavenly knowledge, acts altogether as imprudent a part, as if he should expect to attain a masterly skill in mathematics, and at the same time neglect to inform himself of the first principles of that admired science. When a divine person is the object of our consideration, then surely it becomes us, in a more especial manner, not to lean to our own understanding, but, like little children, to rely on the teachings of that all-wise Spirit, whose nature, dignity, and attributes, we would devoutly contemplate. You will perhaps take notice, that I anticipate what is to be proved, and take it for granted, that the Holy Ghost is indeed God. I would only observe from this remark, how naturally we wish, how almost unavoidably we conclude, that person to be really God, who is appointed to lead us into all truth.

Let us now, sir, if you please, address ourselves to the inquiry, whether the Holy Spirit is a real person? whether that person is very God? And these particulars being discussed, it may be proper to examine briefly the most material of Mr. Tomkins's objections. But to whom, to what shall we apply, in order to find the satisfaction we seek? To reason, and her naked unassisted dictates? Hardly can reason guess aright with relation to the things that are before our eyes; much less can she determine, with any certainty, concerning the unsearchable depths of the divine nature, those τα βαθη τϑ Θϑ. We have, in the word of revelation, an infallible oracle. To this let us direct our search. To the decision of this unerring standard let us inviolably adhere, however it may surpass our comprehension, or run counter to our fond prepossessions.

Here we may possibly ask, Is not the Spirit of God, by a common metonymy, put for God himself? I own I have sometimes been inclined to hesitate on this question. When it is said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, and, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God—I have never thought these passages a sufficient proof of the personality of the blessed Spirit, though (if I mistake not) commonly urged in support of the doctrine. These, I apprehend, might fairly be interpreted of grieving God himself, and resisting the tender, gracious overtures of his mercy: Conformably to that parallel form of speech, where it is said by the inspired writer, Paul's spirit was grieved; *i. e.* without all dispute, Paul himself was inwardly afflicted.

Again: Perhaps the Spirit of the Lord may be nothing more than a particular modification or exercise of a divine power resident in the Deity. For instance, when it is said, in the prophetic language, Not by might, nor by force, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord: or by the evangelical historian, The Holy Ghost was upon him. Are not these texts nearly equivalent, in point of signification, to those scriptural expressions, The right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass: The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding? Is not this the meaning of the former passage, Not mortal strength, but God's omnipotent aid giveth victory in the battle, and success in every undertaking; and this the import of the latter, The communications of infinite wisdom enlightened his mind in an extraordinary manner?

Were there no other Scriptures which concerned themselves in this debate, I should be ready to give up the point. But there are several, which most strongly imply the personality of the Holy Ghost, though they may not assert it in positive terms. It is true we meet with no such term as personality in sacred writ; but if we find the thing signified, it is in effect the same. No one can shew me the word *resurrection* in the whole Pentateuch; but will any one presume to maintain, that this doctrine is not to be proved from the books of Moses? Our Lord's famous reply to the ensnaring interrogatory of the Sadducees must for ever silence such a suggestion. And thus we may further learn from his method of arguing, that it is not only proper, but our duty, to deduce truths by fair consequences, which the text may not explicitly speak.

Be pleased, sir, to consider the apostolical benediction, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the

fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. If we allow the apostle to understand the true import of language, must it not follow from this passage, that the Holy Spirit is a real person, and distinct from the Father and the Son? Otherwise would not the sacred writer, ought not the sacred writer, to have expressed himself in a different manner; to have said rather, The fellowship of his, or the fellowship of their Spirit? The form of administering baptism is another text of this nature: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is evident, I believe it is allowed by all, that the two first are real distinct persons; and is there not equal reason to conclude, that the last mentioned is a person also? Suppose you should endeavour to distinguish three persons in your discourse, what other language would you use than this? I dare say, sir, you are sensible, that one Scripture proof, if plain in its signification, and incontestable in its evidence, is as valid, as decisive, as one thousand; because one such proof bears the stamp of infallible wisdom and infinite veracity. Therefore, was there no other hint in all the inspired volumes, but these pregnant words which compose the form of baptism, this single proof would be sufficiently satisfactory to my judgment.

I shall take leave to refer you to a few more evidences, and transcribe only the following: There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Logos, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. But this, we are told, is a surreptitious text, foisted by the bigotted espousers of a certain favourite set of doctrines. The only resource this of our opposers, when their case becomes desperate, when conviction flashes in their faces; when every other subterfuge fails, then the pretence of spurious and interpolated reading is trumped up. It is not to be found, they cry, in some very ancient copy; perhaps the Alexandrine MS. acknowledges no such passage. But this I must be allowed to question; I dare not take our adversaries' bare word, especially since some of the declared enemies of orthodoxy are not the most exemplary for truth and integrity. However, granting that there may be no such text in the Alexandrine MS., for my part I should not scruple to abide by the universal testimony of all editions, in all countries, much rather than to give up myself implicitly to the authority of a single MS. I should think it much more reasonable to conclude, that the transcriber of that particular copy had, through oversight, dropt some sentence, rather than to charge all the other copies with forgery, and the editions of all ages with a gross mistake. Consider, sir, not only the apparent difficulty, but the moral impossibility of corrupting the sacred books in that palpable manner which this objection would insinuate, at a time when every private Christian valued them more than life, and spent no day without a diligent contemplation of them; at a time when each particular sect read them constantly in their public assemblies, and watched over the genuineness of each text with a most jealous eye. Would it be an easy matter to introduce a suppositious clause into an ordinary will, after it had been solemnly proved at Doctors Commons, and one authentic copy preserved in the archives? If this is scarce possible, how much more unlikely is it, that any one should be able to practise so iniquitously upon the inspired writings, when not one only, but unnumbered copies were deposited in the most vigilant hands, and dispersed throughout the world?

I shall only desire you to consult those other scriptures, Rom. xv. 16, 30; John xvi. 13—15; which, without heaping together a multitude of other proofs, seem to put the matter beyond all rational doubt. In the last of those places, you will take particular notice that the writer speaks of the Holy Ghost in the masculine gender. How could this consist, with propriety of style, upon any other scheme than ours? The expression should have been *it*, not *he*, if the Holy Ghost were a divine energy alone, and not a real person. Nay, it is remarkable, that though Πνευμα be a neuter, yet the historian varies the gender, and gives us a masculine relative, Οταν ελθη εκεινος, Εκεινος εμε δοξασει. And on what principles can this construction be accounted for, or justified, but by allowing the Holy Spirit to be a person? This I think is an observation of some consequence; and therefore accurate writers should beware of using the word *it*, and rather choose the pronoun *him*, when speaking of this divine Being.

The mention of divine Being reminds me of our second subject of inquiry, viz. Whether the Holy Ghost is very God? Here I should be glad to know what kind or degree of evidence will satisfy the inquirers. If we are so far humble and impartial as to prefer the declarations of an unerring word to the preconceptions of our mind, I think there is most sufficient proof afforded by the Scriptures; whereas, if we bring not these dispositions to the search, it will be no wonder if we are bewildered, if we are given up to our own delusions; nay, it will be no incredible, no unprecedented thing, for God to hide these mysteries from such (in their own opinion) wise and prudent ones, while he reveals them to (men endued with the simplicity and teachableness of) babes.

Is that Being truly God, who is pos-

sessed of divine attributes? This question, I imagine, every body will answer in the affirmative. So that, if it appears that the Holy Ghost is invested with the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, our assent will be won, and our dispute at an end. Is it not the prerogative of the all-seeing God to search the heart, and try the reins? Jer. xvii. 10; and is not this the undoubted prerogative of the blessed Spirit? 1 Cor. ii. 10. Is eternity an attribute of God, and of God only? Deut. xxxiii. 27. 1 Tim. vi. 16. This is clearly the property of the Holy Ghost, who is styled, by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, the Eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. Is wisdom, underived, essential wisdom, a character of God, called by the apostle, μονος σοφος Θεος, Jude, verse 25? This is the illustrious character of the Holy Ghost; he is the spirit of wisdom and revelation, Eph. i. 17. In consequence of which sacred excellency, he is able to lead his people into all truth. Is omnipresence a necessary proof of divinity? If so, the Holy Ghost challenges it upon this claim; for thus saith the inspired poet, "Whether shall I go, then, from thy Spirit?" Psalm cxxxix. 7. Is Omnipotence a sufficient attestation of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost? He that enableth mortals to control the powers, to alter the course, to supersede the fundamental laws of nature, can he be less than the Lord God Almighty? Yet St. Paul declares, that his ability to work all manner of astonishing miracles for the confirmation of his ministry was imparted to him by the Spirit, Rom. xv. 19. If any farther proof is demanded, be pleased to consider, with an unprejudiced attention, that very memorable passage, Matth. xii. 31, 32. Surely, from an attentive consideration of this text, we must be constrained to acknowledge, that the Holy Ghost is strictly and properly God. Otherwise, how could the sin against him be of so enormous a nature, so absolutely unpardonable, and the dreadful cause of inevitable ruin? St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians (vi. 19,) addresses his converts with this remarkable piece of instruction, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." The same apostle, writing to the same believers, in his second epistle (vi. 16,) has the following expression, "Ye are the temples of the living God." Who can compare these texts, and yet be so hardy as deliberately to deny, that the Holy Ghost and the living God are one and the same? Besides, if these two scriptures, viewed in conjunction with each other, did not ascertain the divinity of the blessed Spirit, the very purport of the expression, Ye are temples of the Holy Ghost, sufficiently evinces it. It is certain, that the very essence of a temple, or, to speak in the terms of the logician, the *differentia constitutiva* of a temple, consists in the residence of a Deity. The inhabitation of the highest created Being cannot constitute a temple; nothing but the indwelling of the one infinite almighty Lord God. Since, therefore, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit renders the bodies of Christians temples, it seems to be a clear case, that he is truly God. Another text, a text never omitted when this point is under debate, and a text, in my opinion, singly sufficient to give a final decision to the doubt, is in Acts v. 3, 4, where the person styled Αγιον Πνευμα in one verse, is expressly declared to be Θεος in the next. Now, can we imagine that an evangelist, under the guidance of unerring Wisdom, could write with such unaccountable inaccuracy as the deniers of this article must maintain? Were this supposition admitted, I should almost begin to question the inspiration of the sacred books. At this rate, they would seem calculated to confound the judgment, and elude the common sense of the readers. For, to speak so frequently of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to speak in such language as we always use in distinguishing various persons; to ascribe to them severally such attributes as, by universal acknowledgment, comport only with the supreme God; nay, to call each person by himself, distinctly, expressly to call each person God and Lord; sure, if, after all these declarations, there be not three persons in the one incomprehensible Godhead; if each of these illustrious persons be not very God; what can we say, but that the Scriptures are inconsistent and self-contradictory pieces? So that, upon the whole, we are reduced to this dilemma, either to admit this absurd and impious charge upon the Scriptures, or else to acknowledge the personality and divinity of the three persons in the adorable Trinity.

But, perhaps, a curious genius, that has been accustomed to enter deep into the rationale of things, that thinks it beneath a sagacious inquirer to credit, unless he can comprehend,—such a genius may ask, with a kind of amazement, How can these things be? Here I pretend to give no satisfaction. Here I confess myself at a loss. I cannot conceive how the principle of gravitation acts, or what constitutes the power of attraction. If I cannot penetrate the hidden qualities of a thousand common objects that daily present themselves to my senses, no wonder that I should be unable to unravel the awful secrets of the divine nature; no wonder that I should be incapable of finding out to perfection that infinite Majesty who dwells in light inaccessible. Since the το ειναι is attested by a multitude of witnesses from Scripture, let us be content to wait for the

τὸ πῶς, till this gross interposing cloud of flesh and mortality flee away; until that happy hour arrives, that desirable state commence, when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but shall know even as we are known.

I should now proceed, according to the ability which the great Source of wisdom may please to bestow, to examine Mr. Tomkins's Calm Inquiry; but this is what my time, claimed by a variety of other engagements, will not permit; and what, I presume, you yourself, tired already by a tedious epistle, will very readily excuse. Hereafter, if you insist upon my executing the plan laid down in the beginning of this paper, I will communicate my remarks (such as they are) relating to the forementioned treatise, with all that cheerful compliance and unreserved openness, which may most emphatically bespeak me, dear sir, yours, &c.

LETTER XXV.

Weston Favell, Feb. 9. 1745-6.

THANKS to you, dear sir, for your kind wishes. Blessed be the divine Providence, I am now able to inform you that what you wish is accomplished. I have had one of the most agreeable losses I ever met with; I have lost my indisposition, and am in a manner well.

I send herewith the poem on Christianity. The other books, which you have been pleased to lend me, will follow by the first opportunity. I read Mr. Hobson's performance with eagerness and delight. What is wrote by a valuable friend, has a kind of secret unaccountable charm. It may not be preferable to other compositions, yet methinks it pleases more.

I congratulate you, sir, and my country, on the good news received from the North. —How do you like Stackhouse's history of the Bible? I am sure he has one advantage superior to all the historians of the world; that the facts which he relates are more venerable for their antiquity, more admirable for their grandeur, and more important on account of their universal usefulness. I have often thought that the Scripture is finely calculated to furnish out the most exquisite entertainment to the imagination, from those three principal sources mentioned by Mr. Addison, the *great*, the *beautiful*, and the *new*. But what is that compared with that infinitely noble benefit, to impart which is their professed design—the benefit of making us wise to salvation, of making us partakers of a divine nature? I am, &c.

LETTER XXVI.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 11, 1745-6.

DEAR SIR,—I received your ticket some time ago, in which you desire me to consider some particular passages of Scripture. After an afflictive indisposition, which confined me to my room several days, I have examined the texts you allege. They relate, I find, to that grand question, which has lately been the subject of our debate, the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. I could have wished that the controversy had been brought to a satisfactory and happy issue. Very unwilling to engage in it a second time, I must beg leave to sue for my *bene decessit*, and resign the management of so important a dispute to incomparably more able hands. However, in obedience to your request, *(quid enim amicitiæ denegandum!)* I shall briefly lay before you my opinion concerning those portions of inspired wisdom; and then proceed, in pursuance of my promise, to weigh with calmness and impartiality the most material of Mr. Tomkins's objections.

You observe, That the Father is never represented yielding obedience to Christ, or praying to Christ. I acknowledge the truth of the remark, and assign this clear and obvious reason, Because it was the peculiar office of the second person of the Trinity to humble himself, to unite himself to flesh and blood, and to be made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. Had not the blessed Jesus been clothed with our nature, and partook of our innocent infirmities, we should never have heard any such thing as his yielding obedience, or praying to another greater than himself. This results not from his essential, but his assumed nature; nor is it at all repugnant to reason, to be inferior in one character, and at the same time absolutely equal in another. His majesty King George may be inferior to the Emperor in the capacity of Elector of Hanover; he may be subject to the imperial authority, as he is a prince of the Germanic body; and yet equal to the most illustrious monarchs, obnoxious to no earthly jurisdiction, in his nobler quality of King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. This seems to be a very easy and natural solution of the difficulty: whereas, I think, I may venture to defy the nicest metaphysician, or the most acute casuist, to reconcile the notions of divinity and inferiority. As well may contradictions be made compatible. A God who is inferior, is, to my apprehension a perfect paradox. It is necessarily implied in the idea of God, that he be, as our old translation of the Psalms very emphatically and beautifully styles him, The Most Highest. Therefore, our Saviour, who often

asserts his claim to divinity, declares, as an inseparable consequent of this high prerogative, All things which the Father hath are mine. Is the Father's existence inconceivable and eternal? the same also is the Son's. Has the Father an unequalled absolute supremacy? such likewise hath the Son.

But I see you have ready at hand to object, John xiv. 28. My Father is greater than I. Who are we to understand by the person I? Doubtless that Being who was capable of going and coming, who was sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; now with the disciples on earth, anon separated from them by a translation into heaven; and who can this be but the man Christ Jesus, the human nature of our Redeemer? The attribute of limited locality determines this point with the utmost clearness; why then should any one apply that property to the Godhead of our blessed Master, which he himself so plainly appropriates to his manhood?

This text very opportunely furnishes us with a key to enter into the true meaning of your next quotation, 1 Cor. xi. 3. The head of Christ is God. Only let St. John be allowed to expound St. Paul: I ask this single concession from my worthy friend, (and sure it is no unreasonable one): Let us agree to pay a greater deference to the beloved disciple's comment than to Mr. Pierce's paraphrase, or the interpretation of the Arian creed, then the sense will be as follows, The Deity is the head of the Mediator. As the members are conducted by the head, and subservient to the head, so Christ Jesus, in his human capacity, acted and acts in subordination to the Godhead; obeying the significations of his will, and referring all his administrations to his glory. This exposition, I imagine, the context corroborates, and the scope of the apostle's arguing requires.

As for Heb. i. 8, 9. this text affirms, in the most express terms, that Christ is God. And what can be a stronger proof of his unrivalled supremacy and sovereignty? But perhaps this may be one of those places in which, we are informed by our objectors, the word GOD signifies no more than a king or ruler; consequently does not prove our Redeemer to be God in reality, and by nature, but only to be complimented with this appellation in respect of his office and authority. I believe, sir, you will find, upon a more attentive inquiry, that this subtle distinction is contrary to the perpetual use of the Scriptures. A very celebrated critic observes, that wherever the name ELOHIM is taken in an absolute sense, and restrained to one particular person, (as it is in the passage before us,) it constantly denotes the true and only God. Magistrates are indeed said to be Elohim, in relation to their office, but no one magistrate was ever so called; nor can it be said without blasphemy to any one of them, Thou art Elohim, or God. It is also recorded of Moses, Thou shalt be Elohim; yet not absolutely, but relatively only—a God to Pharaoh, and to Aaron; *i. e.* in God's stead, doing, in the name of God, what he commanded, and declaring what he revealed. Besides, does not the apostle in this very chapter, verse 10, address the following acknowledgment to Christ, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands? And is not the work of creation the unshared prerogative and honour of the supreme God? This I am pretty sure of, it is the prerogative of that God to whom the worship of the saints, under the Old Testament, is directed; of that God who has declared himself jealous of his honour, and resolves not to give his glory to another. Melchisedec made this illustrious Being the object of his adoration, Blessed be the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun—was judged by the Psalmist one of the noblest ascriptions of praise which could be made to the Deity. Jonah has left us a confession of his faith, and an abstract of his devotion, in the following words: I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea, and the dry land. Yet St. Paul assures us, that this great Creator and Proprietor of heaven and earth, this object of divine worship in all ages of the ancient church, is he—ὁ δι ἑαυτου καθαρισμον ποιησαμενος των ἁμαρτιων ἡμων, ver. 3. Now, can we view the magnificent system of the universe, the immensity of its extent, the vast variety of its parts, the inimitable accuracy of its structure, the perfect harmony of its motions, together with the astonishing energy and effects of its mechanic powers; can we contemplate this world of wonders, and withhold ourselves a single moment from ascribing the glory of incomparable wisdom and matchless perfections to its Maker? Can we glance an eye, or start a thought, through that ample field of miracles, which nature in all her scenes regularly exhibits, and still conclude, that the Author of all takes too much upon him when he advances the following claim?

———None I know
Second to me, or like, equal much less.
MILTON.

Possibly our sceptical gentlemen are ready to reply, We are far from denying that Christ made the world: but we suppose that he made it only as a ministerial being; not by any sufficiency of his own, but by a power delegated to him from the

infinite Godhead. But sure the abettors of this opinion never considered that emphatical passage, Col. i. 16. By whatever artful evasion they may think to elude the force of the former expression, I cannot see what possible escape they can contrive from the latter. It is plain, from the philosophical principles of an apostle, that the universe was formed by Christ as the almighty Artificer, for Christ as its final end; and is not this a demonstration that Christ was not a mere instrument, but the grand, glorious, self-sufficient Agent; the Alpha and Omega of all things?

After all that has been said upon this text, will it be intimated, that I have been partial in my examination of it? that the sentence which most particularly favours your opinion, and looks with the most frowning aspect upon mine, is passed over without notice, namely, where it is taught, That God anointed Christ with the oil of gladness above his fellows? Heb. i. 9. I reply, by owning, that these words most undeniably imply inferiority; they imply a state of indigence, which wants something it has not naturally; a state of impotence, which receives from another what it cannot convey to itself. Surely then, this clause must, according to all the laws of just interpretation, be referred to that nature which admitted of such wants, and was subject to such infirmities. To ascribe it to that nature which is characterised as God, would be almost as affronting to reason as it is to the Deity. It is farther observable, that the very expression limits the sense to that capacity of our Redeemer, in which others stood related to him as his fellows: And can this be any other than the human? Let me add one word more before I dismiss this inquiry: Suppose I was to shift sides in the dispute, and turn the tables upon the disciples of Arius. Gentlemen, since you take so much pains to prove the inferiority of our Lord Jesus Christ, permit me to try if I cannot outshoot you in your own bow. I will undertake to show, on your own principles, that he was inferior to millions of created beings; for this I have the positive and sure evidence of Scripture, We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, Heb. ii. 9. These gentlemen, I verily think, would have so much regard for the honour of a person on whom their everlasting all depends, as to answer, with some becoming spirit, You are to distinguish between what our Saviour was made occasionally, and what he was originally: Though his human nature was taken from a class of beings lower in dignity than the angels, yet his nobler and more exalted nature was greatly superior to them all. Now, sir, as we must have recourse sometimes to this distinction, our adversaries themselves being our judges and our precedent, why should we not carry it along with us continually? Without it, a multitude of texts appear perplexed in their meaning, and clash with other scriptures; with it, they drop their obscurity, are disentangled from their intricacy, and harmonize entirely with the whole tenor of sacred writ.

1 Cor. xv. 28, is another scripture pointed out for consideration. This, I confess, is a difficult, and admitting it was (to me at least) an unintelligible passage, nay directly repugnant to my hypothesis, what would be a rational procedure in this case? To renounce my faith, because I cannot reconcile it with one scripture, though it stands supported by a copious multiplicity of others? If, in debating on any question, there be five hundred ayes, and but one no, I appeal to the conduct of the honourable House of Commons, whether it be reasonable that the point should be carried by the single negative, in opposition to so vast a majority of affirmatives? However, the state of our doctrine is not so bad, nor this text so diametrically opposite to it, as to destroy all hopes of establishing it with a *nemine contradicente*. The apostle affirms, that at the consummation of terrestrial things, when the state of human probation ends, and the number of the elect is completed, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all: *i. e.* according to my judgment, the Son, at the commencement of that grand revolution, will entirely resign the administration of his mediatorial kingdom; he will no longer act as an advocate or intercessor, because the reasons on which this office is founded, will cease for ever; he will no longer, as a high-priest, plead his atoning blood in behalf of sinners, nor, as a king, dispense the succours of his sanctifying grace, because all guilt will be done away, and the actings of corruption be at an end: he will no longer be the medium of his people's access to the knowledge and enjoyment of the Father, because then they will stand perpetually in the beatific presence, and see face to face, know even as they are known. I may probably mistake the meaning of the words, but whatever shall appear to be their precise signification, this, I think, is so clear as not to admit of any doubt, that it relates to an incarnate person; relates to him who died for our sins, was buried and rose again, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. And can the surrender of all authority made by the man Jesus Christ, be any bar to his unlimited equality as God?

You refer me to Psalm viii. 5, and lxxxii. 1, 6. Exod. xxii. 28, and add, these texts prove that God signifies, in some places, king or ruler. I acknowledge that the

word Elohim, in the afore-cited passages, signifies no more than angels, kings, or rulers. But is this a demonstration that the word Jehovah, the incommunicable name, signifies no more than an angel, a king, or a ruler? This is the conclusion our adversaries are to infer; this the point they are to make good, otherwise their attempts drop short of the mark, fly wide from their purpose: Because it is plain from incontestable authorities, that Jesus is Jehovah. This was hinted in a former letter; and if you please to compare Isa. vi. 3, with John xii. 41, you will find another convincing evidence, that the Jehovah of the Jews is the Jesus of the Christians. Besides, in all those places where the term God is used to denote some created being, invested with considerable authority, or possessed of considerable dignity, the connexion is such as absolutely to exclude the person so denominated from any title to a divine nature; whereas, when the name God is applied to the second person of the Trinity, it is connected with such consequents or antecedents as necessarily include the idea of divinity and supremacy. For instance, when the apostle recognises the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in those remarkable words, Rom. ix. 5, Who is God—lest this idle piece of sophistry should have any room for admittance, he adds a most determining clause—over all, blessed for ever. I have called it idle sophistry, for really it is nothing else. Only observe the process of the pretended argument, and you yourself will allow it no better appellation. What is designed for the argument runs thus: Because rulers of distinction have sometimes the title of Elohim, therefore Jesus, who has the title of Jehovah, is not very God, but only a ruler of distinction: Or, the word God, when necessarily determined by the context to some subordinate being, signifies a subordinate being; therefore the word God, when necessarily determined by the context to signify the supreme God, does not signify the supreme God, but only some subordinate being. These are the mighty reasonings, such the formidable artillery, with which the adherents of Arius attack the divinity and equality of our Saviour. May the arms of our foreign enemies and intestine rebels be made in their kind, of such metal, consist of such strength! and I may venture to address my countrymen in David's encouraging language, Let no man's heart fail because of them.

I hope it will not be objected, that I have sometimes mistook the particular point to be discussed, and confounded the divinity of our Lord with his equality to the Father. I own I have not been scrupulously careful to preserve any such distinction, because I am persuaded it is perfectly chimerical. Whoever admits the former grants the latter; the one cannot subsist without the other; or rather they are one and the same thing. To be equal with the Father is to be divine; and to be divine is to be equal with the Father. An inferior deity was a notion that passed current in the heathen world; but we have not so learned the divine nature as to adopt it into our creed. It is a proposition that confutes itself. The predicate and subject are self-contradictory. God certainly means a being of incomparable, unparalleled glory and perfection. No one will dare to give a lower definition of the Godhead. Yet this the first term of the sentence affirms, the second denies. Whenever I hear the awful word GOD, I form an idea of a being possessed of absolute supremacy. Inferiority is altogether as inconsistent with my apprehension of the Godhead, as a limited extension is with immensity. The schoolmen's maxim is strictly true when applied to the divine nature, that his properties and excellencies *non recipiunt magis aut minus*. Besides, sir, is there not another apparent inconveniency, another inextricable difficulty, attending this superfine distinction? Does it not suppose, instead of distinct persons, distinct beings, distinct essences? That which is inferior cannot be the very same with its superior. Identity, in this case, consists not with inequality. The consequence of this tenet is polytheism.

For my part, I lay it down as an incontestable principle, such as reason and Scripture concur to establish, that whatever, whosoever is God, must be absolutely supreme. I then proceed to examine, whether the divine names, attributes, honours; those which are incommunicably divine, which flow from the divine essence, which cannot comport with a finite existence, but are the sole prerogative of the unequalled God; whether these are in Scripture clearly ascribed to the sacred person of the Son; if they are, my reason requires me to believe that he is very God, and co-equal with the Father. My reason, in her sedatest moments, assures me, that Scripture cannot deceive, though I may be unable to conceive. My reason declares, that I shall be a rebel against her laws, if I do not submit to this determination of Scripture, as decisive, as infallible.—I am, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

Weston-Favell, April 1, 1746.

DEAR SIR,—IF you can spare the Night-Thoughts, the bearer of this ticket will bring them safely to Weston. I propose

to read them when business is done, and the day is fled; so that the time may correspond with the subject.

I hope the bookseller has, before this time, waited on you with the little volume which desires your acceptance. Was it to pass through my hands before it was presented, I should almost be induced to inscribe it with that pretty line in Virgil,

Munera parva quidem, at magnum testantur amorem.

Pray, do you think that passage, Luke vi. 38. δωσουσιν εις τον κολπον υμων, is rightly rendered by our translators, Shall men give into your bosom? Is the idea of men necessarily implied in the original? Or can fact and experience justify the translators in giving this sense to the original? God, and conscience, and a future state, will amply recompense the beneficent; but whether men, the generality of men in this world, are thus generous and grateful, seems to be a point that wants confirmation. This remark was suggested in perusing the place; but I submit it to your judgment, and remain, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 22, 1746.

Dear Sir,—As I cannot attend the infirmary this day, permit me to take this opportunity of acknowledging the favour of your last.

The sermon you was pleased to lend me I admire. Christ the great propitiation is, with me, a most favourite subject; and I think the author has been so happy as to treat it in a clear, nervous, pathetic manner. I am delighted with his reply, and rejoice to observe that it has passed a second edition. I hope the antidote will operate, and spread as wide as the poison. This writer has another recommendation: His conciseness, added to perspicuity, renders his arguments easy to be apprehended, and not difficult to be remembered. I am so much charmed with his performance, that I beg leave to keep it a few days longer; and should take it as a favour, if, in the mean time, you will give the bookseller an order to send for one of the sermons for me.

I heartily applaud that zeal you show for the spiritual welfare of the patients. The infirmary would be an inestimable blessing, if, by the grace of God, it might be productive of a reformation in the persons whom it admits and discharges. As distressed objects will, in all probability, resort to it from all parts of the country, a change wrought in their hearts, and a renewal begun in their lives, might be a happy means of diffusing religion far and near. I hope the clergy concerned in the management of the infirmary will, with delight and assiduity, concur in the prosecution of so desirable an end. I can promise for one, so far as God shall give him ability. I wish some proper scheme was contrived for the execution of this design, in which I might bear some little part, without giving umbrage to my brethren, or alarming their jealousy. I have sometimes thought of offering to give the patients a kind of lecture or exhortation once a-week, formed upon some or other of those Scriptures which are the standing mementos of their wards.* But sometimes doubtful whether such a proposal would meet with acceptance, sometimes checked by the infirmities of my constitution, I have hitherto neglected to mention the affair; however, I now venture to submit it to your consideration. To this, or any other more advisable method, I should very readily contribute the best of my assistance.

"Are you inclined, dear sir, to give the poor creatures all the instruction in the Christian religion you are capable of?" We take you at your word; and henceforward look upon you as an associate in our great work. In a warfare of such unspeakable importance, we are glad to strengthen our force by the accession of every ally; much more of such an auxiliary, as will be regarded by the patients with an uncommon degree of attention and pleasure. Nor can I think it anywise inconsistent with the office of a physician, or any derogation from the dignity of his character, to feel the pulse of the soul, to examine into the symptoms of spiritual maladies, to ask exploring questions concerning the habit of the mind, and prescribe accordingly, either for the purging off the peccant humours of vice, or corroborating the relaxed powers of grace.

May that infinitely condescending and compassionate Being, who disdained not in his own sacred person to take our sicknesses, and bear our infirmities, both direct your counsels, and prosper your endeavours in this momentous affair.

I purpose to wait upon you some afternoon in the next week, and cannot think of a more agreeable topic of conversation, than that of concerting measures for the proper exertion of this labour of love, and encouraging each other to abound in the work of the Lord. I am, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

Weston-Favell, March 1745-6.

Dear Sir,—In a former letter I considered, Whether the blessed Spirit is really a

* Texts of Scripture in the Northampton, Winchester, and several other infirmaries, are written on the walls, and consequently are very useful, if seriously reflected on.

distinct person; whether this person is truly and properly God? It appeared, from a variety of Scriptures, that both these questions were to be resolved in the affirmative. These preliminaries being settled, I would hope, with some perspicuity of reason and strength of argument, I now proceed, in consequence of my engagement, to examine Mr. Tomkins's objections against the received custom of addressing divine worship to this divine Being.

The author, I freely acknowledge, writes with a great appearance of integrity; with a calm and decent spirit of controversy; and with a very plausible air of truth. As the subject of his inquiry is of the highest dignity and importance, as his method of managing the debate is, to say the least, by no means contemptible, I cannot forbear expressing some surprise, that none of the ingenious dissenters to whom the piece is particularly inscribed, have thought proper to interest themselves in the dispute, and either confute what is urged, or else (like persons of that inviolable attachment to the pure scriptural worship which they profess) recede from the use of their allowed doxologies.

For my part, as I firmly believe it a proper practice to worship the Son, as we worship the Father, and to worship the Holy Ghost, as we worship the other persons of the undivided Trinity, I am so far from disapproving, that I admire our customary doxology, and think it a very noble and instructive part of our sacred service. Noble, because it exhibits one of the grand mysteries and glorious peculiarities of the gospel;—instructive, because it so frequently reminds the worshipper of a point which it so greatly concerns him to believe, and which is fitted to inspire the brightest, the strongest hopes, of final, of complete salvation.

But, lest this persuasion should be deemed the crude production of early prejudice, rather than the mature fruit of sedate consideration, we will very readily hear whatever can be alleged against it; and not willingly secrete one objection, or misrepresent one argument, occurring in the inquiry.

"Let it be supposed," says our author, "that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Godhead; I still query, What warrant Christians have for a direct and distinct worship of this third person in the Godhead?" (page 1.) I should think there can be no reasonable doubt, whether worship is to be paid to the Divinity. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, is a law of incontestable authority, and eternal obligation. As for the circumstances of worship included in its being direct, this cannot alter the case, nor render the practice improper. According to my apprehension, all true and genuine worship is direct. If it be addressed to the divine object at second hand, it has more of the nature of idolatry than worship. Such is the religious foppery of the Papists, who will not apply directly to the Father of everlasting compassion, but adore God, as it were, by proxy. With regard to the distinctness of the worship, this depends entirely upon the Scripture's distinguishing their persons. If this be clearly done, the distinctness of worship is properly authorized, and the fitness of it follows of course. If the inspired writers assure us that the Father is God, this is a sufficient warrant to pay divine honours to the Father. If the inspired writers affirm that the Son is God, this is a sufficient ground for ascribing divine honours to the Son. If the same inspired writers declare that the Holy Ghost is God, we need no clearer warrant, nor can we have a louder call, to pay him our devoutest homage. In a word, it is the voice of reason, it is the command of Scripture, it is founded on the unalterable relation of things, that worship, direct worship, distinct worship, all worship, be rendered to the Deity. So that the divinity of the Holy Ghost, exclusive of any apostolical precept or example, is an incomparably better reason for ascribing divine honours to this sacred person, than the bare want of such precept or example can be a reason to justify the omission, or condemn the performance of it.

I am no advocate for implicit faith in any human determination or opinion. Should I see whole sects, or whole churches in a glaring error, such as I can prove from Scripture to be palpably wrong, and of pernicious tendency, I would make no scruple to remonstrate, dissent, and enter my protest. But in a case, which Mr. Tomkins himself (page 2, line 19.) allows to be of a dubious nature; where I have no positive proof from God's holy word that the practice is unlawful or improper; I cannot but apprehend, that it becomes a modest person, diffident of his own judgment, to acquiesce in the general, the long-continued usage of all the churches. This is urged by an inspired writer as a forcible motive for rejecting a practice; and why should not I admit it as a motive of weight for adhering to a practice? We have no such custom, neither the churches of God, (1 Cor. xi. 16.) was an apostolical argument. And in an instance where we are not precluded by any prohibition of Scripture, I think the reasoning is equally conclusive if changed to the affirmative. We have such a custom, and the churches of God. Was I to settle my opinion, and adjust my conduct, with regard to such a point, I should be inclined to argue in the following manner: I cannot bring one text from the sacred writings which forbids the usage; and as it is unani-

mously practised by devout persons of almost every denomination, as it has been the received, the uninterrupted practice of the Christian church for more than a thousand years; who am I, that I should disturb the peace, or separate myself from the communion of the church, for a procedure which such multitudes of excellent persons maintain to be consonant, and which I cannot prove to be contrary, to the sense of Scripture? Who am I, that I should fancy myself to have more of the mind of God than the whole united church of true believers, eminent saints, and illustrious martyrs?

"But there is no precept for this worship in Scripture," (page 1.) and Dr. Owen affirms, "That a divine command is the ground" (he means, I presume, the only ground, or else the quotation is nothing to our author's purpose) "of all worship," (page 25.) Dr. Owen's character, I own, is considerable, as well as his assertion peremptory; but yet I cannot prevail on myself to submit to his *ipse dixit* as an oracle, nor reverence his judgment as infallible. I would ask the Doctor, What divine command the Heathens ever received to worship the blessed God? I know of no verbal or written precept. But they saw their warrant included in their wants; they perceived their obligation resulting from the divine attributes. Will Dr. Owen maintain, that no worship was expected from the Pagans? that they had been blameless, and acted according to the principles of their duty, if they had withheld all acts of veneration from the Deity? No, surely. St. Paul, in declaring them faulty for not worshipping the Almighty in such a rational manner as was suitable to his pure and exalted nature, clearly intimates, that it was their duty both to worship, and to worship aright. It is not said by the apostle, though it is the consequence of the Doctor's position, that they ought to have refrained from all worship, and not have meddled with matters of devotion, till they received an authentic warrant from revelation. The inspired casuist grounds his duty, in this particular, upon the eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i. 20.) of the Supreme Being, which were discoverable by the exercise of their understandings, and from a survey of the creation. In conformity to the apostle's sentiments, I should rather place the foundation of religious worship in the glories, the mercies, the unsearchable riches, of the almighty Majesty. These, together with the relation which dependent creatures bear to this all-producing, all-sustaining, infinitely beneficent God, are the grand warrant to authorize addresses of adoration. These are reasons prior to all express revelations, and would have subsisted if actual commands had never been given. If this be not true, what will become of all natural religion? Scripture, indeed, has declared explicitly the binding nature of these motives; Scripture, like a sacred herald, has promulgated what God foreordained, what reason had decreed, what necessarily flowed from the habitudes of persons and things. Or, to represent the point in another light, the perfections of the Godhead are the original, the inviolable obligation to all expressions of homage and devotion: to ratify this obligation, and impart to it all possible solemnity and sanction, Scripture has added the broad seal of heaven. If this be right reason, and if the Holy Ghost be really God, his all-sufficient excellencies, and my state of dependence, are a proper license, or rather a virtual mandamus, for the applications of prayer and the ascriptions of praise. Grant this one proposition relating to the divinity of the blessed Spirit, and admit that his eternal power and Godhead are a sufficient ground for religious worship, and we shall find ourselves unavoidably determined. We must rebel against our reason, must violate the dictates of our conscience, must act in opposition, not to one particular text, but to the main tenor and scope of the whole Scripture, if we do not render all the service, yield all the reverence due to a glorious Being, in whom we live, move, and exist.

But still we are told, in various places, again and again we are told, "That there is no express warrant." Prodigious stress is laid upon this word *express*; the whole force of the objection seems to terminate on this point. There is no express warrant, therefore it is an unwarrantable practice. For my part, I have not discernment enough to perceive the conclusiveness of this arguing. I must beg leave to deny the consequence of such a syllogism. For if the sense of various Scriptures has made it a duty, this is warrant enough, though it be not particularly enjoined, or tolerated in form. This maxim our ingenious author will admit in other cases, and why not in the present? There is no express command to add any prayer at the celebration of baptism. When our Lord instituted the ordinance, he only delivers the form of initiation into the Christian church, without any prescription relating to concomitant prayer. When Philip administered this sacrament to the eunuch, there is no mention of any address to the Almighty, pertinent to the occasion. I cannot recollect, that any of the holy writers either inform the world that they practised such a method themselves, or so much as intimate that they would advise others, in succeeding ages, to accompany this solemnity with suitable devotions. But though we

have no positive injunction, we have the reasonableness of the thing for our plea. Other Scriptures, that virtually, though not explicitly recommend it, are our warrant. In every thing, says St. Paul, let your requests be made known unto God; consequently, in this sacred and important thing.

I must again declare, that I can by no means assent to our author's grand postulatum, That nothing in the way of divine worship is allowable, but what has an express warrant from Scripture. Because virtual warrants are warrants; consequential warrants are warrants. Our objector must maintain this in some instances, and why should he disclaim it in others? To be consistent in conduct is surely essential to the character of an impartial inquirer after truth. Shall such an one sometimes reject an argument as weak and insignificant because it happens to be illative only, and not direct; and at other times urge it as cogent and irrefragable? I will mention one very memorable particular of this nature; that is, the case of the Lord's day. Why does Mr. Tomkins transfer the sanctification of a particular day from the seventh to the first? Has he any express command in Scripture, any express warrant from Scripture for this alteration? If he has, let him produce it. I must own, I have none but consequential warrants; warrants formed upon conclusions, and derived from some remarkable scriptures; but these not near so numerous, nor near so ponderous, as those which concur to establish the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Now, if an express warrant be not needful in the one, why should it be so rigorously insisted on in the other duty? If then this leading principle of our author's be false or precarious, what truth, what certainty can there be in any, in all his deductions from it? If the groundwork be unsubstantial, and the foundation fall, what solidity can there be in the superstructure? how can the building stand? Possibly Mr. Tomkins may reply, "the example of the primitive church determines this point." We find, it was the custom of the earliest antiquity to observe the Christian sabbath on the first day of the week; and therefore have very good reason to believe that the usage was established by apostolical authority. And may not I say the same with regard to the custom of ascribing glory, and rendering adoration, to the third person of the Trinity? Justin Martyr, the most ancient and authentic apologist for Christianity, who is next in succession, and next in credit to the *patres apostolici*; he declares expressly, That it was the received custom of the Christian Church, in his days, to worship the Holy Ghost. His words are, Πνευμα προφητικον οτι μετα λογυ τιμωμεν, αποδειζομεν. You perceive, he not only avows the thing, but vindicates its reasonableness and propriety. Perhaps some captious critic may insinuate, that it is matter of doubt, whether the word τιμωμεν implies divine honours. I waive all attempts to prove this point from the original of the New Testament, because, to obviate such an objection, we have another passage to produce from the same saint, father, and martyr, Πνευμα προφητικον σεβομεθα και προσκυνεμεν, Apol. 1. Can any expressions be imagined more forcible in their signification, or more apposite to our purpose? They import the highest acts of adoration, and yet they describe the regards which were paid by the purest antiquity to the Holy Ghost. Will it still be suggested, that Justin makes no mention of offering up prayers, or addressing praises? I answer, This he must certainly mean, because no one can be said ασεβειθαι και προσκυνειν τον Θεον η το Πνευμα, who withholds praise, or restrains prayer. These particular instances are as necessarily implied in those general terms, as the species is included in the genus.

You will please to observe, that this amounts to a great deal more than Mr. Tomkins, (page 17.), not very ingeniously, suggests, viz. "a few hints that learned men have found, in the primitive ages, of the ascription of praise to the Holy Ghost." It seems also entirely to overthrow what, in another place, he advances (page 26.) not very consistently with truth, viz. "That there is so little appearance of the observance of such a custom, for so many ages of the Christian church." Few hints and little appearance! Can a clear and determinate declaration, made by a writer of the most unquestionable veracity, concerning the unanimous, the universal practice of the ancient church; can this evidence, with any fairness or equity, be rated at the diminutive degree of hints, and little appearance?

As to what is remarked relating to the corruption of the early writers, the interpolations, or alterations made by careless transcribers, (page 17.), this seems to be a most empty and jejune insinuation. It is what will serve any side of any debate. It is opposing hypothesis to fact, precarious and unsupported hypothesis to clear and undeniable fact. This sure is catching, not at a twig, but at a shadow. I never could like Dr. Bentley's *oscitantia et hallucinatio librariorum*, even in his animadversions on heathen authors; because it was an outcry fitted for any occasion, a charge ever ready at hand, and equally suited to discountenance truth or detect error; much less can I think it sufficient to overthrow the testimony, or invalidate the authenticity of our ancient Christian writers. Would a bare innuendo,

(and Mr. Tomkins's is no more), and that from an interested person, without any the least show of proof; would this be admitted, in a court of judicature, to supersede the plain, the solemn deposition of a credible witness? Supersede it! Quite the reverse. It would convince the judge, and teach the jury, that the cause must be extremely wrong, utterly insupportable, since artifices so weak and transparently fallacious were used in its defence.

But it is frequently objected, that no mention is made, no warrant is to be found for distinct worship. The afore-cited writer, and the whole Scripture, is silent upon the article of distinct worship. And the reader is led to suppose, that there is some mighty difference between distinct and I know not what other kind of worship. Why does our author harp so incessantly upon this string? whence such irreconcilable aversion to this quality of worship? One would almost suspect he was conscious that some worship should be paid, but could not digest the doctrine, nor submit to the payment of distinct worship. I must reply, once for all, that if any worship be due, distinct worship cannot be improper; much more if all worship (which, I apprehend, is included in Justin's words, and follows from the divinity of the blessed Spirit) be requisite, distinct worship cannot be unwarrantable.

Another grand argument urged by our inquirer is, "That the apostles, as far as appears, never practised this worship of the Holy Ghost themselves, nor recommended it to others." (page 2.) He should, by all means, have printed *as far as appears* in Italics or capitals; because then the reader would have apprehended more easily the uncertain foundation on which the reasoning is built. But though this particular, relating to the practice of the apostles, does not appear one way or the other, yet our author, in his 4th page, and elsewhere, concludes from it as assuredly as if it stood upon authentic record. "For," says he, "if we admit that the reason of things is sufficient to establish this practice, it will prove too much." It will undoubtedly, if it proves any thing, prove it a duty to pay such worship to the Holy Spirit; and consequently, that the apostles were defective, either in not seeing this reason of things as well as we, or not practising according to it. Does he not here suppose the apostolical omission an acknowledged, undoubted point, which, a few lines before, he had confessed to be dubious and unapparent?

However, not to insist upon this little self-contradicting slip, I would ask, What reason has Mr. Tomkins to conclude, that the apostles omitted this usage which the Christian churches have adopted? Do they ever declare, or so much as hint, that they are determined to omit it? Do they ever caution their converts against it as a dangerous error? Is there any such memorial preserved, or any such caveat lodged in their secret writings? Now, to argue in our author's strain, If it was so unjustifiable a thing to address praise, or put up prayer to the Holy Ghost, there could not be a more necessary precaution than that the apostles, those careful instructors, should have warned their people of the mistake, especially since it was so extremely probable, so almost unavoidable, that they would fall into it. For I appeal to the whole world, whether a considerate person would not naturally judge it reasonable, whether a devout person would not feel a forcible inclination, to worship that venerable Name into which he was baptized; and to praise that beneficent Being, who is the author of so many inestimable blessings. Yet though this is so apparently natural, such as the apostles could not but foresee was likely to happen, they say not a syllable by way of prevention; they take no care to guard their converts against such a practice. A pregnant sign, that it is allowed by divine Wisdom, and chargeable neither with superstition nor idolatry.

But our author, to corroborate his argument, adds, "To suppose the apostles directed any explicit worship to the Holy Ghost, though we have no mention of it in Scripture, where yet we meet with frequent doxologies of theirs, and addresses by way of prayer or petition," would be an unreasonable presumption. I cannot accede to this assertion. The doxologies and prayers of the apostles, recorded in Scripture, are only occasional and incidental; inserted, as the fervour of a devout spirit suggested, in the body of their doctrinal and exhortatory writings. Now, the omission of such a practice in writings, which were composed with a view of instructing mankind in the great fundamentals of Christianity, which were never intended as a full and complete system of devotions; the omission of this practice in such writings can be no fair or conclusive argument for its being omitted in their stated acts of public worship. If, indeed, the apostles had, in their epistolary correspondence, drawn up a form of devotions; had declared, that in them was comprised a perfect pattern of devotional addresses, proper to be offered to the Deity; that all acts of worship which deviated a jot or tittle from that prescribed form, were unwarrantable; if such a composition had been transmitted from the apostles, and we had found no such addresses therein as those for which we are pleading, I should then allow a good deal of force in the argument drawn from the apostolical omission; though, at the same time, I could not be

able to forbear wondering at the inconsistency of their doctrines, which teach us that the Holy Ghost is God, and of their worship, which refuses him divine honours. But I think, as the case stands, no solid argument, nothing but a specious cavil, can be formed from this circumstance of its being unpractised in the writings of the apostles.

"It does not appear that the apostles addressed distinct worship to the Blessed Spirit; therefore we conclude, that they actually addressed none:"—As though fact and appearance were convertible terms. I am surprised that an author of Mr. Tomkins's penetration can prevail upon himself to be satisfied, or should offer to impose upon his readers, with a deduction so very illogical. Is the not appearing of a thing a certain argument, or indeed any argument at all, for its not existing? It does not appear that there are mountains, or groves, or rivers beneath our horizon: It does not appear that there are any such vessels as lymphatics, any such fluid as the chyle, in these living bodies of ours. But by comparing them with others that have been dissected, and by reasoning from indisputable principles relating to the animal economy, we assure ourselves of the reality of both these particulars. Consider, sir, into what unnumbered absurdities, and evident falsehoods, this way of arguing would betray us, if pursued in all its consequences. It will prove, if we once admit it as a test of truth, that nothing was transacted by scriptural men, but what is particularly recorded in scripture history. I nowhere read Isaac circumcised his son Jacob, or instructed his household after the example of his father Abraham. But shall we infer, from the silence of Scripture with regard to these matters, that he never conformed to the former institution, nor performed the latter service? I should much rather believe that, as he bears the character of a godly man, he walked in both these statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And since the apostles uniformly agree in this grand premise, That the Holy Ghost is God, it seems much more reasonable to conclude from hence, that they paid him direct worship, than from their bare silence to infer, that they neglected this practice. I nowhere read in the sacred writings, that St. Peter suffered martyrdom, or sealed the testimony of Christ with his blood. But must we, on this account, persuade ourselves that he was not one of the noble army of martyrs? No, you will say, it is very supposable that he laid down his life for his Saviour, even though this event is not expressly recorded, because our Lord clearly predicts it, when he informs him by what death he should glorify God. And may not I reply, with parity of reason, it is very supposable that the apostles, in their solemn devotions, addressed direct and distinct worship to the Holy Ghost, because their declaring their belief in his personality and divinity was a strong intimation that they should, was a sort of prediction that they would, render all kind of homage and adoration to him. Upon the whole, if this be a mere presumption, no better than a *gratis dictum*, that the apostles did not worship the Holy Ghost, then all the specious arguments derived from hence drop of course.

Our objector still insists, "That this is not a necessary part of Christian worship," (page 2.) Be pleased to observe how he departs from his first proposal. His first inquiry, that which the title page exhibits, was, Whether this be warrantable? then, with an evasive dexterity, he slips into another topic, and maintains that it cannot be necessary. Whether this be tergiversation or inaccuracy, I shall not stay to examine; but must ask Mr. Tomkins, What reason he has for this positive determination, that it cannot be necessary? Because, on the contrary supposition, "we shall condemn the apostles as guilty of a great omission," (page 2.) This argument the author uses more than once, therefore I may be excused in replying to it once again. We can have no pretence to condemn the apostles till we have undeniable proof that there was such an omission in their conduct. Who can assert, who dares maintain, that, when the apostles were met together in the holy congregation, for large, solemn, copious devotion, they never recognised the divinity of the three sacred Persons, never addressed distinct acts of praise or invocation to each respectively? This Mr. Tomkins may persist in supposing; but, after all he can suggest in vindication of this principle, it will amount to no more than a bare supposal. I may at least as fairly suppose the very reverse; and, I think, have the suffrage of reason, the analogy of Scripture, the consent of the purest antiquity, on my side. However, in case Mr. Tomkins had demonstrated, by incontestable evidence, that the practice under consideration cannot be necessary, does he confine himself, in every instance, to what is strictly necessary? Does he not allow himself in what is expedient? Could I not mention various particulars which are not absolutely necesssary, but yet they are decent and useful; they contribute to the beauty and harmony of worship, to the comfort and edification of the worshippers? Perhaps it may not be necessary to particularize in our devotions the present distress of our nation, and to form particular petitions suitable to our national exigencies, or particular thanksgivings accommodated to our national deliverances. But since this is

very expedient; since it tends to beget in all a more lively sense of our dependence on divine providence; since it is a most emphatical method of ascribing to the supreme Disposer the glory of all our public mercies, this practice is very becoming, very proper, very useful. Should I plead, in opposition to this custom, that it is not absolutely necessary: Your prayers may be acceptable to God, and beneficial to your country, without such particularizing. St. Paul gives no express command, sets no explicit example of any such usage, there is no precedent from any of the apostles, where the affairs of the state under which they lived are particularly displayed before God in humble supplication.—Would Mr. Tomkins think this a sufficient reason for him in his private, or for ministers in their public devotions, to discontinue the practice? No, verily; the propriety, the expediency of the thing would justify and ascertain its use, even though no scriptural pattern had recommended, no scriptural precept enjoined it.

It is affirmed, (page 5,) That "the addresses of the New Testament are always made to the Father, or to the Son;" and it is added, (page 10,) "that there is neither rule nor example in it for worshipping any other person whatever." This point our author affirms with a very positive air, as though it were incapable of being controverted; and therefore often builds assertions on it, often makes deductions from it. Suppose it was an undeniable truth, I think we have shown that it can be no satisfactory proof, that in all the enlarged devotions of the apostles, no addresses were offered to the Blessed Spirit, because a few short ejaculations made no explicit mention of him. But this assertion, perhaps, upon a closer examination, may appear too bold and unjustifiable; somewhat like the position which has been advanced with regard to the sentiments of the primitive writers, and practice of the primitive church. It might be proper to consider, on this occasion, 2 Thess. iii. 5, The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and patience of Christ. This you will allow to be a prayer of benediction. You will also observe, that here is particular mention of three persons. The Lord, who is the object of the invocation, and bestower of the blessing, is neither the Father nor the Son. And who then can it be but the Holy Ghost? whose amiable office it is to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. v. 5. It will not, I presume, be intimated, that this is the only passage of the kind; for were it the only one, yet, where the evidence is infallible, we need not the mouth of two or three witnesses to establish the matter in debate. However, for further satisfaction, we may consult 1 Thess. iii. 11—13; 2 Thess. ii. 16. If we consider these texts in conjunction with those Scriptures which speak of the Holy Ghost as a distinct person, we shall perceive a beautiful propriety, and a particular emphasis, in understanding the verses as mentioning the sacred persons severally. The latter text especially, considered in this view, is extremely pertinent, has a very admirable propriety, and agreeably to a maxim laid down by a great master of correct writing—

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God and our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work. Supposing the three persons implored in this supplication, every thing that is attributed to each has a perfect conformity with that part which each is represented as acting in the blessed work of redemption: *e. g.* Our Father, who hath loved us; for God so loved the world, saith St. John, that he gave his only begotten Son. God, the Holy Ghost, who hath given us everlasting consolation; for it is the peculiar office of the blessed Spirit to administer comfort, called therefore the Paraclete. Jesus Christ, who hath given us good hope through grace: We have hope in Christ, saith the apostle to the Corinthians; and nothing is more frequently celebrated, by the apostolical writers, than the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold then a pertinency, a beauty, a significant distinction, and an exact harmony between all the parts of this verse, if taken in our sense; but a strange, confused, tautological kind of diction, if you disallow that the three divine persons are distinctly applied to.

Page 6. it is suggested, "That we may incur the resentment of the other two persons, as showing a neglect or disrespect to them, if, of our own heads, we should in any peculiar and distinguishing form worship the Father." This, sure, is a most unworthy insinuation, as though the infinitely sublime and glorious persons of the Godhead were meanly ambitious or weakly jealous. This is measuring the Deity, not by our reason, which is a very incompetent standard; not by our senses, which are still more inadequate judges; but even by our sordid and vile affections. But not to insist upon this gross error; not to aggravate this affront offered to the adorable Trinity; this intimation, and others of the like strain, seem to be founded on a great mistake with relation to the nature of the Godhead. The essence is one, though the persons are distinct. So that whatever honour is paid to any person, is paid to the one undivided essence. If we call Jesus the Lord, St. Paul assures us, it is to the glory of God the Father. Whoever sees the Son, our

Saviour himself declares, sees the Father also; *i. e.* Whoever has a right understanding of the Son, and sees by faith his divine excellencies; that man sees, is acquainted with, the perfections of the Father also; and for this obvious reason, because the Father and Son are one. And will not this hold good with regard to the Holy Spirit? If so, whatever honour is paid to one, is paid to all the three sacred persons; or rather, whatever devout ascriptions of praise are addressed to either of the divine persons, they are addressed to the one living incomprehensible God. I wish Mr. Tomkins had attended to this consideration. It might have guarded him against some other unwary expressions, which imply the notion of Polytheism; particularly that in page 10, where he tells us, "that the Scripture sets forth the Father and the Son as the objects of worship." I cannot find any such representation in Scripture. The Scripture is uniform and consistent, and speaking of but one God, speaks of but one object of divine worship, viz. the infinite Deity, distinguished by a threefold personality. This may seem strange; but since we have the Saviour's word, and the apostle's evidence, to support the tenet, it should, methinks, be admitted as true. This may seem strange, but is it therefore to be rejected as false? At this rate, we must deny the existence of a thousand phenomena in nature; we must explode as impossibilities numberless apparent facts.

Page 7. the inquirer advances a very unaccountable proposition. "It should seem," says he, "that the Son of God had quitted for that time (during his humiliation) his claim to divine worship; though it should be granted that he did receive divine worship before." I must ask with the Jewish ruler, How can these things be? Can God abandon his divinity? Can he cease to be supremely great and good? Is he not (I would not say by the necessity, but by the absolute perfection of his nature,) to-day and yesterday, and for ever the same? If so, it seems impossible that creatures should, for so much as a single instant, be released from the duty of adoration; it seems impossible (with reverence be it spoken) that God should relinquish his claim to their profoundest homage. This would be to deny himself; which the apostle reckons among the Αδυνατα, 2 Tim. ii. 13, Αρνησασθαι εαυτον ου δυναται. This tenet, I imagine, is contrary, not only to reason, but to Scripture. I should be pleased to know, whether Mr. Tomkins, when he was composing this paragraph, recollected that memorable saying of our Lord, John iii. 13, No man hath ascended into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven. Is not this a manifest proof, that our Saviour was in heaven by his divine nature, even while his human nature was sojourning on earth, or confined within the limits of a scanty apartment? And if the divine Son, while holding in his humanity a conference with Nicodemus, was present by his Godhead in the heavenly regions, could angels be insensible of his presence? and, if sensible of his presence, could they withhold their adoration? *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.* Let Socinians, and men that are called infidels, believe such an absurdity. I cannot reconcile it to my apprehensions. Our Lord emptied himself, it is true; because when he appeared among mortals, he appeared without the pomp and splendour of his celestial majesty. He suffered no such glory to irradiate and adorn his person as surrounded him on the mount of transfiguration, and will invest him when he comes to judge the world; but was in all things such as we are, sin only excepted. Thus he humbled himself, not by disrobing his eternal Godhead of its essential dignity, but by withholding the manifestations of it, in that inferior nature which he was pleased to assume.

Page 8. Our author seems to mistake the meaning of that royal edict issued out in the heavenly world: Let all the angels of God worship him, Heb. i. 6. He supposes this was a command to worship the Son in the sublime capacity of God over all. This, surely, could not be the sense of the words; because a command of such an import must be needless. This was the natural, the unchangeable, the indispensable duty of all creatures; and such as those superior intelligences could not but easily discern, such as those upright spirits could not but readily obey, without any particular injunction. The command, therefore, I apprehend, is rather referable to the humanity of our blessed Redeemer; to that nature in Immanuel which purged away our sins, by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice. This was made higher than the angels. This had an illustrious name given it, to which every knee should bow. This was exalted into heaven; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto the man Christ Jesus. If this remark be true, then our author's interpretation is erroneous; consequently his round-about argument, derived from a mistaken principle, must fall to nothing.

Page 12. In the note, our objector asks, "Did the people of Israel, upon hearing these words, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, ever imagine that there were three persons then speaking?" This question, I suppose, is intended to invalidate the doctrine of the Trinity. But the great article stands upon a rock, too impenetrable to be undermined by such

an interrogatory; too immoveable to be shaken by such a suggestion. I pretend not to give a categorical answer to the query, but only desire to observe, that the people of Israel have several intimations in their sacred books, of a plurality of persons in the unity of the divine essence. They were accustomed to hear Moses speak in the plural number, when he relates the wonderful work of creation, Let us make man. Their inspired and royal preacher spoke of the almighty Maker of them, and of all things, in plural terms, Remember now thy Creator, Eccl. xii. 1. in the original, Creators. The prophets acknowledged and teach this grand mystery, particularly the evangelical prophet Isaiah, chap. lxiii. 9, 10. So that, if the children of Jacob and Joseph were ignorant of this awful truth, it seems owing rather to the blindness of their understandings than to the want of proper discoveries from above. But be the case as it is supposed with regard to the Jews, are we obliged to copy their ignorance? Must their sentiments be our guide? their imaginations the model of our creed? Surely for a Christian to argue, or even to surmise, that there is no such thing, because the ancient Jews were not acquainted with it, is altogether as unreasonable as it would be unphilosophical to maintain, that there are no such places as America or Greenland, because they were both unknown to the ancient inhabitants of Canaan. Mr. Tomkins cannot but know, that it is the excellency of the evangelical dispensation to take off the veil from the Mosaical; that we, by comparing their law with our gospel, by applying the interpretation of our apostles to the doctrines of their prophets, are able to see clearly what they perceived but dimly. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, says St. Stephen; as your fathers did, so do ye, Acts vii. 51. If this reproof be compared with the several narratives recorded in the Old Testament, concerning the stiff necked and refractory behaviour of the Jews, we shall gather, by the clearest deduction, that the Holy Ghost is Jehovah. Perhaps the Israelites, when they heard the psalmist playing upon his harp, and singing his congratulatory hymn of praise, Thou art ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for thy enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them, Psalm lxviii. 18; the Israelites, I say, upon hearing these words, might not be aware, that the person who ascended up on high was the blessed Jesus; and that the Lord God dwelling among, dwelling in, depraved disobedient mortals, to renew and reclaim them, was the Holy Ghost. But we, by collating Eph. iv. 8. with the former part of the verse, and John xiv. 17. Rom. viii. 11. with the latter, are, to our exceeding great consolation, brought to the knowledge of these glorious doctrines.

Page 14. our author observes, "That Dr. Watts would prove the propriety of paying divine worship to the Holy Ghost, from the form of administering baptism." This argument he undertakes to invalidate. He proceeds in a very unexpected manner; springs a mine, of which we were not at all apprehensive. What if it should turn to the overthrow of his own tenet? The Doctor maintains, "That baptism is a piece of worship." Our author replies, "That hearing the word in the public assemblies, may also be reputed a piece of worship." May it so? Then, *ex ore tuo*; your own concession confutes your opinion. For, if to hear the word with assiduity, with reverence, with an humble expectation of its becoming the instrument of our salvation; if this be a species of worship, it is doubtless a worship paid to him who is the author and giver of the word. Now, we are sure that it was the Holy Ghost, who spake by the prophets, who spake by the apostles, who spake all the words of that life, which in our religious congregations are explained and enforced.

Page 15. Mr. Tomkins urges the expression of St. Paul, 1 Cor. x. 2, which I cannot forbear suspecting, notwithstanding all the remonstrances of charity, which thinketh no evil, he wilfully misunderstands. It is evident, on the very first glance, that Moses in that place cannot mean the man Moses; but the system of religion, the body of laws, moral, judicial, and ceremonial, which were by him delivered to the Jews. Is it therefore, a proof, that to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost is no act of worship to that divine person, because it was no act of worship to Moses to have been baptized into an economy instituted by God, and only promulgated by Moses?

For my part, I am steadfastly persuaded, that to be baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost is a very noble and sublime kind of worship; not to say, an indispensable obligation to all other instances and degrees of worship. It is coupled with that greatest of Christian duties, believing; which I take to be a worship of the mind, far more important than any bodily homage, without which all external expressions of adoration are mere formality. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. I verily think no one will deny, that baptism is, at least, equal in its import to circumcision; instead of which it seems to be substituted. Now, circumcision was evidently a token and ratification of the covenant of Jehovah. It was a visible attestation to the person circumcised, that the

Lord was his God, engaged by covenant to protect, bless, and make him finally happy. It was a solemn declaration of an absolute self-surrender to the blessed God, to acknowledge him for the only Lord, to serve him in all dutiful obedience, to seek his glory, and to be resigned to his will. This seems to have been the meaning of that divinely appointed rite, emphatically expressed in the words of the Jewish legislator, "Thou hast this day avouched the Lord to be thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people," Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. And can we imagine that baptism, which has superseded circumcision, is inferior to it in significancy? Or can we imagine that these solemn acts of recognising the Lord for our only God, and consecrating ourselves to his honour, are no expressions of worship?

Though this dedication of ourselves to the service of the Holy Ghost should be implied in the ordinance of baptism, "still it must be granted," replies our author, "that this can be no other service of the Spirit than what is enjoined in the New Testament," (page 15.) Thereby insinuating, that it is somewhat different from the service we stand engaged to yield both to the Father and to the Son. But, according to all the allowed methods of speech, the baptized person is dedicated alike to each of the three sacred persons; he avows them all to be the object of his worship, and the author of his salvation. There is no manner of difference in the terms which specify the obligations; and since divine wisdom has made them the same, why should we presume to pronounce them diverse? How unaccountably strange would the baptismal form be on our objector's interpretation: I baptize thee into an obligation to adore, to obey, to worship the Father and the Son; but not to pay the same reverential and devout regards to the Holy Ghost? What writer of ingenuity, in order to support a singular hypothesis, would do such apparent violence to the meaning of the sacred text? What reader of discernment would become a convert to an opinion, which must darken and pervert the most evident sense of Scripture, in order to acquire an air of plausibility? Suppose a person should, in making his last will, express himself in the following style: I constitute A, B, and C, my joint executors; I give and bequeath to them whatever remains of my estate and goods, when my legacies are paid and my debts cleared. Would it not be a most extravagant and unreasonable pretence if a captious neighbour should maintain, that C is not vested with an equal power, has not a right to an equal dividend with A and B? If a gentleman of the long rob should offer to give this for law, would he not forfeit his character either of sagacity or integrity? If none of these observations will convince Mr. Tomkins that he has misrepresented the tenor and extent of the baptismal engagement, we will, in order to bring the matter, if possible, to an amicable accommodation, accede even to his own assertion. He argues, "That no other service of the Spirit can be meant, but such as is enjoined in the New Testament." Agreed: let us join issue on this footing: let us rest the cause on this bottom. As it is Mr. Tomkins's own motion, I hope he will acquiesce in the result of such a trial. Now the New Testament, both virtually and explicitly, requires us to acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be God and Lord; and what service is payable, according to the prescriptions of the New Testament, to such a Being? This, and no other, I would render myself; this, and no other, is rendered by all the churches. I do not so much as attempt to be an advocate for any other worship to be addressed to the divine Spirit, than what the evangelical Scriptures direct us to offer unto that majestic and venerable, that tremendous and amiable name, the Lord our God. If therefore the New Testament demands all honour and adoration, as the inviolable due of this most exalted Being, then Mr. Tomkins must either flatly deny the divinity of the Holy Ghost, must contradict the express declaration of the inspired writers on this head, or else confess that his notion stands condemned even on his own principles.

What is alleged from 1 Cor. i. 13, seems to corroborate our sentiments, rather than to support his. St. Paul asks, with warmth, and a sort of holy indignation, εις το ονομα Παυλε εβαπτισθητε? he speaks of it as an absurd and shocking thing. Now, what could render this so odious and monstrous a practice, such as the apostle disclaims and rejects with abhorrence? Nothing, that I can apprehend, but the horrid evil it would imply—the evil of ascribing divine honours to Paul, making Paul an object of worship, and consecrating persons to a creature, who ought to be consecrated only to the Creator, God blessed for ever. So that I must declare, I think this text a strong intimation that baptism is really a sacred service or divine worship, which it is utterly unallowable for any creature to assume or admit. Therefore the good apostle renounces it, with a noble kind of detestation; much like the angel, who, when John offered to fall at his feet, and do him homage, cries, Ορα μη τω Θεω προσκυνησον, Rev. xxii. 9.

The apostolical benediction is another passage usually, and deservedly, produced in justification of our practice. Mr. Tomkins

alleges, "That this is very different from a direct address by way of prayer to the Spirit." (page 17.) It seems to me to be an undoubted prayer, and to have the very same force as if it had been expressed in the more common precatory form. O Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafe them thy grace; O God of goodness, grant them thy love; O eternal Spirit, accompany them with thy comfortable presence. That this is the purport of the words, is undeniable: and where is the extraordinary difference, whether they be introduced by an *esto* or a *fac?* I believe all will allow the form ordained by God (Num. vi. 24—26.) for the use of the Jewish priests, was a real prayer: The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace! If this was an address to the Almighty, the apostolical benediction is exactly of the same nature. To say, that it was only a kind of wish, and not designed for a devout aspiration to Jehovah, must greatly debase and enervate it; not to hint, that this sacerdotal blessing contained a recognition of three divine persons, which might be obscure in that age, but has been fully illustrated by the apostles; not to hint the probability, that St. Paul had this very passage in his eye, when he breathed out his benedictive prayer, and purposely intended to explain it in the evangelical sense. Besides, I would desire to know, whether any minister could, with a safe conscience, use the following benediction? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Virgin Mary, be with you all, amen! Why should a conscientious minister be afraid of using such a form, if it be no prayer? if it be not a virtual ascription of omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence to the Virgin, and, in consequence of those attributes, a supplicatory address to her? Still we are encountered with another objection, "If I should say to a friend, May the good angels attend you; shall this be called a praying to the angels?" Mr. Tomkins himself must own, if he will deal fairly, that the case is by no means parallel. The elect angels disavow all divine worship; but does the Holy Ghost do this? The elect angels are ministering spirits; but of the Holy Ghost it is said, The Lord is that Spirit. The angels are confessedly created and finite beings, so that it would be absurdity and blasphemy to invocate them; but the Holy Ghost is possessed of the perfections, performs the works, and is called by the incommunicable name of God, so that it is wisdom and piety to pray to him. For which reasons, I make no doubt but that, whenever the apostles put up such an ejaculation, η κοινωνια του αγιου πνευματος μετα παντων υμων, they accompanied it with a devout mental address to the uncreated Spirit; because it would be a piece of irreverence and folly, barely to wish the mercy, and not apply to that ever-present Being for its accomplishment.

As for the other arguments which Dr. Watts advances in order to vindicate the custom of ascribing praise to the Holy Ghost, viz. "That it may be expedient to practise it frequently in some churches, where it has been long used, lest great offence should be given:"—"That it may be proper to use it sometimes, on purpose to hold forth the doctrine of the Trinity in times of error, and to take away all suspicion of heresy from the public worship:" These considerations I leave to the Doctor. I have no inclination to try my skill at such weapons, but choose to act with regard to them as David acted in relation to Saul's armour; because I really think that they rather encumber than uphold the cause: They are so unwarily worded, that they represent the practice not as a noble essential piece of divine worship, founded on the strongest and most invariable principles, always suitable to our necessities, and always correspondent to the nature of the blessed Spirit; but as an occasional and time-serving expedient, to be used, not constantly, but now and then only; and that to answer a turn none of the most important —to avoid not any real deficiency in worship, but only a suspicion of heresy. Wherever I am solicitous to secure the conclusion, I would by no means offer to deduce it from such unsolid and precarious premises.

I have now examined the most considerable objections urged by Mr. Tomkins against the unanimous practice of Christian congregations, whether they conform or dissent. I shall only beg the continuance of your candour and patience, while I touch upon another particular or two, which may farther corroborate our custom, and prove it to be somewhat more than warrantable.

Suppose we produce a command of our Lord Jesus Christ, will this be sufficient to ascertain the practice? Does not our Saviour give this charge to his apostles, Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest? Matt. ix. 38. Luke x. 2. Now, I would humbly ask, Who the Lord of this spiritual harvest is? Shall we refer ourselves to Scripture for satisfaction? Will Mr. Tomkins abide by the determination of Scripture? will he honestly acknowledge, that, if the Scripture declares the Holy Ghost to be the Lord of the harvest, we have then a clear commission, a positive command, to address ourselves by way of prayer to the Holy Ghost? It is the Holy Ghost who appoints the la-

bourers that are to be employed in this harvest: The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them, Acts xiii. 2. and xx. 28. It is the Holy Ghost who qualifies the workmen that are to despatch this momentous business, with wisdom, with knowledge, with utterance, and with all miraculous abilities, 1 Cor. xii. 8—11. It is the Holy Ghost who makes these labours effectual, and crowns them with ample success, Acts x. 44. 1 Thess. i. 5. From these scriptures, and their testimonies concerning the blessed Spirit, it seems indisputably plain, that he is the Lord of the harvest. Can we have a more forcible motive to pray unto him, than the consideration of his superintending, conducting, and prospering the progress of (that best of blessings) the everlasting gospel? Need we a better warrant to offer our devoutest applications to him than our Lord's express injunction, viewed in connexion with these remarkable texts?

Suppose I prove farther, that the heavenly beings pay divine worship to the Holy Ghost; suppose I shew you angels and archangels in postures of profound adoration at the throne of the eternal Spirit, and glorifying him in strains of the most sublime devotion: Will this be allowed a proper precedent for our practice? will any one be so bold as to affirm, that he is unfit to receive the worship of mortals on earth, if it appear that he is the object of angelical worship in the heaven of heavens? In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, we meet with one of the grandest representations imaginable: Jehovah exhibits himself to the entranced prophet, seated on a lofty and august throne; before him stood the immortal host of seraphim; they veiled their faces, in token of deepest self-abasement; they lifted up their voices with a rapturous fervour, and uttered this magnificent acclamation, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. The trisagium of the seraphic armies seems to intimate, that they addressed their praises to the one Jehovah in a trinity of persons. If you look forward to verse 8. you will find another circumstance confirming this remark; for the glorious Majesty speaks of himself in the plural number, Who will go for us? But the proof I chiefly depend on, the proof which is absolutely incontestable, which none can deny, without supposing themselves better judges of the sense of Scripture than the apostles—this proof is found in Acts xxviii. 25. where St. Paul evidently applies the words spoken by this majestic and divine Being to the Holy Ghost, Well spake the Holy Ghost, saying. And if he attributes the words to this sacred person, who dares separate the honours? since all must allow, that the person who gives the commission to the prophet, and the person whom the celestial legions adore, is one and the same. Since therefore the angels address the Holy Ghost with solemn acts of praise; since they bear united testimony that the whole earth is full of his glory; Mr. Tomkins should consider, whether he acts a becoming part in endeavouring to exclude his glory from any Christian congregation by his example, and from every Christian congregation by his writings.

If Mr. Tomkins should still think his own opinion sufficient to overrule all these allegations of Scripture; of greater weight than the practice of St. Paul to the Thessalonians; more unexceptionable, and fitter to be admitted as our pattern, than the example of the angelic host; I cannot but imagine, that the propriety of our custom is apparent, even on the tenor of his own favourite notions. Page 12th, he quotes that grand and fundamental law of revealed religion, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." He proceeds to consider who this Lord our God is, whom we are to serve. He then informs us, "It appears from the whole current of Scripture, in the New Testament as well as the Old, that it is he who, in times past, spake unto the fathers by the prophets." Rightly judged. We make no appeal from this verdict, but acquiesce in it, though it is his own; only taking along with us St. Peter's declaration, Prophecy came not in old time (rather at any time, *unquam* not *olim*, ποτε not παλαι) by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21. Mr. Tomkins himself maintains, that the genuine and undoubted object of divine worship is that infinitely wise and gracious Being who spake to our fathers by the prophets; and St. Peter, in the most express manner possible, asserts, that this infinitely wise and gracious Being, who spake by the prophets, is the Holy Ghost. Can demonstration itself be plainer? Sure, then, Mr. Tomkins must either retract his position, or disallow the apostle's application of it; or else give us leave to adhere inviolably to our practice, and to look upon it as justifiable beyond all reasonable exception; and, what should carry some peculiar weight with our author, justifiable on principles of his own.

May I urge this point a little farther? I should be glad to know, what is the scriptural meaning of being converted unto the Lord? Is it not to renounce every lying vanity, to forsake every evil way, and to turn to the Lord with all our heart; that we may fear him, love him, put our whole trust in him, and serve him truly all the days of our life? Does not this include some,

rather, is it not comprehensive of all worship? So that if it is certain from Scripture that sinners are to be converted to the Holy Ghost, then it is equally certain that sinners are to pay, not some only, but all worship, to that blessed Being, who is the centre of their souls and the source of their happiness. Be pleased to read attentively 2 Cor. iii. 16, 17. and we dare venture to stand by your decision.

Let me add one more consideration, and I have done. The blessed Spirit is to help our infirmities in prayer, Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit is to subdue our iniquities, and mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13. The Spirit is to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts, Rom. v. 5. The spirit is to sanctify us wholly, in all our faculties, 1 Thess. v. 23. The Spirit is to transform us into the divine image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The Spirit is to seal us unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30.; and to be the earnest of an incorruptible inheritance, Eph. i. 14. In a word, from the Spirit we are humbly to expect all the fruits of goodness, righteousness, and truth, Eph. v. 9. Now, what a comfortable prospect rises before us, if this Spirit be the all-sufficient, the infinite God, to whom nothing is impossible; who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, even above all that we can ask or think! But how languid must be our hopes, how scanty our expectations, if he be not the divine Being, but only some finite existence! And, in another state of things, to whom will righteous souls acknowledge themselves inexpressibly indebted, to whom will they return their ardent thanks, and address the most joyful praises, but to the author of these inestimable blessings? If this then is likely to be the employ and the delight of heaven, should it not be begun on earth?

Upon the whole, since the custom of offering prayer and addressing praise to the Holy Ghost, is contrary to no text of Scripture, is founded upon his divine nature, and results from the indispensable obligation of creatures to worship the Godhead: Since it was undeniably the practice of the Christian church in its purest days, and has been received, by unanimous approbation, for many hundreds of preceding years: Since it is probable, if we will allow their doctrines and conduct to be consistent, it is certain, if we will prefer the most accurate and unembarrassed interpretation of their epistles, that the apostles used this method of worship: Since the analogy of the whole Scripture justifies it, and the innumerable benefits which are communicated to us from the blessed Spirit demand it: Since angels ascribe glory to his awful majesty, and our Saviour directs us to put up prayers to his almighty goodness: These, and other considerations, determine me to join, without the least scruple, with full assurance of its propriety, in that ancient noble doxology, Glory be to the Father, who hath loved us with an everlasting love; and to the Son, who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood; and to the Holy Ghost, who applies these blessings of redeeming grace to our corrupt hearts; to this great, eternal, incomprehensible Trinity, be rendered undivided honours, and immortal praise!

Having been so very prolix already, I shall not render myself more tedious by making any apology; but shall only add, what no consideration can induce me to omit, that I am, dear sir, your obliged friend, &c.

LETTER XXX.

Weston-Favell, March 1745-6.

Dear Sir,—You have set me a task, which I should be glad to execute, if I was able. God forbid that I should be backward to plead for the interests of that Redeemer on earth, who, I trust, is making perpetual intercession for me in heaven. But my fear is, lest the noble cause should suffer by the unskilfulness of its defendant. It is for this reason, purely for this reason, I wish to decline accepting the challenge you seem to give me in your letter. For this once, however, I will enter the lists, and venture to try the strength, not of your arm, but of your arguments.

I do not wonder that you have objections to make against Christianity. I know some eminent Christians who were formerly warm and zealous in the opposition; yet they have frankly owned, that their minds were then either very inconsiderate, or else immersed in other speculations; and that they had no leisure, or no inclination, to weigh the evidences and examine the nature of the evangelical doctrine. Since they have applied themselves to consider these points with a seriousness and attention becoming an inquiry of the last importance, an inquiry in which their very souls and all their eternal interests were embarked, they are thoroughly convinced that their former sentiments were wrong. They are fully persuaded, that the gospel institution is of divine extract; that it is a system, noble and sublime, benevolent and gracious, every way suitable to the majesty of God, and admirably calculated for the comfort, the improvement, and the happiness of mankind.

Methinks you will reply, and very reasonably, "That all such should be able to account for the change of their opinions." I dare say they can. But as you call on me so particularly to vindicate the religious

principles which I have from my infancy embraced, I will now attempt to vindicate them from the various charges of which they stand arraigned in your letter.

Be pleased then, dear sir, to observe that the Christian doctrine teaches, that when God brought man into being, he blessed him with a state perfectly holy and happy. If you read the Bible, the authentic narrative of our fall, as well as the only guide to our recovery, you will find it an avowed truth, that God made man upright. If, therefore, man corrupted himself, and (as it is impossible to bring a clean thing out of an unclean) polluted his offspring; where is the harshness, where the injustice, of the divine procedure in adjudging him worthy of death? Let God be justified, and let mortals bear the blame.

You think it very odd, that this tragical catastrophe should be occasioned by eating an apple. So should I too, was there nothing more in the case than barely eating an apple. But this was a wilful and presumptuous breach of a most positive command, of the only command which the almighty Lawgiver enjoined. And the smaller the matter of the prohibition, the more inexcusable was the fault of not complying with it. In this act of disobedience was implied—the most perverse discontent in the happiest circumstances imaginable; the most shameful ingratitude for the most inestimable favours; pride and arrogance, even to an unsufferable degree; implicit blasphemy, making God a liar, and hearkening to the suggestions of the devil, in preference to the solemn declarations of truth itself. Indeed, this transgression was a complication of iniquities; and, though represented under the extenuating terms of eating an apple, was really the most horrid provocation that was ever committed.

But that the transgression of Adam should fasten guilt, or transmit corruption to his latest posterity, this, you imagine, is all a chimera. If then you was created in a perfect state; if you suffered nothing by the original lapse, why is your heart prone to numberless evils? why do you tread in the steps of an apostate ancestor? why do you violate the law of an infinitely pure God, and too often delight in that abominable and accursed thing which he hateth—sin? You are too honest and ingenuous to deny the truth of these expostulations. And if so, you must allow that your nature was depraved in Adam, or, which seems to be more culpable, that you have corrupted yourself. Then, there is no such great cause to find fault with the supreme Disposer of things for including you in Adam's trespass, since you yourself do the same things.

Is it consistent, you ask, with the character of an infinitely good Being, to make this resolve, That he would, on account of this single crime, bring into existence almost innumerable millions of creatures, so spoiled by himself, that they should all deserve eternal damnation? I answer, this is entirely a misrepresentation of the Christian scheme. It was not in consequence of the original crime that God determined to bring the human race into being, but in pursuance of his own eternal purposes, which are always the issue of consummate wisdom, of unbounded benevolence, and will, unless his creatures stubbornly reject the overtures of his love, terminate in their unspeakable felicity. Neither was the human race spoiled by the Creator, but by themselves. To suppose that the Author of all excellence should deprave the work of his own hands, is doubtless a shocking thought, and such as we utterly disavow. So far was he from being the sole operator, that he was not so much as accessary in any degree to their misery; but warned them of their danger; charged them to beware; and planted the barrier of his own tremendous threatenings between them and ruin.

You are displeased, that everlasting happiness should never be attainable by any of these creatures, but by those few to whom God gives his effectual free grace. If the proposition be set in another light, which is really the true method of stating it, if we say, That, though all have forfeited, yet all may recover everlasting happiness, because effectual grace is freely offered to all; what can a man of candour object to such a dispensation? Will he not acknowledge the goodness of the divine procedure, and inveigh against the perverseness of mortals; the most unreasonable perverseness of all those, who are too proud to be sensible of their want of grace, or too careless to trouble their heads about it? Will he not be constrained to declare them suicides, and that they are chargeable, if they perish, with their own destruction? If we prescribe a medicine of sovereign efficacy, and the sick is so self-willed as to refuse the recipe, who is to be blamed in case of a miscarriage—the physician or the patient?

When, therefore, you talk of persons being unavoidably damned, you quite misconceive the tenor of our most merciful and benign institution; which offers forgiveness to all, though ever so profligate, through the Saviour's atonement; which makes a tender of grace to all, though ever so abandoned, through the Saviour's mediation. The language, the most compassionate language of which is, Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will you die? And because the sinner, enslaved to vice, is unable to shake off the fetters, it farther says,

Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find grace sufficient for you.

As to the meaning of the term grace, I apprehend it signifies the pardon of obnoxious, and the acceptance of unworthy persons, on account of the expiation and merits of the Redeemer. It imports also a communication of knowledge and strength to ignorant and impotent creatures, that they may discern their Creator's will, and discerning, may be enabled to perform it. And in forming these ideas, I can see nothing stupid; in expecting these blessings, nothing foolish.

But still, perhaps, you think it scarce reconcileable with the wisdom, the justice, the mercy of God, to suffer mankind to fall. That he foresaw it, and could have prevented it, is undeniable. He foresaw it, or else he could not be omniscient; he was able to have prevented it, otherwise he could not be omnipotent. But what if the eternal Maker knew, that this would give occasion to the most ample and glorious manifestation of those very attributes which you suspect are eclipsed hereby? Would this conciliate your approbation? would this incline you to acquiesce in the economy of the gospel?

Certainly it is a most stupendous discovery of wisdom to find out a method, whereby the seemingly jarring attributes of justice and mercy may be reconciled; whereby the sinner may be saved, without any injury to the inviolable holiness of his laws, or any derogation to the honour of his just and righteous government. It was impossible to give such an amazing proof of his infinite kindness for poor mortals, as by delivering his own Son to take their inferior nature, and bear all their guilt. Nor can there be so signal an exertion of justice, as to punish this most excellent Person when he stood in the place of offenders; or of mercy, as to divert the vengeance from their obnoxious to his immaculate and innocent head.

As from the scheme of redemption the highest glory redounds to the divine majesty, so the richest consolation is derived from hence to frail creatures. The happiness of men consists in the favour of God. His love is better than life. To be graciously regarded by that adorable Being, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; to be the objects of his complacency, whose smile constitutes heaven and whose frown is worse than destruction; this, this is human felicity. And how could God Almighty give us a brighter evidence, a more pregnant proof of his inconceivably tender concern for us, than by surrendering his only Son to condemnation and death for our sake? Transporting thought! big with a delight which man could never have known had not Adam fallen. This obviates an objection on which you strongly insist, That you and others never consented to make Adam your representative. For if this method of ordering things be productive of a superior felicity to all that are willing to be happy, then it can be no wrong to the world in general, or to any individual person in particular; no more than it is a wrong to the minor, for his guardians to procure interest for his money, and improve his estate against the time of his coming to age.

Upon the whole, there is no reason to quarrel with that sovereign will of God which permitted us to fall in Adam, from thence to contract guilt, to derive pollution, and consequently to deserve damnation: But rather, there is abundant cause to admire, to adore, to bless his holy name, for providing a Redeemer; a Redeemer of unknown dignity, and unutterable perfection; a Redeemer, by whom all the evils of the fall may be more than redressed; a Redeemer, in whom all the awful and amiable attributes of the Deity are most illustriously displayed; a Redeemer, through whom the most wicked and most unfortunate of our race may find mercy and arrive at happiness; a Redeemer, who most compassionately invites all, all that are weary and heavy laden, to come to him, and most assuredly declares, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. And is it not strange, very strange, hardly credible, sure, that any should reject so great salvation, and choose death rather than life?

Let me beg of you, sir, to consider these points with calmness and impartiality. You cannot but be sensible, that many learned, many wise, many excellent persons most cordially believe them; receive their chief satisfactions from them, and would rather die than renounce them. Since it is possible, at least, that they may be in the right; since you do not pretend to be infallible in your judgment; and since you acknowledge a God of unerring wisdom and everlasting goodness; let me beseech you to implore his guidance in your search, and his direction in your determination. For I am not ashamed to own, or rather I am bold to maintain, that this wisdom cometh from above; this wisdom is the gift of God; and prayer is altogether as necessary to its attainment, as sagacity of mind, or the accomplishments of learning.

LETTER XXXI.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 1, 1746.

Dear Sir,—This morning I received your favour. The day lowers, and threatens

rain, which debars me from the pleasure of paying you my thanks in person.

Mr. Huygens I hope to read very carefully. But, I believe, it will be proper to take heed of adopting into my plan any notions that are difficult and abstruse. I would have every thing so perspicuous, that the dimmest understanding may apprehend my meaning; so obvious, that he who runs may read. Let me lay before you a little sketch of my design, with a request that you would alter the general order, and make retrenchments, or additions of particular incidents, as you shall think most expedient.

A contemplative walk. The approach of evening, and gradual extinction of light. The advantages of solitude. The stillness of the universe. The coolness of the atmosphere. Darkness, and its usefulness to mankind. Sleep, and its beneficial effects. Dreams, and their extravagance. A glow-worm glimmering. An owl shrieking. A nightingale singing. The very different circumstances of mankind: some revelling and carousing; some agonizing and dying. A knell sounding. The notion of ghosts walking. The moon, with its various appearances, and serviceableness to our globe: the heavenly bodies; their number, size, courses, distances, display many of the glorious attributes of their Creator; some of which are specified. They teach nothing of redemption; this the peculiar prerogative of revelation. Christ the day-star from on high, that points out and makes clear the way of salvation.

These are some of the subjects which, I imagined, might be admitted into the composition of a night-piece. If others occur to your mind more pleasing, or more striking, be pleased to suggest them.

I am glad to find, by the quotation from Mr. Locke, that your esteem and veneration for the Scriptures are on the increasing hand. May we be persuaded, ever more and more, of the incomparable excellency of those sacred volumes. This one consideration, that they are the book of God, is a higher recommendation of them than could be displayed in ten thousand panegyric orations. For my part, I purpose to addict myself, with more incessant assiduity, to this delightful and divine study. Away, my Homer; I have no more need of being entertained by you, since Job and the Prophets furnish me with images much more magnificent, and lessons infinitely more important. Away, my Horace; nor shall I suffer any loss by your absence, while the sweet singer of Israel tunes his lyre, and charms me with the finest flights of fancy, and inspirits me with the noblest strains of devotion. And even my prime favourite, my Virgil, may withdraw; since in Isaiah I enjoy all his majesty of sentiment, all his correctness of judgment, all his beautiful propriety of diction, and—But I must have done. The messenger waits; he can stay no longer than barely to allow me leisure to subscribe myself, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 29, 1746.

Dear Sir,—Having taken cold, and got a hoarseness, I am afraid to venture abroad, lest I should lose my voice, and be incapable of performing the duty of the morrow.

If any method is agreed upon by the committee, for endeavouring, in some more effectual manner, to promote the spiritual recovery and everlasting welfare of the infirmary patients, I wish you would be so kind as to inform me of it in a letter, that, if any part of this generous undertaking should fall to my share, I may address myself to the prosecution of it, with all the ability which the Divine Goodness shall vouchsafe to communicate. Or, if there be no need of my concurrence, that I may accompany it with my best wishes, and, at least, further it with my prayers. Who am, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

My very dear Friend,—Your last found me on the recovering hand, getting strength and spirits, though by slow degrees.

Soon after I received your favour, a messenger came from London, bringing us the alarming news, that my youngest brother was extremely ill. My father's bowels yearned, and his heart bled; but the infirmities of age, and an unwieldy constitution, hindered him from taking the journey. Upon me, therefore, the office fell. Feeble and languid as I was, there was no rejecting such a call. Accordingly I took coach, and in two days arrived safe at London, where I found my poor brother (the packer) seized with a most violent fever. He was attended by two eminent physicians; but they proved vain helpers, and miserable comforters. For a considerable time his stout constitution struggled with the disease, but at last was forced to yield, was forced to drop in the dreadful combat. After attending his sick-bed for several days, I had the melancholy task of closing his dear eyes, and resigning him up to death.

Oh! the uncertainty of mortal things! What is health but a glimmering taper, that expires while it shines, and is liable to be extinguished by every motion of the air? What is strength, but a tender blossom,

that is often withered in its fullest bloom; often blasted, even before it is blown? Who could have thought that I should survive my brother, and follow him to the grave? I, sickly and enervated, he always lively and vigorous: In flourishing circumstances, and blessed with prosperity in his business; but now removed to the dark, inactive, silent tomb: Lately married to a beautiful and blooming bride; but now everlastingly divorced, and a companion for creeping things.

Scarce was I returned to Weston, but another awful providence fetched me from home. My very worthy physician, Dr. Stonehouse, who lives and practises at Northampton, had the misfortune to lose an amiable and excellent wife. She also was snatched away in the morning of life (aged 25), and dead before I so much as heard of her being disordered. At this valuable friend's house I was desired to abide some time, in order to assist in writing letters for him, and despatching his necessary affairs; in comforting him concerning the deceased; and (if the will of God be so) in endeavouring to improve the awakening visitation to our mutual good.

You will surely say, when you read this account, that I have been in deaths oft. Once upon the borders of it myself, and more than once a spectator of its victory over others. However, my dear friends, let us not be dismayed. Let no man's, at least no believer's, heart fail, because of this king of terrors. Though thousands fall beside us, though ten thousands expire at our right hand, and though we ourselves must quickly give up the ghost; yet the word is gone out of our great Redeemer's mouth, and it shall not return unfulfilled,—I will swallow up death in victory. He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: he shall say to the grave, Give up; and to the sea, Keep not back; release my sons from your dark confinement, and restore my daughters to their everlasting Father's arms. Then shall we lead him captive whose captives we were, and triumph eternally over this last enemy. In the mean time, let us lay all our help, all our guilt, upon the divine Author of our faith, and Captain of our salvation. So shall we no longer be in bondage, through fear of death; but, with the saints of old, overcome through the blood of the Lamb; overcome the dread, even while we sink beneath the stroke of this our mortal foe.

What I wrote concerning a firm faith in God's most precious promises, and an humble trust that we are the objects of his tender love, is what I desire to feel, rather than what I actually experience. Considerations they are, with which I would ply my own heart, in hopes that they may be effectually set home by divine grace, in hopes that they may become the happy means of making me strong in faith, and enabling me thereby to give glory to God.

Your remarks on this important point are exceedingly judicious, and perfectly right. After which, it will be insignificant to my friend, and look like arrogance in his correspondent, to add, that they exactly coincide with my sentiments.

I do not doubt but there are many dear children of the blessed God, who are in a much better condition, with regard to his favour, than they can easily be persuaded to believe. Many sincerely righteous, for whom light is sown; many true hearted, for whom joyful gladness is prepared: which, though latent in the furrows of inward tribulation, or oppressed under the clods of misgiving fears, shall, in another world, spring up with infinite increase, and yield an everlasting harvest.

That humble hope, mixed with trembling, you have very pathetically described, in the breathings of a renewed soul panting after God; languishing for the tokens of his love; ardently desiring the final enjoyment of him in his heavenly kingdom; and relying wholly on the meritorious passion, pleading nothing but the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Happy, without all peradventure, happy the heart, in which such affections habitually prevail. They are the beginning of heaven, and will certainly be completed in glory. They constitute a signal part of that meetness for the inheritance of saints in light, concerning which the apostle speaks, and which is one of the surest evidences of our designation to that purchased possession. Christ will in no wise, on no consideration of past provocation or present corruption, either for weakness of faith or want of confidence, cast out such a one. Let not such a one question, but he who has begun the good work will accomplish it even unto the end.

We should, however, as you most pertinently observe, lament all the remains of unbelief as a misery; repent of them as a sin; and labour to obtain a more assured faith, both as our duty and our felicity. The direction for prayer, you know, is, that we draw near in full assurance of faith: and, whatsoever things ye ask in prayer, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. The Thessalonians are commended for receiving the gospel with much assurance of faith. Receiving the gospel! What is meant by that expression? Believing that the apostles were no impostors; that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah; and that his doctrine came from heaven? This, and abundantly more, I apprehend, it implies, That Christ died, not for sins only in general, but for their sins in particular;

that he bore all their iniquities, in his own bleeding body and agonizing soul, on the cursed tree; that all their crimes being fully expiated, the most rigorous justice would not demand a double payment for the same debt; and consequently, that there remained no condemnation for them. This is the glad tidings, which they not only attended to, and credited with a speculative assent; but with a personal application of it, each to his particular case. And why should not we do the very same? I shall only subjoin further on this head, what I take to be a very clear and accurate explanation of the apostle's celebrated definition of faith: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; putting us into a kind of present possession of the promises, and setting divine truths before the mind in all the light and power of demonstration. For this beautiful illustration of the inspired writer, I am obliged to an excellent clergyman of this neighbourhood, who lately favoured us with an admirable visitation sermon; and, for the good of the public, was prevailed on to print it. You will give me leave to close the topic with a distinction which I have somewhere read, or on some occasion heard; a distinction which I think properly adjusts the case under consideration, and settles it, neither on a precarious nor a discouraging issue. Many have the faith which bringeth salvation, who have not that faith which produceth assurance; but none have the former who do not aspire after and endeavour to possess the latter.

On the whole, I heartily beseech the adorable and infinitely gracious Giver of every perfect gift, to establish, strengthen, settle us in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he would fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. And I dare say, we shall often lift up our hearts to our heavenly Father, and breathe out that ardent petition, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief! If we have such frequent recourse to the overflowing and inexhaustible fountain of all good; if we add to our prayers meditation on the merits of Jesus, and on the sure word of promise,—our faith will grow; the grain of mustard-seed will be quickened, and shoot up into a tree; the little drop will become a stream, and the stream spread into a river. The waters that issued from the sanctuary were, at first, deep to the ancles only; then they arose to the knees; soon they reached the loins; and were afterwards waters to swim in.

The Contemplations you are pleased to inquire after are, after long delays, or a very slow procedure of the press, launched into the world. What may be their fate I dare not conjecture. Whether, by the general disapprobation, they may be unfortunately becalmed; or, by the severity of critics, may split on the rocks of censure; or, foundering through their own unworthiness, may sink in oblivion; or, blessed by a gracious Providence, may gain the haven of public acceptance, and import those valuable commodities, pleasure which improves, and improvement which delights. When they reach your parts, be so good, dear sir, as to peruse them, first with the humble child-like spirit of a Christian, who seeks religious advantage in all that he reads. Next, with the candid rigour of a friend, saying, as you proceed, Here his thoughts are redundant, and want the pruning knife; there they are deficient, and call for the grafter's hand; here the language is obscure, and perspicuity is the only remedy; there it is inexpressive, and must be rendered more nervous, in order to reach the judgment or strike the passions. Above all, let me beg of you to implore a blessing from the most high God, both upon the author and his piece; that the one may be a monument of divine mercy, the other a polished shaft in the great Immanuel's quiver.

Should not a sense of his love make us more ardently desirous of bringing others to partake of that everlasting bliss which we humbly expect as our final portion; and of which some foretastes have been indulged even in our present state? Should we not be stirred up with greater assiduity and love, to warn every man, and exhort every man, that they also may be presented perfect in Christ, and live for ever in the light of his countenance? The book I mentioned formerly, and took leave to recommend, shall be sent. I have set it apart as a present for my dear friend; and whether my life be prolonged, or my death hastened, neither of these circumstances shall make any alteration in my design. Only let me desire you, in your next, to give me once more the proper directions for conveying it to you; for, some way, or other, in my late unsettled state, I have mislaid your letter. Please to present my thanks to Mrs. —— for her kind wishes; and tell her, that they are, and shall be most cordially returned, by her and your most faithful and affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 28, 1747.

Dear Sir,—I have read the ingenious gentleman's letter attentively. Though he says the strongest things that can be urged upon the point, I still adhere to my sentiments; and not because they are mine, but the Scripture's, and supportable, I am per-

suaded, by a variety of texts from the oracles of truth. I beg leave to waive the prosecution of the controversy. Controversy is what I naturally dislike, and what I have seldom found advantageous. I know his opinion, and he has given me an opportunity of declaring mine; and would only add, that if in any thing we be otherwise minded, (than is consistent with the gospel of grace) God (upon a diligent application to his word, and humble prayer for the teaching of his Spirit) will reveal this unto us, Phil. iii. 15.

I have been reading Mr. Baxter's Saint's Everlasting Rest, and admire the copiousness, the justness, and the devotion of his thoughts. How happy the soul that, while reading them, can make them his own! May this be always the prevailing desire, and, in due time, the heaven-vouchsafed portion of the worthy owner of the book, and of his most affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 1747.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE heard nothing from my printer during all this interval. What can be the reason of his long silence, and great negligence, I cannot imagine. But this week it occurred to my mind, that if he delays the second edition at this rate, I may possibly be able to prepare the third letter to accompany it. Accordingly, I have postponed other business, and applied wholly to this work. I have transcribed some part of the intended piece, and send it for your perusal. Pray be so good as to examine it narrowly, and favour me with your remarks and improvements, on a separate paper. There are, I fear, besides more material faults, several mistakes in the copy, owing to my want of leisure to review it. I suppose the remainder of my design, when completed, will consist of about the same number of pages.

If I live till Monday, I propose to visit my patient at the infirmary: and, if company happens to be agreeable, will take the pleasure of spending an hour with a certain valuable and very much esteemed friend at Northampton. If you are not able to guess the person I mean, you shall soon be informed by, dear sir, yours, &c.

Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inertes,
Culpabit duros, incomptis allinet atrum
Transverso calamo signum, ambitioso recidet
Ornamenta, parum claris lucem dare coget,
Arguet ambigue dictum, mutando notabit.—HORACE.

This I transcribe, not to inform you of the critic's office, but only to apprize you of what I wish, and what I humbly request.

LETTER XXXVI.

Weston-Favell, April 12, 1747.

DEAR SIR,—I HAVE folded down a corner of the leaf at the place where your perusal left off. There is a note or two subjoined to the preceding pages, which I wish you would please to examine. My humble service to Dr. ——. I desire he will write his remarks and corrections on a separate paper. What think you of the following lines for a motto?

Night opes the noblest scenes, and sheds an awe
Which gives those venerable scenes full weight,
And deep impression on the intender'd heart.
NIGHT THOUGHTS

—— Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti.

Your plan for forming a Christian society, and regulating our interviews, I greatly approve. It seems to me to be complete. I see nothing that should be taken from it, nor can think of any thing to be added to it. I heartily wish to have it carried into execution, and hope it will be productive of considerable comfort and advantage to the members; and not to them only, but, by rendering them more useful in their respective stations, to many others.

A cold, and hoarseness on my voice, make me somewhat fearful of coming to —— this day. I hope you have perused the remainder of the manuscript; and cannot but wish you would give the whole a second reading. The unknown importance of what we print, inclines me to urge this request. Who can tell how long it may continue, and into what hands it may come? I almost tremble at such a thought, lest I should write unadvisedly with my pen, and injure instead of serving the best of causes.

If you have put my little piece into the hands of my Aristarchus, Dr. —— I mean, desire him to be particularly attentive to the redundancies, and lop them off with a plentiful hand.

I shall soon create you a second task, by transmitting for your correction twenty folio pages of remarks on the stars, and serious improvements.—Yours, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

Weston-Favell, June 27, 1747.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—COMING home this evening, I could not forbear musing on the various topics which furnished matter for our discourse; and now I am all thoughtful and retired, I cannot forbear taking notice of some particulars relating to our conversation. To be silent in such a case, would, I am persuaded, be more displeasing to a gen-

tlemen of your discernment and generosity, than to use the utmost freedom of speech.

Was it you, dear sir, or I, that, when a certain passage in Scripture happened to be mentioned, treated it, not indeed with a contemptuous disdain, but with too ludicrous an air? descanted on it in a sportive and frolicsome manner, in order to create a little pleasantry? If I was the person that indulged this improper levity, I beseech you to rebuke me, and severely too. Though my design might be innocent, my conduct was apparently wrong. That infinitely precious and important book should be always held in the highest veneration. Whatever the divine Spirit vouchsafes to dictate, should be thought and spoke of by mortals, with gratitude, dutifulness, and awe. It is the character of a religious man, that he trembles at God's word! and it is said of the great Jehovah, that he has magnified his name and his word above all things.

Who was it, dear sir, that lent to our valuable friend that vile book, Le Sopha, and yet wrote by Crebillon, with an enchanting spirit of elegance; which must render the mischief palatable, and the bane even delicious? I wonder that your kind and benevolent heart could recommend arsenic for a regale. It puts me in mind of the impoisoned shirt presented to Hercules. I am sure you did not think on it, or else you would no more have transmitted such a pestilent treatise to the perusal of a friend, than you would transmit to him a packet of goods from a country depopulated by the plague. If that polluting French book still remains in your study, let me beg of you to make it perform quarantine in the flames.

The last particular relates to attendance on the public worship of God. Let us not neglect the assembling ourselves together. This was the advice of the best and greatest casuist in the world; not to say, the injunction of the Maker of all things, and Judge of all men. Would we be assured of our love to God? This is one evidence of that most noble and happy temper,—Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth. Would we glorify the Lord? Then let us appear in his courts, fall low on our knees before his footstool, and in this public manner avow him for our God, recognise him for our King, and acknowledge him to be our Supreme Good. Would we follow the example of our devout and blessed Master? Let us remember how it is written, Jesus went into the synagogue, as his custom was. And, if we take due care to get our hearts prepared, by a little previous meditation and earnest prayer, I dare answer for it, our attendance will not be in vain in the Lord. God will, according to his promise, meet us in his ordinances; make us joyful in his house of prayer: and we shall experience what (if I remember right) that brightest ornament of the court of judicature, Judge Hales, declared, That he never sat under the preaching, even of the meanest sermon, but he found some word of edification, exhortation, or comfort.

Dear sir, bestow a thought on these things. If the remonstrances are wrong, I willingly retract them; if right, you will not pronounce me impertinent. Love and friendship dictate what I write; and the only end I have in view, is the holiness, the usefulness, the happiness, the final salvation of my much esteemed friend. It is for this, this only, I have now taken my pen in hand, and for this I shall often bend my knees before God, and thereby prove myself to be, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, July 18, 1747.

Dear Sir,—I desire you to accept my thanks for the variety of beautiful lines which you sent me to choose a motto from. They are all elegant, but not sufficiently expressive of the design of the piece. Therefore I imagined the following quotation from Dr. Young somewhat more suitable:—

> Night is fair virtue's immemorial friend;
> The conscious moon, through every distant age,
> Has held a lamp to wisdom.

You advised me to add a sort of note to the passage objected to by Mr. ——, relating to the spark's being visible. In pursuance of your direction, I subjoined the following:—

"I beg leave to inform the young gentleman, whose name dignifies my dedication, that this was a remark of his worthy father, when we rode together, and conversed in a dusky evening. I mention this circumstance, partly to secure the paragraph from contempt, partly to give him, and the world, an idea of that eminently serious taste which distinguished my worthy friend. The less obvious the reflection, the more clearly it discovers a turn of mind remarkably spiritual, which would suffer nothing to escape without yielding some spiritual improvement. And the meaner the incident, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the noblest truths from the most trivial occurrences."

Will not this be looked upon as a sly underhand artifice whereby the author extols himself?

Does the famous Dutch philosopher, Nieuentyt (I think is his name), treat of the heavenly bodies? If he does, be so good, in case he dwells in your study, to send him

on a week's visit to me. Dr. Watt's treatise on astronomy I should be glad to peruse.

The Hymn to the Moon, whoever is meant by Scriblerus Decimus Maximus, is very poetical. I durst not venture to add what is wanting to render it a complete address, lest it should become like the visionary image, whose head was of gold, his feet of iron and clay.

My transient remarks on Dr. Rymer's Representation of Revealed Religion are lost. I must desire leave to postpone my observations on the other books.—I am, dear sir, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 8, 1747.

Dear Sir,—After my thanks for what passed in yesterday's interview, give me leave to add my acknowledgments for the perusal of your poem entitled The Deity. It is a noble piece, quite poetical, truly evangelical, and admirably fitted to alarm and comfort the heart, to delight and improve the reader. I must desire to read it again.

I visited the poor condemned malefactor; found him an ignorant person; aimed chiefly at these two grand points, to convince him of the heinousness of his sin, and shew him the all-sufficiency of the Saviour to obtain pardon even for the very vilest of offenders. To preach and teach Jesus Christ, is our office; to make the doctrine effectual, God's great prerogative. Nothing more occurs, but that I am, &c.

LETTER XL.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 8, 1747.

Dearest Mr. ——, I ought to take shame to myself, for suffering so kind a letter, received from so valuable a friend, to remain so long unanswered. Upon no other consideration than that of my enfeebled and languishing constitution, can I excuse myself, or hope for your pardon. My health is continually upon the decline, and the springs of life are all relaxing. Mine age is departing, and removing from me as a shepherd's tent. Medicine is baffled; and my physician, Dr. Stonehouse, who is a dear friend to his patient, and a lover of the Lord Jesus, pities, but cannot succour me. This blessing, however, together with a multitude of others, the divine goodness vouchsafes to gild the gloom of decaying nature, that I am racked with no pain, and enjoy the free undisturbed exercise of my understanding.

I am much obliged to you for carrying my message to the Abbey with so much speed, and conveying to me with equal despatch a satisfactory answer. When you visit the worthy family again, be pleased, after presenting my affectionate compliments, and most cordial good wishes, to inform Mrs. ——, that the piece is sent to the press, and after some corrections made in the dedication, addressed to my god-son. It is my humble request to him, and my earnest prayer to God, that he may regard it, not merely as a complimentary form, but as the serious and pathetic advice of his father's intimate acquaintance, and his soul's sincere friend; who, in all probability, will be cut off from every other opportunity of fulfilling his sacred engagements, and admonishing him of whatever a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health.

I forgot whether I told you, that the last work will be divided into two parts; will be full as large as the two first letters; and therefore the whole will be disposed into two small pocket volumes, on a very neat paper, with an elegant type, in duodecimo. But a convenient number of the new essays will be printed in the octavo size and character, for the satisfaction of those who purchased the former edition, and may possibly be willing to complete their book. It was a considerable time before I could think of a title for the last pieces, that suited their nature, and expressed their design. At length I have determined to style them Contemplations on the Night, and Contemplations on the Starry Heavens.

Now I apprehend myself to be near the close of life, and stand, as it were, on the brink of the grave, with eternity full in my view, perhaps my dear friend would be glad to know my sentiments of things in this awful situation. At such a juncture, the mind is most unprejudiced, and the judgment not so liable to be dazzled by the glitter of worldly objects.

I think, then, dear sir, that we are extremely mistaken, and sustain a mighty loss in our most important interests, by reading so much, and praying so little. Was I to enjoy Hezekiah's grant, and have fifteen years added to my life, I would be much more frequent in my applications to the throne of grace. I have read of a person who was often retired and on his knees, was remarkable for his frequency and fervency in devotion; being asked the reason of this so singular a behaviour, he replied, Because I am sensible I must die. I assure you, dear Mr. ——, I feel the weight of this answer, I see the wisdom of this procedure; and, was my span to be lengthened, would endeavour always to remember the one, and daily to imitate the other.

I think also we fail in our duty, and thwart our comfort, by studying God's holy word no more. I have, for my part, been too fond of reading every thing elegant and valuable that has been penned in our own language; and been particularly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets of antiquity. But was I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of those accomplished trifles. I would resign the delights of modern wit, amusement, and eloquence, and devote my attention to the Scriptures of truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. This wisdom, whose fruits are peace in life, consolation in death, and everlasting salvation after death; this I would trace, this I would seek, this I would explore, through the spacious and delightful fields of the Old and New Testament. In short, I would adopt the apostle's resolution, Acts vi. 4, and give myself to prayer, and to the word.

With regard to my public ministry, my chief aim should be, to beget in my people's minds a deep sense of their depraved, guilty, undone condition; and a clear believing conviction of the all-sufficiency of Christ, by his blood, his righteousness, his intercession, and his Spirit, to save them to the uttermost. I would always observe to labour for them in my closet, as well as in the pulpit; and wrestle in secret supplication, as well as to exert myself in public preaching, for their spiritual and eternal welfare. For unless God take this work into his own hand, what mortal is sufficient for these things?

Now, perhaps, if you sat at my right hand, you would ask, What is my hope with regard to my future and immortal state? Truly my hope, my whole hope, is even in the Lord Redeemer. Should the king of terrors threaten—I fly to the wounds of the slaughtered Lamb, as the trembling dove to the clefts of the rock. Should Satan accuse—I plead the Surety of the covenant, who took my guilt upon himself, and bore my sins in his own body on the tree. Should the law denounce a curse—I appeal to him who hung on the accursed tree, on purpose that all the nations of the earth might be blessed. Should hell open its jaws, and demand its prey—I look up to that gracious Being who says, Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom. Should it be said, No unclean thing can enter into heaven; my answer is,—The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin: though my sins be as scarlet, through his blood they shall be as white as snow. Should it be added, None can sit down at the supper of the Lamb without a wedding-garment, and your righteousness, what are they before the pure law and piercing eye of God, but filthy rags? These I renounce, and seek to be found in Christ Jesus, who is the Lord my righteousness. It is written in the word that he is to judge the world at the last day, By his obedience shall many be made righteous.

So that Jesus, the dear and adorable Jesus, is all my trust. His merits are my staff, when I pass through the valley of the shadow of death. His merits are my anchor, when I launch into the boundless ocean of eternity. His merits are the only riches which my poor soul, when stript of its body, desires to carry into the invisible world. If the God of glory pleases to take notice of any mean endeavours to honour his holy name, it will be infinite condescension and grace; but his Son, his righteous and suffering Son, is all my hope, and all my salvation. Dear sir, pray for me, that the weaker I grow in body, the stronger I may become in this precious faith. May the choicest blessings attend you and yours! A letter would revive yours, &c.

P. S.—Though the days are come upon me, in which I have reason to say of worldly things, I have no pleasure in them; yet I find a secret satisfaction in this consideration, that to you, my dear friend, and to others of my candid acquaintance, I may be permitted, even when dead, to speak in my little treatises. May they, when the author is gone hence, never to be seen in these regions below, O may they testify, with some small degree of efficacy, concerning Jesus, that Just One! may they fan the flame of love to his person, and strengthen the principle of faith in his merits! Once more, dear sir, adieu.

LETTER XLI.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 22, 1747.

Dear Sir,—Having read Dr. Middleton's introductory discourse, I hardly know what to think of his bold assertion, That all the miracles supposed to be wrought after the apostolic age, are absurd and fictitious. I must suspend my opinion concerning this point, till I find it either confirmed by the silence, or confuted by the arguments of the advocates for ecclesiastical antiquity. In the main, I approve of his design, which is to settle the proofs of our holy religion on the basis of the inspired writings, and to deduce its doctrines from the same sacred source. The Scriptures, as our friend H—— beautifully expresses himself, are the armoury of God, from whence we may draw weapons of a divine

temper, wherewith to engage all that oppose the truth, or hold the same in unrighteousness.

Does not this ingenious writer bear a little too hard upon the religious character and exemplary behaviour of the primitive fathers? I cannot but think they had, at least in this respect, a very evident superiority over most of their successors. How flowing, perspicuous, and elegant is the Doctor's style; and how stiff, obscure, and bombast, the language of the archdeacon! I dare say you could not forbear smiling at his—blazing out most fastidious hypercritics; reproaching, (not virulently, but) tartly; lashing, (not severely, but) supercilliously; and penetrating the very vitals of the dead languages.

If your Matho is not lent out of town, I wish you would be so good as to send for it, and favour me with a sight of it by the bearer. The reason of my requesting this is, that Mr. ——— informs me by my brother, if he has not the last piece by the middle of next week, his press must stand still. And methinks I would gladly peruse Matho before I suffer my last essay to depart. When can you afford me your conversation for an hour or two, in order to examine Mr. ——'s remarks, and bestow the finishing touches on the piece? Shall I wait upon you on Monday morning early? When this business is despatched, your book, and my thanks, shall be returned together.—Yours, &c.

LETTER XLII.

Weston-Favell, Oct. 31, 1747.

Dear Sir,—With thanks I return Colonel Gardiner's life. The worthy author has presented me with a copy, which I hope will serve to humble and animate me so long as I live.

Abernethy on the Divine Attributes, I will soon restore. In the mean time, shall I beg the favour of borrowing Pliny's Natural History?

You may remember who is to call upon you *(Deo volente)* on Monday morning. I must devote the greatest part of this day to prepare my translatory quota of Dickson's *Thereapeutica Sacra.* The thoughts of our little society bring to my mind a pleasing circumstance, which I observed when we were at our last interview. My very valuable friend Dr. S—— told a story, in which he had occasion to refer to some profane and execrable language. Instead of defiling his lips with a repetition of the hellish jargon, he was so truly discreet as only to mention it under the general title of horrid oaths. A delicacy this, which I thought highly becoming both the Christian and the gentleman. I have sometimes taken the freedom to observe, in the most respectful manner, upon some little inadvertances in my worthy friend's conduct; but now it is with the highest pleasure that I congratulate him upon a most amiable piece of religious decorum introduced into his discourse.—I am &c.

LETTER XLIII.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 2, 1747.

Dear Sir,—The surprise which your letter gives me is inexpressible, and the grief equal. I will hasten as soon as possible to my worthy and afflicted friend. O that I could bring with me some healing balm for his wounded heart! It would be no small alleviation of my own sorrows, if I might be instrumental to make his less. A long continued cold, and an unexpected journey, have unfitted me from following your prescriptions. I am obliged to your candour for ascribing my neglect to this cause, and not to any disregard of your advice; for I am persuaded,

——— Si qua potuissent Pergama dextra
Defendi, etiam hac defensa fuissent.

I will stay the messenger no longer; and I hope I shall not stay long before I set out myself. It is owing wholly to an accident that I do not accompany the bearer, with a view and a hope of administering some consolation to Dr. S——. I am, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

Northampton, Dec. 5, 1747.

Dear and worthy Sir,—You will wonder to see a name which you have but lately known at the bottom of this paper. But how, how will you be surprised, how grieved, to read the occasion! It is so afflicting, almost so insupportable to our valuable friend, that he is unable to give you the narrative; therefore has committed the office *(triste ministerium!)* to my pen. And must I tell you? can you bear to hear it? Mrs. S—— is dead; that amiable and excellent lady is dead. She was safely delivered of a daughter the very day on which Dr. S—— wrote to you last; was as well as could be expected or wished on Sunday morning; and departed this life on Tuesday evening. On Sunday in the evening our common friend perceived her to be attended with some alarming, and, as he apprehended, fatal symptoms. Dr. K—— was immediately sent for, who gave some

encouragement. On Monday came Dr. J—— through a very deep snow, and most terrible weather, but urged by friendship and compassion. The moment that sagacious practitioner beheld her, he confirmed Dr. S——'s first sentiments, that the case was irrecoverable: and added, that the great change was at the very door, and would probably take place in twenty-four hours, which came to pass accordingly.

Your own tender and sensible heart will naturally conclude Dr. S—— is so oppressed with sorrow, as not to be capable, at present, of answering his most valued correspondents:

Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.

But he intends, when time has somewhat alleviated his grief, and religion has more reconciled him to the awful dispensation, to make a particular reply to the whole of your epistolary favour. You will, I do not question, recommend our distressed friend to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. May we all lay this awakening stroke of Providence to heart, and give all diligence to have our sins pardoned through redeeming blood, our souls renewed by sanctifying grace; that whether we live, we may live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we may die unto the Lord; so that living or dying we may be the Lord's.

The second edition of my Meditations, with the addition of another volume, is at last published. I have given directions to my bookseller to send you a copy; and beg of you to accept it as a small, but the most speaking and eloquent expression I am able to form, of that great, that growing esteem I have conceived for Dr. Swan, ever since our first interview at Weston. Be pleased dear sir, to read it with the utmost, or rather with your own candour; and sometimes dart up a short petition for the author, that, whatever is the fate of his book, himself may live over his writings, and be what he describes.—I am, &c.

LETTER XLV.

Weston-Favell, 1747.

Dear Sir,—Mr. H—— delivered your message. Upon a repeated perusal of your Rules and Orders, I find nothing to add, nor any thing to alter. I think it is a finely calculated scheme, and seems very likely to be productive of considerable good.

When the disciples were together, after their Master's resurrection, they had the honour, the comfort, and advantage of his divine presence. And why may not we, when associated on such a plan, and conversing with such views, reasonably hope for the same blessing?

I shall return all your books by the first opportunity, only the first volume of the History of the Bible, I beg to keep a little longer. The Bible I intend, for the future, to make the principal object of my study. That beautiful and important exhortation shall be my ruling directory, Ο λογος τȣ Χριστȣ ενοικησατω εν υμιν πλουσιως.

Perhaps Dr. W——ll will be so obliging as to answer my letter. And if so, I think it will be proper to defer writing to Mr. R——n, and sending the draught, till I hear the Doctor's sentiments. I beg of you to accept the cordial compliments, as you have always the best wishes, and frequently the earnest prayers of, dear Sir, yours, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 12, 1747.

Dear Sir,—This, I hope, will find you perfectly recovered from your indisposition, and thoroughly reconciled to God's holy will. Afflictions, when sanctified, are real blessings; they work humility, and wean from the world; they teach us to pour out, not our words only, but our very souls, before God in prayer; and create an ardent desire after that inheritance in heaven, which is incorruptible and immortal; after those mansions of peace, where sorrow and sighing flee away. May this be the effect of that awful stroke which has made so deplorable a breach on my friend's domestic comfort.

Next week Abernethy will return to your study; and I only wish that he might bring with him a little more of the everlasting and glorious gospel. With my compliments to Mrs. ——, I am, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

Weston, Dec. 1747.

Dear Sir,—I truly commiserate your variegated calamity; and heartily wish I could suggest any thing which might be the means of administering some ease to your afflicted mind, and of assisting you to reap ample benefit from your distressing situation.

You well know that all afflictions, of what kind sover, proceed from God: I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things, Isaiah xlv. 7. They spring not from the dust; are not the effects of a random chance, but the appointment of an all-wise, all-foreseeing God, who intends them all for the good of his creatures. This,

I think, is the fundamental argument for resignation, and the grand source of comfort. This should be our first reflection, and our sovereign support. He that gave me my being, and gave his own Son for my redemption, he has assigned me this suffering. What he ordains, who is boundless love, must be good; what he ordains, who is unerring wisdom, must be proper.

This reconciled Eli to the severest doom that ever was denounced: It is the Lord! and though grievous to human nature, much more grievous to parental affection, yet it is unquestionably the best; therefore, I humbly acquiesce, I kiss the awful decree, and say from my very soul, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. iii. 18.

This calmed the sorrows of Job under all his unparalleled distresses: The Lord gave me affluence and prosperity; the Lord has taken all away: rapacious hands and warring elements were only his instruments; therefore I submit, I adore, I bless his holy name.

This consolation fortified the man Christ Jesus at the approach of his inconceivably bitter agonies: The cup which, not my implacable enemies, but my Father, by their administration, has given me, shall I not drink it? It is your Father, dear sir, your heavenly Father, who loves you with an everlasting love, that has mingled some gall with your portion in life. Sensible of the beneficent hand from which the visitation comes, may you always bow your head in patient submission; and acknowledge, with the excellent but afflicted monarch Hezekiah, Good is the word of the Lord concerning me, 2 Kings xx. 19.

All afflictions are designed for blessings; to do us good at the latter end, however they may cross our desires, or disquiet our minds at present. Happy (says the Spirit of inspiration, and not wretched) is the man whom God correcteth, Job v. 17; and for this reason, because his merciful chastenings, though not joyous but grievous, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby, Heb. xii. 11. God's ways are not as our ways. The children whom we love we are apt to treat with all the soft blandishments and fond caresses of profuse indulgence; and too, too often cocker them to their hurt, if not to their ruin. But the Father of spirits is wise in his love, and out of kindness severe. Therefore it is said, Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, Heb. xii. 6. Would you not, dear sir, be a child of that everlasting Father, whose favour is better than life? Affliction is one sign of your adoption to this inestimable relation. Would you not be an "heir of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Affliction is your path to this blissful patrimony. Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22. Would you not be made like your ever-blessed and amiable Redeemer? He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and every disciple must expect to be as his master.

Perhaps you may think your affliction peculiarly calamitous; and that, if it had been of some other kind, you could more cheerfully submit, more easily bear it. But you are in the hands of an all-wise Physician, who joins to the bowels of infinite love the discernment of infinite wisdom. He cannot mistake your case. He sees into the remotest events; and, though he varies his remedies, always prescribes with the exactest propriety to every one's particular state. Assure yourself, therefore, the visitation which he appoints is the very properest recipe in the dispensatory of heaven. Any other would have been less fit to convey saving health to your immortal part, and less subservient to your enjoyment of the temporal blessings which may, perhaps, be yet in store for you.

Should you inquire what benefits accrue from afflictions? Many and precious. They tend to wean us from the world. When our paths are strewed with roses, when nothing but music and odours float around, how apt are we to be enamoured with our present condition, and forget the crown of glory, forget Jesus and everlasting ages? But affliction, with a faithful though harsh voice, rouses us from the sweet delusion. Affliction warns our hearts to rise and depart from these inferior delights, because here is not our rest. True and lasting joys are not here to be found. The sweeping tempest, and the beating surge, teach the mariner to prize the haven, where undisturbed repose waits his arrival. In like manner, disappointments, vexations, anxieties, crosses, teach us to long for those happy mansions, where all tears will be wiped away from the eyes, Rev. xxi. 4; all anguish banished from the mind; and nothing, nothing subsist, but the fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

Afflictions tend to bring us to Christ. Christ has unspeakable and everlasting blessings to bestow: such as the world can neither give nor take away; such as are sufficient to pour that oil of gladness into our souls, which will swim above the waves of any earthly tribulation. But are we not, dear sir, are we not most unhappily indolent and inattentive to these blessings, in the gay hours of an uninterrupted prosperity? It is very observable, that scarce any made application to our divine Redeemer, in the days of his abode with us, but the children of affliction. The same spirit of

supineness still possesses mankind. We undervalue, we disregard the Lord Jesus, and the unspeakable privileges of his gospel, while all proceeds smoothly, and nothing occurs to discompose the tenor of our tranquillity. But when misfortunes harass our circumstances, or sorrows oppress our minds; then we are willing, we are glad, we are earnest, to find rest in Christ.

In Christ Jesus there is pardon of sins. Sin is a burden, incomparably sorer than any other distress. Sin would sink us into the depths of eternal ruin, and transfix us with the agonies of endless despair. But Christ has, at the price of his very life, purchased pardon for all that fly to him. He has borne the guilt of their sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Have they deserved condemnation? He has sustained it in their stead. Are they obnoxious to the wrath of God? He has endured it as their substitute; he has made satisfaction, complete satisfaction for all their iniquities, Rom. iii. 25, 26. So that justice itself, the most rigorous justice, can demand no more. O that distresses may prompt us to prize this mercy! may incite us to desire ardently this blessedness! then it will be good for us to have been afflicted, Psalm cxix. 71.

Christ has obtained for us the gift of the Holy Spirit, (Gal. iii. 2.) to sanctify our hearts, and renew our natures. An unrenewed carnal mind, is ten thousand times more to be lamented, more to be dreaded, than any external calamities. And nothing can cure us of this most deadly disease but the sanctification of the Spirit. The divine Spirit alone is able to put the fear of God in our souls, and awaken the love of God in our hearts, Jer. xxxii. 40. His influences suggest such awful and amiable thoughts to our minds, as will be productive of these Christian graces. This sacred principle subdues our corruptions, and conforms us to our blessed Redeemer's image. How is this best gift of Heaven disesteemed by the darlings of the world, who have nothing to vex them? But how precious is it, how desirable, to the heirs of sorrow? They breathe after it, as the thirsty hart panteth for the water brooks. They cannot be satisfied without its enlightening, purifying, cheering communications. This is all their request, and all their relief, "that the spirit of Christ may dwell in their hearts," Rom. viii. 9; may enable them to possess their souls in patience, Luke xxi. 19, and derive never-ending good from momentary evils. Before I close these lines, permit me to recommend one expedient, which yet is not mine, but the advice of an inspired apostle, If any be afflicted, let him pray. Dear sir, fly to God in all your adversity, pour out your complaints before him in humble supplication, and show him your trouble, Psalm cxlii. 2. When I am in heaviness, says a holy sufferer, I will think upon God, Psalm lxi. 2.—his omnipotent power, his unbounded goodness, whose ear is ever open to receive the cry of the afflicted. When the psalmist was distressed on every side, without were fightings, within were fears, the throne of grace was the place of his refuge; I give myself to prayer, Psalm cix. 3, was his declaration. This method, we read, Hannah took, and you cannot but remember the happy issue, 1 Sam. i. 10. Let me entreat you to imitate these excellent examples; frequently bend your knees, and more frequently lift up your heart to the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation; not doubting, but that through the merits of his dear Son, through the intercession of your compassionate High-priest, he will hear your petitions, will comfort you under all your tribulations, and make them all work together for your infinite and eternal good.

In the mean time, I shall not cease to pray, that the God of all power and grace may vouchsafe to bless THESE CONSIDERATIONS, and render them as balm to your aching heart, and as food to the divine life in your mind. I am, dear sir, with much esteem, compassion, and respect, your very sincere well-wisher, &c.

LETTER XLVIII.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 5, 1747.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I assure you I am extremely concerned for the death of your most excellent wife, as indeed I think she has left few equals behind her: "Take her all in all, I shall never see her like again."* But, my dear friend, you must not give way to excessive sorrow. All proper allowances I tenderly do and ought to make, as such will be made both by God and man; but yet our sorrows must not be immoderate, or inconsistent with the will of God, and resignation to his providence. Give me leave to present you with, and recommend to you, on this melancholy occasion, a repeated perusal of Dr. Grosvenor's Mourner, or the Afflicted Relieved. It is a most valuable gem; and as it is wrote in numbers like the Spectators, it will not weary your attention. I am sure you stand in need of the consolations and helps there suggested. I am never without some of these little books to give away to my acquaintance under affliction, especially for the loss of dear relations or

* Shakspeare's Hamlet.

valuable friends. I think it, for these purposes, one of the most judicious and universally useful books extant: and it well deserves to be translated into the language of every nation where Christianity is professed.

Do not you often recollect, in this season of distress, the discourse, the prayers, the amiable, the rejoicing, and the heavenly spirit of our dear friend, who was with us last month? Blessed be God for making him such a lovely example, and such a zealous promoter of pure and undefiled religion! Blessed be God for promising us the same Divine Spirit; and giving us the same glorious hopes, which have had such a quickening and ennobling influence on his heart! The rich goodness of the Lord exercised to others, should encourage our expectations, should strengthen our faith. Let it then, let it be so. Adieu, my dear friend! I will come to you again very soon. In the mean time, I shall not cease to pray for you; as I am, with great compassion and great esteem, most tenderly, most sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER XLIX.

Weston-Favell, Jan. 12, 1748.

My dear Friend,—Loth to make your servant stay, and loth to trespass too much upon the patience of our family who wait for me, I write in the utmost hurry. After so great an opinion as that of the judicious Dr. ——, I hardly dare venture to deliver my sentiments; yet I must confess myself strongly inclined to prefer your intended motto.

Is it a vulgarism? Rather the simplicity of the gospel; accommodated to the lowest capacity, suited to strike ordinary readers; who are the persons most likely to be impressed. Or, if it is a vulgarism, let this be for the illiterate, the poetry for the polite.

Is it Puritanical? Be not ashamed of the name. They (the Puritans) were the soundest preachers, and I believe the truest followers of Jesus Christ. If such an imputation is a bugbear, we shall not act like gallant soldiers of Christ. Is it not the most important truth in the whole book of God? the surest, easiest, most compendious means of overcoming the dread of death? If so, I need not make the conclusion.

Will censure ensue? Dear sir, dread it not. Be bold for once to despise ridicule; or rather, if it must needs fall upon you, to glory in this: *Dedecus haud indecorum.*

Pardon my freedom. Only just think on my reasons. Reject them, and welcome. I shall be glad to be overruled for the better.—Yours, &c.

LETTER L.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 4. 1748.

Dear Sir,—I sincerely thank you for taking the trouble of correcting my marks for Italics. I am glad you did not erase Mrs. S——'s name. I assure you, Doctor, I shall always esteem it a real honour to be reckoned in the number of your friends; and shall look upon it as one of the satisfactions accruing from my book, that it tells it in so pertinent a manner to the world; though, with regard to your truly amiable deceased lady, I fear it will be an instance of the arrogance of my heart, and a reproach upon the impotence of my pen, or else I would say,

—— Si quid mea scriptula possunt,
Nulla dies unquam memori illam eximet ævo.

Yours, &c.

LETTER LI.

Weston-Favell, March 1748.

Dear Sir,—I am very much obliged for the present of your franks; they could never be more wanted, or more welcome. If you have not so much as you wish, to relieve the necessities of the poor, distribute from my stock. I am cloistered up in my chamber, and unacquainted with the distresses of my brethren. Lend me therefore your eye to discover proper objects, and your hand to deal about my little fund for charity. Do not forbid me to send a guinea, in my next, for this purpose; do not deny me the pleasure of becoming, through your means, an instrument of some little comfort to my afflicted fellow-creatures; and (what is a far more endearing consideration) to the friends, the brethren, the members of him who died for my sins. If you have any other friend, to whose taste it may be agreeable, and in whose hands useful, I will empower you to make the present. Herewith comes the Descant enlarged. I hope you will be able to read it, and not a little to improve it. Can you engage Dr. —— to run it over? to grant *postremum hoc munus?*

I must write it over again, so fear not to erase and blot. I have not seen where or how I can handsomely introduce that fine quotation from Mr. Dyer's Ruins of Rome, but will still consider it, because you desire it.—I am, dear sir, yours, &c.

LETTER LII.

April 1748.

Fy, fy upon you, dear Dr. ——. I had been endeavouring all the day long to fix my admiration on that most exalted, that most amiable Being, who, though possessed of excellencies which the very angels contemplate with rapture and adoration, yet humbled himself to death, the death of the cross, for my friend and me; when your praises, kind indeed, but alas! perniciously kind, fetched my thoughts from their proper element, and proper object, to grovel on a creature, and that the meanest of creatures—self. I could wish myself, on such occasions, like the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ears, and refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so sweetly. Praise is most enchanting music to the human ear; shall I rather say, most delicious poison to the human taste? From strangers, or complimentary correspondents, we must expect a touch upon this string, a sprinkling of this spice. But among friends, bosom friends, Christian friends, it must not be so. You and I, dear sir, will teach one another's hearts to rise in wonder, and glow with love, at the consideration of that ever-blessed sovereign, who is higher than the kings of the earth, higher than the potentates of heaven, and yet lay in darkness and the shadow of death, that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life. Pardon my excursions on this subject. A letter from my father is enough to cast contempt upon created things. It informs me that my poor sister is reduced very low; so low, that my father cannot hear her speak. He seems to look upon her life to be in very great danger. May the Father of compassions restore her health, that she may live to the honour of her dying Master, and be a comfort to her afflicted parents!—Glad I am that my dear friend can relish the writings of that shining and burning light Mr. ——. Our disesteem of such gospel doctrines as he teaches, generally arises from ignorance of ourselves. Therefore I heartily join with the Grecian sage, in saying, *E cœlo descendit.* I am affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER LIII.

Weston-Favell, May 26, 1748.

Dear Sir,—I have given directions to my bookseller to present you with the new edition of my Meditations; which I desire you to accept, and to look upon as a small but unfeigned expression of my most affectionate esteem. The pleasure of your company I cannot expect often to enjoy; let me therefore, dear sir, by means of my little treatise, converse with you now and then, as it were by proxy, with a view of familiarizing to our minds those sublime subjects which will be the study and the delight of a glorious eternity.

Another set I have sent for Mr. ——; which I beg of you to render acceptable, by presenting. That worthy minister stands entitled to my grateful acknowledgments for his judicious and excellent letter. His candid and weighty observations have induced me to alter the exceptionable passage in the book; and will, I hope, incite me to cultivate in my heart that amiable spirit of charity which hopeth all things.

What I accidentally hinted to Dr. ——, who favoured me with a sight of Mrs. ——'s letter, I never imagined would have been communicated to her, or any person living. Had I suspected any such consequence, I should certainly have withheld my pen, and concealed what I might happen to think; because I neither relish controversy, nor have strength of mind, or solidity of judgment, sufficient to conduct the procedure of an argument. All my aim, all my desire is, to quicken in my own heart the seeds of practical faith and vital holiness. If to this I might be enabled to cherish the same sacred principles in the hearts of some of my serious and humble acquaintance, I should wish for no other fruits of my labours. However, as Mrs. ——'s objections are advanced, and are now before me, it would be a failure of respect to her, and a desertion of my divine Master's honour, if I did not attempt at least, to satisfy her scruples, and vindicate his conduct. I shall, therefore, with all freedom, but with sincere good-will, transmit my sentiments on every article of her letter.

And first, with regard to the little assistance which I have contributed, and which Mrs. —— thinks worthy of her acknowledgments, I beg of her to observe, that it is owing, wholly owing to her adored Redeemer. To him, to him alone, she is obliged (if there be an obligation in the case) for this friendly donation. He has been pleased to command this instance of my gratitude, for his unspeakably tender mercies to my soul. He has been pleased to declare, that he will look upon such a piece of kindness as done to his own most blessed self. This makes me, this makes all believers, glad to embrace every such occasion of shewing our thankfulness to our infinitely condescending, gracious Lord. The action which Mrs. ——'s grateful pen calls generous, does not arise, as she ex-

presses it, from any innate nobleness of mind. I remember the time, when this heart was hard as the flint, and these hands tenacious even to avarice. But it is Jesus, the quickening Spirit, and the lover of souls, who has made your friend to differ from his natural self. If the flinty bowels are melted into compassion, they are melted by a believing consideration of his most precious blood. If the avaricious hands are opened, and made ready to distribute, willing to communicate, they are made so by the free grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore not unto me, not unto me, but unto the great and good Redeemer, are all the returns of gratitude due.

"It is utterly inconsistent," says Mrs. ——, "with my way of thinking, that the Son of God should be present at a wedding at all." But why should it be thought utterly, why in any degree, inconsistent with his dignity or wisdom, to be present at the solemnization of an ordinance which he himself instituted; instituted in the state of innocency itself; instituted, for promoting the happiness of our nature, and for perpetuating, with regularity and purity, its very existence? If our Lord opened his commission, and shewed his divine credentials at a bridal festivity, it was, in my humble opinion, with a very peculiar propriety: Because it was a significant intimation of the benign and amiable genius of his religion, that he came, not in the austere and recluse spirit of the Baptist; came not to forbid, but to sanctify, the lawful and truly valuable comforts of our present being. If Mrs. —— pleases to consult the office of matrimony, as it is celebrated by our church, she will find a substantial reason assigned for our Saviour's gracing this solemnity with his presence, and working his first miracle on this occasion. And the more attentively she reads the Scriptures, she will find, in various places, how the Son of God delights to honour this sacred institution; since he calls himself the bridegroom of true believers; and declares that he will betrothe them to himself in righteousness: since he shadows forth their spiritual union with his blessed self, by that most endearing, most indissoluble of ties, the nuptial; and figures out the satisfaction resulting from his gospel, and even the sublime enjoyments of his heavenly kingdom, by a marriage feast. When these things are taken into consideration, I hope it will appear that our holy Redeemer acted entirely in character, and conformably to the whole tenor of his revelation, by ennobling, by blessing the matrimonial festival with his presence.

But "such a sort of feast is in general a scene of revelling." It is, I must acknowledge, too frequently so in our nation, and in our age. But was it also a scene of revelling, offensive to modesty, or contrary to sobriety, in early times and among the Jewish people? There seems to be a hint in this very narrative, that they were particularly careful to prevent all manner of indecency, or dissolute indulgence. For this reason, they appointed a governor of the feast; a principal part of whose office was to see that no irregularities were committed, but that all was conducted with decorum as well as economy. Besides, if some of those festivities are perverted, will it follow that all are abused? Might not there be some serious set of neighbours who knew how to be merry after a godly sort, and fulfil the old Mosaical rule of rejoicing before the Lord their God? I myself have been present at the celebration of a wedding between Christian parties, and among Christian friends, where heavenly conversation, and joyful thanksgiving to the adorable Author of all our comforts, made the chief and the choicest part of our entertainment. And is there not very evident cause to suppose, that the nuptials in question were consummated between persons of such a character? The holy Jesus, his devout mother, and serious disciples, would scarcely have been invited, or would hardly have accepted the invitation, if it was an irreligious couple, or a wanton assembly of guests.

But "in such a mixed multitude, it is hardly supposable that all should be serious in their dispositions, or innocent in their conversation." Would not then the presence of so venerable and divine a Person, strike an awe upon the most loose inclination? Could not his eternal power and Godhead control the most abandoned temper and ungovernable tongue? He that intimidated the sacrilegious rabble, when they profaned the temple, and drove them before his single scourge; he that struck prostrate to the ground a whole band of armed men, only with his word; he who had all hearts in his hand, and could turn them whithersoever he pleased; he would doubtless prohibit, at this juncture, whatever might carry the appearance of an immodest or intemperate freedom. So that Mrs. —— need not question but that, if any of the company was dissolutely disposed, the authority of our Lord's character, and much more the agency of his Spirit on their minds, did most effectually restrain all licentiousness.

"One would think," it is farther observed, "he might have improved some occurrence or other to their information and advantage." That this was not done is taken for granted; I suppose because the evangelist does not expressly record it. But is this a fair deduction, or a satisfactory reason? Are there not many mighty works

which Jesus performed, many edifying conferences which Jesus held, professedly omitted by the inspired penman? Was not our Lord's tongue a fountain of wisdom ever flowing, and a well of life never exhausted? When did that good Shepherd let slip an opportunity of feeding the flock? He went to feasts, in the same spirit, and for the same purpose, as he came into the world, to turn poor mankind from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The sun might as well forbear shining as the Sun of righteousness neglect to diffuse healing rays and heavenly knowledge all around. God's great design in sending his Son into the world was, that ignorant and sinful men might be reclaimed from the error of their ways, and be made wise unto salvation. And our Saviour solemnly declares, that he always did the will of him that sent him. If, therefore, this declaration be true, and if our Lord's conduct was uniform, we cannot but conclude, that at Cana, as well as throughout all Galilee, his mouth was exercised in wisdom, and his tongue talked of judgment; that the words which dropped from his gracious, his instructive lips, were much sweeter than the richest dainties which the table yielded; much more reviving than even that generous wine, produced by a miracle, which his divine power, on this distinguished occasion, wrought. This reminds me of another objection, couched in the following words:—

"It is harder yet to reconcile his behaviour when there. To increase the wine when the guests had well drunk, could tend to no other end than to promote and encourage intemperance." Perhaps Mrs. —— does not sufficiently attend to the narration of the evangelist. I do not find it asserted that these guests had well drunk. The expression is used, but applied to other persons, and the custom usual at other ceremonies of this nature. I once was acquainted with a worthy gentleman who frequently invited to his table the young persons of his neighbourhood; and would take a pleasure in cultivating, by his discourse, the principles of sobriety, industry, and piety in their minds. Now, in case he had said, after supper was removed, "I know very well, my honest neighbours, it is customary with some persons of fortune to please and to pride themselves in making their visitants drunk. They push the glass briskly round, and press one bumper upon another, till they send their guest staggering to bed." But now, would any one infer, from such a remark on the practice of others, that this was also the practice at my friend's house? To form any conclusion injurious to the sobriety of those guests, seems to be much the same illogical and unreasonable arguing. But, supposing the expression applied to the guests then present, what is its signification? The original word sometimes signifies no more than to drink with so moderate an indulgence, as innocently to exhilarate the spirits. It is used concerning Joseph's brethren, when they were treated in his palace, and had portions sent from his table, Gen. xliii. 34. Now, can any one, who is at all acquainted with the character of that exemplary patriarch, imagine that he would permit his brethren, in his own presence, to transgress the rules of temperance? Much less can any one, who really believes in Jesus, and seriously considers the design of his coming into the world, allow himself to suspect, that he would furnish fresh wine for those who (in the obnoxious sense of the word) had well drunk already. Could he, who is our sanctification, the Lord our purifier, administer to our inordinate gratifications?

"Yes," says Mrs. ——, "because this increase of the wine could tend to no other end than to promote and encourage intemperance." Mrs. —— possibly forgets, that the Jewish festivals were prolonged for several days; that a fresh succession of guests might be expected; that very probably a much greater resort of company than was provided for might be occasioned by our Lord's illustrious presence; that the miraculous supply might be intended for their accommodation; or, that it might not be all spent on that occasion, but reserved for the future accommodation of the married couple.* We read, John xxi. that the disciples took, at one cast, a vast multitude of great fishes. But did they eat them all immediately? Then they would have been gluttons indeed. They used for themselves what was necessary to satisfy their hunger, and sold the remainder to procure a livelihood. And why should we not conclude, that the bridegroom also, after a cheerful, but temperate refreshment of his visitants, preserved the remainder of that fine wine for future exigencies? This I take to be the case; and that our divine Master, by this means, rewarded him for his hospitality to himself and his followers; at the same time giving a most conspicuous proof, that, as he and his disciples were henceforth to have neither storehouse nor barn, but to subsist on the charity of others, none should be losers by entertaining him and his friends; that every such kindness should meet with a full recompense of reward.

"I must not omit the rough answer

* Many commentators are of opinion, that the water was not turned into wine in the water-pots, but as it ran into the cup, and the liquor in the water-pots remained water still. If so, which interpretation, without the least force, the text will very well bear, the lady's objection will appear to have less strength yet.

which he makes to his mother upon this occasion; which, I think, stands in need of an excuse, though we find none in the evangelist for it." I do not wonder that Mrs. —— is somewhat offended at this expression. She is a lady of refined taste, and delicate address; and as she is not acquainted with the original language, nor aware how the phrase sounded in oriental ears, her remark is not to be looked upon as a censorious reflection, but as a proof of the politeness of her own sentiments. However, when she has an opportunity of consulting the ancient writers, she will find that their language had less of compliment, and more of sincerity than ours. It was so plain and artless, that persons of the best breeding have addressed ladies of the highest quality by this very name; and without intending any slight, or giving the least affront. She may remember, that the eleven brethren, when pleading before the governor of Egypt, pleading for their liberties, or even their very lives; when, if ever, their expressions would be most carefully guarded, and full of the utmost reverence, yet use this (to modern ears) uncourtly style—the man; meaning the viceroy himself, Gen. xliv. 26. Surely Mrs. —— cannot forget, that our Lord, in his last moments, calls his mother by the very same appellation. Much less can she suspect, that he could be wanting in respect and tenderness, when his concern for the parent of his flesh triumphed over the agonies of the cross.

Perhaps the substance of the reply may be thought somewhat unkind. I believe it should be translated, Woman, what hast thou to do with me? *i. e.* in such instances as this, wherein my Deity is concerned, and an interposition of my omnipotence is requisite. I would have thee to know, once for all, that in affairs of this nature thou hast no authority over me; neither does it become thee to direct me. She was overforward; she took too much upon her; and the answer was intended for a plain and serious rebuke. Accordingly, the humble mother, like one sensible of her misconduct, acquiesces with silent submission, and never offers (throughout the whole course of the history) to interfere in such a manner any more, but leaves it to his wisdom to determine, both when his divine power should be exerted, and what it should effect.

"I do not know how it happens," says Mrs. ——, "but the more nearly I examine matters of faith, the further I am from assenting to them." Will it be acceptable to my dear friend ——, or will it be disgustful, if I attempt to tell her how this in general happens? She seems to be possessed of great ingenuity of temper, and equal penetration of mind; therefore I cannot think she will take amiss, what I only offer to her impartial consideration, without any application to herself. It happens, because people are unrenewed by the sanctifying influences of divine grace. This is not my precarious conjecture, but the infallible declaration of the great Searcher of hearts. The carnal man, says the Wisdom of heaven, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. This was the case with Nicodemus. Our Lord's discourse was a riddle, was quite unintelligible to him, because he was not born of the Spirit, had not experienced that sacred change on his heart. Sometimes it happens, because persons are wise in their own eyes; depending more upon the sagacity of their own judgment than upon the enlightening grace of God. I thank thee, O Father, says our blessed Redeemer, that whereas thou hast hid these things from (suffered them to lie hid, to escape the discernment of) the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them unto babes. But who are they that are wise in their own conceits? I answer, they who study much, but pray little; who are often at their desk, but seldom on their knees; often exercise their minds in contemplations, but seldom lift up their hearts in earnest supplications to the Father of lights. But I must not enlarge. I shall be insufferably tedious. I most cordially commiserate Mrs. ——'s afflicted condition. I beg of her to be more frequent, more importunate, in her devout addresses to the gracious God. This is proper, peculiarly proper for her distressed circumstances. If any be afflicted, let him pray—is a recipe prescribed from heaven; but more especially needful for the unsettled state of her mind. For let me say, and let it not be looked upon as an unfriendly saying, I cannot but fear that soul is sadly unsettled, far from being fixed on that Rock of ages, that only Foundation, Jesus Christ, who can suppose the blessed Redeemer chargeable with such great indecencies of speech, and still grosser improprieties of conduct. Can a mind, which admits such unworthy apprehensions of the great Immanuel, rely on him as its all-satisfying atonement, its complete righteousness, as the only anchor of its final, eternal hopes? May the God of all goodness reveal his dear Son in her heart, and in mine; that to us it may be given to know the mystery of his gospel; that we may see it to be the wisdom of God, and feel it to be the power of God to our salvation! You will, I dare say, heartily join your Amen to this important request. If any fresh difficulties are started, I beg leave to

decline the province of attempting their solution; and would remit all future inquiries to the much clearer judgment and abler pen of our valuable friend Mr. ——. Dear Sir, pardon my prolixity; pray for my little piece and its author; and assure yourself of a willing and hearty return of this kindness, from your truly, &c.

LETTER LIV.

Weston-Favell, May 1748.

I SEND my dear friend the letter, which by his instigation I write. I send it this night, that if he discerns any thing in it very improper, it may be returned by the bearer, and the needful alterations made. Methinks it gives a person a tasteful satisfaction to find favour with judicious and excellent men. What a transport of delight must it create, to meet with the acceptance of the great Judge, the eternal King, the Fountain of all perfection! To be admitted into his immediate presence; to be favoured with the brightest manifestations of his divine attributes; to love him with all our souls, and to be infinitely more beloved by him; to be conformed to his glorious, his most amiable image, and so much the more as ages in an endless succession roll on ages—this is life, this is blessedness, this is heaven! And this life is in his Son; this blessedness is purchased for us sinners by the obedience of Christ; to this heaven Christ is the way, the door, the passport. O let us not doubt but he will make us meet, by his Spirit, for the inheritance which he has obtained by his blood. Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LV.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 18, 1748.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your letter, full of tenderness and full of piety, last night. The very first thing I apply myself to this morning, is to acknowledge your favour, and confess my own negligence. But your affectionate heart will pity rather than blame me, when I inform you, that a relapse into the disorder of which I was never thoroughly cured, has brought me very low; insomuch that I am unable either to discharge the duties of life, or to answer the demands of friendship. I have not been capable of preaching for several Sundays. Pyrmont water, ass's milk, and such kind of restoratives, I try, but try in vain. A great while ago I had begun a very long letter to my ever-esteemed Mr. ——. In this I proposed candidly to represent the reasons of my belief with regard to the final perseverance of the true believer. But weakness of spirits, and its never-failing concomitant, imbecility of thought, obliged me to desist. In the new edition of my Meditations, a note is added on this subject, declaring, That I am far from maintaining it as essential to Christianity, or necessary to salvation, &c. Where I say, What infidels are we in fact? my meaning is, that we are all in some measure chargeable with practical infidelity; as we are all in some degree carnal, in some degree sinful, while we continue in this mortal body. Considering the infinite veracity, and unchangeable faithfulness of the blessed God, the most exalted saints have too much cause to lament their deficiency in point of faith, and evermore to cry out, Lord, help our unbelief!

An humble, well-grounded assurance of our reconciliation to God, is an unspeakably precious blessing. It is what all should seek, and many have attained. A gentleman told me a few days ago, That though he was often solicited to sin, often defiled with corruption, yet he had no manner of doubt concerning his everlasting salvation for these twenty years. On trying occasions, that seemed to endanger his final happiness, he fled, I presume, to the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. He viewed, by faith, the infinite, (O transporting truth!) the infinite satisfaction made by the bleeding Immanuel; and could not but confide, that a divine expiation was more powerful to save, than all past sins or present infirmities to destroy. This is the white stone of which Job was happily possessed—I know that my Redeemer liveth; and this sweet confidence supported him under all his tribulations. This is that earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, of which St. Paul makes mention, and with which he was endued: We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And, in the full assurance of this blessed hope, may you, my dear friend, be every day more and more established, strengthened, settled!

If at any time I am favoured with this heavenly gift, it is derived from such comfortable Scriptures: The Son of the Most High came into the world to save sinners: He died, the just for the unjust: He poured out his soul for transgressors. And since you and I know ourselves to be sinners, unjust, transgressors, why should we not take to ourselves the comfort here offered for our acceptance? Why should we not make use of the privilege here consigned over to our enjoyment, and claim the legacy, in these clauses of our dying Mas-

ter's testament, most evidently beqeathed to our souls? To found our expectations on this bottom, will be a means both of humbling and exalting us; of filling us with shame, and filling us with hope; that we may abhor ourselves, and yet rejoice in God our Saviour. Many build their hopes upon their religious duties and righteous deeds: such a building must unavoidably be shaken by every temptation, and sapped by every working of corruption. These are in no wise the foundation, but evidences rather that we are fixed on it. For my part, when I can exercise a grace, or perform a duty, that is debased by no imperfection, mingled with no corruption, then I will trust on self-righteousness. But till then, I must be very unreasonable if I do not rely on my illustrious Surety; fly to the ark of his wounds, and make mention of his righteousness only. This is all-sufficient; and never, never faileth those that trust in it.

You are not ignorant of my sentiments with regard to our dissenting brethren. Are we not all devoted to the same supreme Lord? Do we not all rely on the merits of the same glorious Redeemer? By professing the same faith, the same doctrine which is according to godliness, we are incorporated into the same mystical body. And how strange, how unnatural would it be, if the head should be averse to the breast, or the hands inveterately prejudiced against the feet, only because the one is habited somewhat differently from the other? Though I am steady in my attachment to the established church, I would have a right hand of fellowship, and a heart of love, ever ready, ever open, for all the upright evangelical dissenters. I thank you for the news you sent; it is impossible for me to pay in kind. Make my most respectful compliments acceptable to worthy Mr. ——. I had agreed to wait upon him when I was in town; but my brother's illness growing worse, and soon proving fatal, deprived me of this pleasure, and sent me home to attend his corpse with sorrow to the grave. I hope you will be pleased with Archbishop Leighton's works; and I heartily pray, that they may be abundantly blessed to both our souls. I sincerely commiserate poor Miss D——'s case. Despair is indeed a fiery dart of the devil; but, blessed be Sovereign Goodness, there is a remedy against this malady. The Israelites, though wounded by the deadly serpents, looked to the brazen type hung upon the pole, and found a certain cure. And though we are stung by a sense of guilt, and almost perishing in extreme despondency, yet let us turn our eye to him who was lifted up on the cross, and we shall be whole. He who was gashed with wounds, and covered with blood, who was pierced with irons, and stabbed to the heart; he is our medicine, our recovery, our life. By his stripes we are healed. Oh! let us look unto him from the depths of distress, as well as from the ends of the earth, look unto him and be saved. My paper admonishes me to have done; but I cannot conclude without assuring you, that I love you most affectionately; so long as life and understanding last, shall pray for you among my choicest friends; and hope, when this transitory scene of things is at an end, to be, in bonds of nobler friendship and tenderer endearment, ever, ever yours, &c.

LETTER LVI.

Weston-Favell, June 3, 1749.

So, my dear Sir, the physicians upon the whole have given your friend no great hopes of a cure. The apothecary's shop, the ass's dugs, and the mineral waters may, they apprehend, palliate the disorder; but that even a palliation, it seems, is not to be expected, without keeping the mind quiet and cheerful: and that this important end may most effectually be answered, the doctors have recommended diversions, travelling, and company; giving a caution, at the same time, I am told, against retirement, so much praying, and poring over religious books.

Now, if cheerfulness be the grand, the fundamental, the only recipe adequate even to the mitigation of this disease, I may venture to assert, that such recipe is to be found (possibly what I declare may be wondered at, but I aver it is to be found) in the Bible. It may be seen wrote at length, and it well deserves consideration, in Prov. xvii. 22. "A merry heart doth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

That a satisfied, a serene, and cheerful state of mind, will in this case be more beneficial than all manner of restoratives for decayed nature, or cordials for the sinking spirits, I can easily believe; nay, I am farther convinced, that whatever can be contrived by the most solicitous care of the physicians, will probably be rendered ineffectual, without this prime preparative, this most sovereign prescript. It is indispensably necessary, that all possible endeavours should be exerted to have the thoughts calm, placid, and easy. Every thing must be sacrificed to this most desirable end. Nothing can be more pernicious, in such circumstances, than the contrary situation of mind. But here will arise a question, How this inward tranquillity may most easily be attained, and most surely established? By

company, by travelling, by diversions, the doctors and some others will reply.—I am far, very far from being an enemy to diversions, when properly chosen, and used with moderation. Travelling may beguile the sense of woe, and palliate for a while the malady. Company, when cheerful and improving, is an excellent source of comfort; when innocent only and entertainining, is of some present service, and ought to be allowed (at intervals) admittance. But these will no more reach the case now under consideration, are no more able to create a settled tranquillity in the breast, than the gentle motions of a fan are sufficient to impel a wind-bound fleet. If they engross our time, and leave no leisure for nobler methods of consolation, they will certainly prove like heavy lowering clouds, and, instead of diffusing, will intercept the rays of heartfelt satisfaction. But what, may it be asked, would I substitute instead of these expedients? I would beg leave (unpolite as it may seem, and in a manner exploded) to recommend prayer to God, and the daily reading of the Scriptures. If kind and friendly conversation be judged proper, why should prayer be disapproved? Prayer is an humble, but delightful intercourse, with the best, the greatest, the everlasting Friend. And has any earthly friend exercised more loving-kindness? is any earthly friend more able to administer relief, than the blessed God? If there be such friends, let them be our whole dependance, and let omnipotent Goodness be secluded from any regard.

God has so loved us, that he gave his own Son, dearer to himself than angels, and all worlds, to die for our salvation. Rather than we should perish for ever, he sent his infinitely glorious Son to take upon him our nature, and suffer the unknown agonies of crucifixion. To show his readiness to succour us in any distress, he styles himself the Father of mercies, and God (not of some, but) of all comfort, 2 Cor. i. 3. And where is the person from whom we may more reasonably expect to receive tender and compassionate succours, than from this all-gracious God? Is he not as powerful as he is gracious? What Job said of his companions, is in a degree true of every human aid,—Impotent and miserable comforters are ye all. But the God of heaven is able to give songs in the night of distress; to make the bones that sorrow and anguish have broken, to rejoice. If he speak peace, who shall cause disquietude, or what shall destroy our tranquillity? Indeed, if we apply for comfort to any thing lower than heaven, or by any such means as exclude frequent prayer, we neglect the fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. The Scriptures (and believe me, as I speak from daily experience) are a treasury of comfort. One who had drank deep of the cup of sorrow declares, that they rejoice the heart; and that for his own part, if his delight had not been in the divine law, he should have perished in his trouble; (see Bible, Psal. cxix. 92.) These things, says the favourite disciple, write we unto you (not barely that you may have joy, but) that your joy may be full, John xv. 11. And St. Paul adds, that whatever things are written by the Spirit of inspiration, are written for our benefit; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope, Rom. xv. 4.; that blessed hope of eternal life, which is an anchor to the soul in all the storms of adversity; which is the oil of gladness, swimming above all the waves of affliction. By having recourse to diversions and amusements, in preference to the strong consolations suggested in the Bible, we act as injudiciously, we shall be deceived as certainly, as if, amidst the sultry heats of summer, we should seek cooling refreshment from a painted tree, and shun the embowering shady covert of a real grove.

If we are afflicted, the Scriptures acquaint us, that our afflictions are the chastisements of a Father, not the scourges of an enemy. They give us assurance, that the all-disposing Providence will not suffer us to be afflicted above what we are able to bear; (see 1 Cor. x. 13.); that they shall turn to our good, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness; that they are light, are only for a moment, and yet shall work out for us a weight, an eternal weight of glory. Can all the volumes of heathen morality suggest, or all the recreations of the world afford, such rational and solid consolation? Without these consolations, afflictions will be like a latent sore, smarting and rankling in the heart; will produce discontent with our condition, and repining at Providence; a melancholy temper, and a fretful carriage. Trifling company, and worldly pleasures, will serve only to aggravate the misery, and make us inwardly mourn, that while others are in the elevations of mirth, we are pressed with a weight of calamity; whereas, by means of those sovereign consolations, afflictions may be improved to the health of the mind, and become a most salutary expedient for furthering our spiritual happiness.

Can any thing be more, or equally comfortable, than the privileges recorded in that charter of our salvation, the Scriptures? There we are told, that as many as truly believe in Jesus Christ, are children of the Almighty; that the Lord who commandeth the waters, the glorious God who maketh the thunder, the everlasting King who ruleth

all things in heaven and earth, is their Father; he pities them as a father pities his own children, Psalm ciii. 13.; and that a mother may sooner forget her sucking child, than he can remit his tender care for their present welfare and endless felicity, Isaiah xlix. 15. That because we are sinners, Christ Jesus, with infinitely more than parental tenderness, bore our sins, and expiated all our guilt, in his own bleeding body upon the tree, 1 Peter ii. 24. Because we frequently offend, and always fail, our merciful High-priest ever liveth to make intercession for us, and to plead his divine merits in our behalf, Heb. vii. 25. Because we have many corruptions within, and are assaulted by various temptations without, we have a promise of the blessed Spirit to subdue our corruptions, Gal. iii. 14.; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. and renew us after the image of him who created us, Col. iii. 10. Because we are liable to manifold misfortunes, and visited with a variety of sorrows, the same Holy Spirit is promised, under the amiable character of a Comforter, John xv. 7.; Luke xi. 13. Because all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof (the youth, the beauty, the wealth, all mortal accomplishments, and every worldly enjoyment) is withering, and transient as the flower of the field, (Isa. xl. 6.) the Scriptures direct our view, and consign over to our faith a most incomparable reversionary inheritance; an inheritance reserved in heaven for us, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. i. 4.

Are these things, I would ask the physicians, likely to deject the mind, or oppress it with heaviness? Need their patients fear an aggravation of distresses from the offer, from the enjoyment of such blessings? Much more reasonably might the bleeding wound fly from the lenient hand, dread the healing balm, and court its cure from the viper's envenomed tooth. Have these truths a tendency to engender gloomy apprehensions, as the medical gentlemen are too apt to imagine, or do these increase the load which galls the afflicted mind? Rather, what heart (that attends to, and believes such glad tidings) can forbear even leaping for joy? These are calculated to put off our sackcloth, and gird us with gladness; are enough to turn the groans of grief into the songs of gratitude.

Cheered by these reviving considerations, supported by this blessed hope, the ancient Christians were more than conquerors over all their calamities; they even gloried in tribulations, because these were the appointed way to the kingdom of heaven, Acts xiv. 22. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had, in the world above, a better and more enduring substance, Heb. x. 34. They perceived with complacency the decay of their earthly tabernacle; because there remained for them, after their dissolution, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1. Perhaps we may not arrive at such heights of heroic and triumphant exultation; but surely we should try those remedies, which in their case were so surprisingly and happily successful.

Upon the whole, a peaceful composure of mind, and calm resignation to the all-wise will of God; a holy joy in the merits of our ever-blessed Redeemer, and a well-grounded hope of unutterable and immortal bliss in a better world; these, these are more absolutely needful for a case like this, and will do more towards relief, than all the drugs that nature produces. And very sure I am, that these noble anodynes are dispensed no where but in the Scriptures; are to be procured no otherwise than by prayer. Other methods may stupify for a moment, but will not remove the pain, much less introduce permanent ease.

I speak not this from mere speculation, or conjectural probability. I have myself experienced the efficacy of the preceding expedients for these desirable purposes. Having been a sort of veteran in affliction, I have been under a necessity of applying these consolations; and have the utmost reason to bear witness, that there are none like them. The Scriptures are the treasury of joy and peace, and the truly religious are generally the most uniformly cheerful.

If you apprehend what I have here advanced on the means of obtaining true cheerfulness and solid peace of mind, may be in any measure instrumental to the comfort of your friend, you would do well perhaps to communicate it, as I presume you are not ashamed of appearing in the recommendation of the Bible. The physicians would probably sneer at such sort of advice, but the arguments will not be the less valid on that account; and if their patient be seriously disposed, such sneers would have little or no effect.

Do you recollect Dr. Young's lines * in the Eighth Night?

> ———Wouldst thou not laugh,
> This counsel strange should I presume to give—
> Retire and read thy Bible to be gay;
> There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace.
> But these, thou think'st, are gloomy paths to joy;
> False joys indeed are born from want of thought;
> True joy from thought's full bent and energy:
> And this demands a mind in equal poise,
> Remote from gloomy grief and glaring joy.
> Much joy not only speaks small happiness;
> But happiness that shortly must expire.
> Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, stand?
> Can such a joy meet accidents unshock'd?
> Or talk with threatening death, and not turn pale?

Though my letter is much longer than I at first intended, and stands in need of an

* See Letter CLX. in this volume.

apology for its prolixity, I cannot conclude without giving you a fresh assurance, that amongst the great number of those who esteem and respect you, there is not one of them who more sincerely regards you than, good sir, your most obedient, and very humble servant.

LETTER LVII.

Weston-Favell, July 23, 1749.

Dear Sir,—The favour you have done me, in presenting me with Mr. Moses Brown's works, was far from my expectation. Please to accept my best thanks for the gift, which, I dare say, will in the perusal prove perfectly agreeable, and not a little useful.

I hope the divine Providence will give his Sunday Thoughts an extensive spread, and make them an instrument of diffusing the savour of true religion. Seldom, if ever, have I seen a treatise that presents the reader with so full, yet concise a view; so agreeable, yet so striking a picture of true Christianity, in its most important articles, and most distinguishing peculiarities. Though I am utterly unacquainted with the author, I assure myself he is no novice in the sacred school, and has more than a speculative knowledge of the gospel; every page discovers traces of an excellent heart, that has itself experienced what the muse sings. I am, &c.

LETTER LVIII.

Weston-Favell, July 29, 1749.

Thanks to my dear friend for his welcome letter. It imparted joy to my heart; and having communicated pleasure to our family, is gone (part of it, I mean) to make glad your children and your friends at Northampton. I must confess, I never was so much disheartened at your disorder as many others were, even though the physicians themselves had given you over; and though I have been often accosted by some of your cordial well-wishers with such saddening addresses, "I am sorry, sir, to hear that Dr. S—— is gone to Bristol, without any likelihood of returning alive," I really believe that God has some signal work for you to do. He that has snatched the brand from the fire, and made it a polished shaft in his quiver, will not, I persuade myself, so soon cast it away, or break it to pieces. I have a strong presage, that almighty Goodness will continue you as an instrument to glorify his Son Jesus Christ, and to turn many to righteousness, years and years after I am gone hence, and seen no more. And I bless, together with you, his holy name, for confirming so far my apprehensions, as to begin the work of your recovery from so deplorable an illness. May he do in this case as he will in the more important affair of our eternal salvation, thoroughly accomplish what he has graciously begun!

Your family is in prosperity; your olive plants thrive, and are glossy with health. I asked Sally, Where her papa was, and how he did? and her pretty little lips lisped, Very bad, and gone to Bristol. Think, my friend, when you remember those sweet and engaging children, think on that delightful promise in Scripture, Can a mother forget her sucking child? yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee, Isa. xlix. 15.

From my heart I pity your sufferings; but if I pity your distress, with what infinitely more tender compassion are you regarded by your heavenly Father? by him who said in the multitude of his mercies, "My Son shall bleed, that you may be healed: My only Son shall die, that you may live for evermore." May this blood, thus shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life! I hope you will be enabled to cast your burden upon the Lord, and resign yourself wholly to his wise disposal; and, doubtless, you will experience to your comfort, that he has the bowels of a Father to commiserate, and the arm of Omnipotence to succour.

A passage in the epistle to the Colossians, which I read this very day, (viz. chap. i. ver. 11.) is extremely pertinent to your case, and what I shall frequently pray may be fulfilled to your great consolation,—That you may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness. If you should live to give me an hour's conversation, this verse, and the preceding, would furnish us with a most pleasing and improving subject of discourse. The conciseness, the propriety, the energy of the inspired supplications, is admirable. But I must waive such remarks, lest I send you a preachment instead of an epistle.

I heard you condemned the other day, in a large company, and indeed treated with a malignant severity, about an affair in which, to my certain knowledge, you had acted with great generosity. I explained, to the confusion of the relater, all those circumstances which he had so grossly misrepresented; and then I quoted the remark of Mr. Richardson, in his Clarissa, viz. "That difficult situations (like yours) make seeming occasions of censure unavoidable; and that where the reputation of

another (especially of a man of character) is concerned, we should never be in haste to censure, or to judge peremptorily on first surmises." *Audi alteram partem*, is always my rule. It is our duty to use circumspection; and to be upon our guard to cut off occasion from those who seek occasion to misrepresent and injure us: after this precaution, we should not be too solicitous about the clamours of the malevolent and the unthinking. May the God of wisdom give us that prudence, which is profitable to direct! And then

Conscia mens recti famæ mendacia ridet.

This was the Heathens' cure for the wounds of defamation; this their armour against those keenest of arrows, bitter words. But see in this, as well as in every other instance, the noble superiority of the Christian scheme! Being defamed, we bless, says the apostle. Pray for them that despitefully use you, says his divine Master. This not only baffles, but more than triumphs over the efforts of malice; and brings an increase of virtue, consequently of happiness, even from the poison of malignity, and the gall of misery.

The bishop has been at Northampton, and his charge turned upon the study of the Scriptures; which he affectionately recommended, and forcibly urged. There was something omitted, which I could not but wish had been represented and enforced; however, in the main it was excellent, and what I should rejoice to have reduced to universal practice. Our dear friend, Mr. ——, spied the defect I hint at; and when his mealy-mouthed companion would not indeed have concealed it, but rather have enlarged upon what was valuable, "Truly," says he, "I do not see why we should not speak boldly, and bear our testimony, though it make the ears of the hearers to tingle." He is cut out for a champion in the cause of our blessed Lord; very sensible, and much of the gentleman: bold too as a lion, he breathes defiance against the world and hell. Confiding in his almighty Master, he fears neither the scourge of the tongue, nor the pomp of power.

Please to present my affectionate compliments to Mr. C —— and to Mr. G——. I need not solicit a place in their or your daily intercessions, because I am persuaded neither of you can withhold so needful a piece of charity. Accept my best wishes, to which I join my earnest prayers for your health, your comfort, and happiness; and believe me, as I am, my dear doctor, your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LIX.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 30, 1749.

We have seen marvellous things to-day, said the people of old; and I may truly say, I have read marvellous tidings this evening. What! is —— become a serious and zealous preacher? He that so often filled the scorner's chair, is he transformed into a strenuous advocate for the gospel, and a devoted champion of Christ? Never, surely, was the prophet's exclamation more seasonable, Grace! grace! Zech. iv. 7. How sovereign its power! How superabundant its riches!

I heartily congratulate you, my dear friend, my very dear brother I must call you now, on this change. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, that he hath counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry. I think the hand of Providence, in conducting this affair, is very visible, and much to be regarded; which must give you no small satisfaction, and tend to work, not the spirit of fear, but of love, and of faith, and of a sound mind.

How honourable is your new office! to be an envoy from the King of heaven! How delightful your province! to be continually conversant in the glorious truths of the gospel, and the unsearchable riches of Christ! How truly gainful your business! to win souls! this is, indeed, an everlasting possession. And how illustrious the reward promised to your faithful service—When the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away!

May we clearly discern, and never forget, what a Master we serve! so glorious, that all the angels of light adore him; so gracious, that he spilt his blood even for his enemies; so mighty, that he has all power in heaven and on earth; so faithful, that heaven and earth may pass away, much sooner than one jot or tittle of his word fail. And what is his word, what his engagement to his ministers? Lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS. I write it in capitals, because I wish it may be written in our hearts. Go forth, my dear friend, in the strength of this word; and, verily, you shall not be confounded. Plead with your great Lord, plead for the accomplishment of this word, and the gospel shall prosper in your hand. In every exercise of your ministerial duty, act an humble faith on this wonderful word, and the heart of stone shall feel, the powers of hell fall. Would to God I had health and strength, I would earnestly pray for grace, that I might join, vigorously join, in this good warfare. But you know, I am like a bleeding, disabled soldier, and only not slain. I hope, however, I shall rejoice to see my comrades

routing the foe, and reaping their laurels; rejoice to see them go on, conquering and to conquer; though no longer able to share, either in the toils or the triumphs of the day.

I believe it will be no easy matter to procure a curate, such as you will like; at least, none such offers to my observation. I heartily wish your valuable friend, Mr. ——, that faith in the all-atoning blood of the Lamb, and that comfort in the communications of the Spirit, which may sweetly outbalance the weight of any sorrow, and enable him to rejoice in tribulation!

Remember, now you are a minister of God, that your tongue is to be a well of life: you are to believe in Christ, daily to cherish your faith in Jesus, that out of your heart may flow rivers of living waters; such tides of heavenly and healing truths, as may refresh the fainting soul, and animate its feeble graces.

Please to present my affectionate compliments to Mr. C——, and Mr. S——; engage their prayers to the Father of compassions in my behalf; and when you yourself draw near to the throne, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, fail not to remember, dear sir, yours sincerely, yours unalterably, &c.

LETTER LX.

Weston-Favell, Sat. evening.

My Dear Friend,—This morning I received your parcel, with a ticket full of the affection of your heart, and sprightliness of your temper. My health languishes, but it is a singular mercy that it is not tortured away by racking pains. I would do any thing to repair my constitution, and prolong my life; that, if it should please the divine Providence to renew my strength, I might devote it wholly to his service, and be less unprofitable in my generation. But from what I feel, and yet cannot describe, I have no expectation of this kind.

I am highly delighted with Witsius de Œconomia Fœderum: he is an author exactly suited to my taste; so perspicuous, so elegant, so orthodox. I wish such a treasure had fallen into my hands, when I studied at the university.

I like Mr. ——'s spirit, only wish it was a little more evangelical. Let us so act our parts, as, &c. Might not Tully have said the same? has not Seneca said as much? Why should not Christ Jesus be the foundation of our hopes? Is it less rational, less comfortable, to say with St. Paul, He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

I heartily pity our Staffordshire friend. Cheer him, speak comfortably to him, let not the consideration of his circumstances increase the depression of his spirits. We will never abandon him, nor suffer him to want, so long as we have any thing ourselves. I said, we will not abandon: But how poor and cold the consolation arising from this succour! What are we? impotence, misery, sin! I believe he loves the Lord Jesus, flies for refuge to the hope set before him (Heb. vi. 18,) in the everlasting righteousness, and perfect atonement of Christ. He may therefore boldly say, and apply to himself those glorious promises—I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me, Heb. xiii. 5, 6. Present my tender and affectionate compliments to him.

I am glad you have invited to your house that eminent friend of God, and dear friend of yours, the Rev. Mr. ——, (for such I know he is.) In so doing you certainly act the το θεοσεβες, and I cannot but think the το πρεπον, even in the judgment of the world. Thus doing, you are in the fashion; for it is a reigning maxim at court, (the court of the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,) "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers." And can there be a more worthy stranger? "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." You know who it is that says of his faithful ministers, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." Gracious and adored Redeemer! shall we not receive thee into our houses, who, for our sakes, hadst not where to lay thy blessed head! wast an exile in Egypt; a prisoner at the bar; a corpse in the grave! Pray for me, dear friend, that I may bow my poor head in dutiful resignation to the divine will; that I may bless the hand and kiss the rod that chastises; and love the Lord who takes away the strength of my body, but has given me the blood of his Son. I beseech Mr. —— to unite his supplication with yours; for I am fearful lest I should disgrace the gospel in my languishing moments.

Upon a repeated review of the Hints you have wrote to promote the cause of religion, I do not see how to improve them: only exercise your talent; stir up the gift of God by a zealous use, and you yourself will be the best improver of such hints. O! let us work while the day lasts; the Judge is at the door, and eternity at hand. May we watch and pray always, that we may be found worthy to stand before the Son of man at his coming. I am ever, and most affectionately yours.

LETTER LXI.

My dear Friend,—I am quite ashamed to be found so dilatory in acknowledging your welcome letter; made doubly valuable by bringing with it the judicious observation of Mr. ——. Your late favour has hinted a consideration, which will always pass for some excuse with my compassionate friends; and which, so long as this earthly tabernacle is upheld from falling into the dust, I shall always have to allege: I mean, a very languid and disordered state of body. And as I number you amongst my truly compassionate friends, I look upon myself to be acquitted as soon as arraigned.

I entirely agree with Mr. ——, in his remarks on my lord bishop's well-meant and pathetic letter. It is pity, and it is strange, that in an earnest exhortation to repentance, no regard should be had to Christ Jesus. Is it not his gift to impotent sinners, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins? Is not his precious, but bitter passion, the exciting cause of evangelical repentance; according to the testimony of the prophet, They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn? And can our poor imperfect repentance find favour in the sight of the Lord, unless it be accepted in the Beloved?

I am as much pleased with that ingenious writer's observations on my own little volumes. Let the righteous smite me friendly, and reprove me. With thankfulness I shall receive, with readiness submit to correction. I am very far from thinking Mr. —— a sour critic. On the contrary, I admire his candour in transmitting the mistakes to the author himself, and not trumpeting them abroad to the discredit of the work. I have so high an opinion of his judgment, that if the Father of lights should enable me to finish the small piece I am attempting, I should be extremely glad to have every sheet pass under the correction of so wise and penetrating an observer.

To call Sisera's mother a Midianitish lady, is a most undoubted and palpable blunder. If the divine Providence pleases to give another edition to the book, it shall certainly be altered.

As to the frontispiece, there was great doubt whether I should have any at all. It was first drawn with a direct crucifix, such as is represented in the Romish churches, and almost idolized, I fear, by the Christians of that communion. For this reason the decoration, though sketched out by my very obliging draughtsman, was wholly omitted in the second edition. Then it was suggested that a piece of machinery might succeed—be equally expressive and yet unexceptionable, which is the import of the present figure; our Lord, not portrayed in the window, nor exhibited in imagery, but rising from the spot, or miraculously appearing in the place.

With regard to my calling those persons who took up arms against King Charles I. rebels; you know it is the avowed tenet of the Church of England, and the declared sense of our legislators. If I was to alter that expression, especially since it has stood so long, it might probably disgust readers who are in a contrary way of thinking; at least it would give occasion for speculation, and stir up the embers of mutual animosity, which, I hope, are now sleeping, and upon the point of being extinguished. For my part, I look upon King Charles as one of the best men that ever filled a throne; and esteem the Puritans as some of the most zealous Christians that every appeared in our land. Instead of inveighing against either, I would lament the misfortune of both; that, through some deplorable mismanagement, they knew one another no better, and valued one another no more. Otherwise, how happy might they have been! they, in so devout a sovereign; he, in such conscientious subjects.

Washing away sins by baptism is a scriptural expression: "And now," says Ananias to the converted persecutor, "why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Where, I suppose, washing with water, which is the sign, is put for the application of the Lamb's blood, which is the blessing signified. This, I apprehend, extends to native impurity, as well as committed iniquity, since they both render us children of wrath. Not that it implies an extirpation of original corruption, but refers to its condemning power; which is done away when the atoning merits of Christ's death are applied and sealed to the soul. Upon the whole, I think the expression is justifiable. Yet if Mr. ——'s remonstrance had come sooner, it would have been more explicit in its meaning, and more guarded from possibility of mistake: And was I called upon to explain my sentiments, I should take leave to borrow Mr. ——'s words.

Please to present my most affectionate compliments to him; and let him know, I acknowledge myself obliged to him for his valuable remarks, and shall be still more obliged, if he pleases sometimes to remember me in his effectual fervent prayers; that I may, though weak in body, be strong in faith; giving glory, by a thankful resignation, and comfortable hope, to God our Saviour. I hope he intends to publish his discourse upon the Christian Sabbath. I

think such a treatise is not a little wanted. I have seen nothing upon the subject that has given me satisfaction.

Transmit my most cordial affection to good Mr. ——; I dearly love him, and rejoice in the expectation of meeting him in the everlasting kingdom of our glorious Redeemer. How inconsiderable, what a perfect nothing, is the difference of preaching in a cloak or in a gown, since we both hold the Head, both are united to the same Saviour, and have access by the same Spirit to the Father. I assure him his name has been constantly mentioned in my poor intercessions, ever since he favoured me with his friendly and edifying epistle. Tell him, I am making some faint attempts to recommend to the world a doctrine which is music to his ears, and better than a cordial to his heart—the righteousness of Immanuel, freely imputed to wretched sinners, for their complete justification and everlasting acceptance. I would also represent, in an amiable and endearing light, that other precious privilege of the gospel, sanctification of our hearts, and newness of life, through the power of the blessed Spirit; and give, if the Lord should enable, a pleasing picture of death, stripped of his horrors, and appearing as an usher, commissioned by the court of heaven, to introduce us before the Prince of the kings of the earth. Beseech my worthy friend to assist me with his prayers to the Father of mercies and Fountain of light, that if I write, it may not be I, but the Spirit of the Lord Jesus that writeth by me, enabling blindness itself to find out acceptable words, and to hit the avenues of pleasure and conviction.

I am glad to hear that the second part of Sunday Thoughts is come abroad. Pray do not fail to let Mr. —— have six sets for me before Thursday morning; because he has another parcel to transmit to me this week, in which those may with convenience be enclosed. You have paid me an obliging compliment: beg of the blessed God, dear sir, that I may not be puffed up with vain conceit of myself or my writings. O that earth and ashes, that guilt and sin should be proud! What so unreasonable? yet what so natural? May the Lord of glory rebuke this arrogant spirit, and teach my soul to be humble, to be evermore dependent on his aid as a weaned child.

As to your entering into holy orders, I have no manner of doubt—by all means do it. It is what I have been praying for these several years; it is what all the disciples of Christ are directed to implore at the Lord's hand, that he would send many such labourers into his vineyard. As God has inclined your heart to the work, as he has given you so clear a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and stirred you up to be zealous for the interests of a bleeding Saviour; I assure you, if the king would make me a bishop, one of the first acts of my episcopal office should be to ordain the author of Sunday Thoughts. I hope the Lord will guide you with his Spirit, will commission you to feed his flock, and make you a chosen instrument of bringing many sinners to Christ, many sons unto glory. Pray do not think your letters are troublesome; they are always pleasing, always cheering to, dear sir, your very sincere, and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXII.

My Dear Friend, —— sent me some time ago your translation of Zimmermannus. I was so engaged in urgent business, that I really had not leisure, and so oppressed with bodily weakness, that I had not ability to undertake the office of comparing it with the original. I added my solicitations to yours, and pressed —— to revise, and, if need be, correct the manuscript; and I would beg of you, my dear friend, not to be hasty in publishing. In this affair, I am for following the example of Fabius, *Cunctando restituit rem.*

If I have not been punctual in answering your letter, ascribe it to the usual, which is indeed the true cause; I mean to a failure of strength, and languor of spirits, which both disincline and disqualify me for every thing. The winter has made me a prisoner. I have not been any farther than the church these two months. May you and all the ministers of the blessed Jesus be anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power! May you, in imitation of our divine Master, go about doing much spiritual good, and shedding abroad the savour of his most precious name. O that I had strength! I would then pray earnestly that I might go and do likewise.

Since it is represented that I have engaged to preface the translation of Zimmermannus, I will not balk the expectations of my valued friend, though I assure you I shall address myself to it with some trepidation; sensible that it will carry too assuming an air, and seem as though, from being an obliged author, I should take upon me to act as dictator, and direct the public in their choice of books.—Yours affectionately, &c.

LETTER LXIII.

My dear Friend,—I received your letter; am sorry to hear you have been ill, heartily wish you a re-establishment of your health, and shall be glad, when it suits your inclination and conveniency, to see you at Weston.

I am glad you are beginning to catechize your children. I hope you will be enabled to feed Christ's lambs, and dispense to them the milk of the word, as they may be able to bear it. Indeed you apply to a wrong person for advice. I make some efforts, it is true, to discharge this duty, but not to my own satisfaction; and great will be the glory of divine grace, if it is to the edification of my people. My time for catechizing is during the summer; when the days are long, and the weather is warm. But I think you do right to conform to the usual custom of catechizing in Lent.

My method is to ask easy questions, and teach the children very short and easy answers. The Lord's prayer was the last subject of our explanation. In some such manner I proceeded:—Why is this prayer called the Lord's prayer? Because our Lord Jesus Christ taught it us. Why is Christ called our Lord? Because he bought us with his blood. Why does he teach us to call God Father? That we may go to him as children to a father. How do children go to a Father? With faith, not doubting but he will give them what they want. Why our Father in heaven? That we may pray to him with reverence. What is meant by God's name? God himself and all his perfections. What by hallowed? That he may be honoured and glorified. How is God to be honoured? In our hearts, with our tongues, and by our lives, &c. &c.

On each question I endeavour to comprehend, not all that may be said, but that only which may be most level to their capacities, and is most necessary for them to know. The answer to each question I explain in the most familiar manner possible; such a manner, as a polite hearer might perhaps treat with the most sovereign contempt. Little similes I use, that are quite low, fetched *non ex academia, sed e trivio.* In every explanation I would be short, but repeat it again and again. Tautology, in this case, is the true propriety of speaking; and to our little auditors, the *crambe repetita* will be better than all the graces of eloquence.

I propose to explain to them principally the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the commandments. What relates to the two sacraments, at present, I do not attempt to set before them; let them first have some tolerable notion of the former. I fancy you had better proceed in the same method. If I know your sentiments about baptism aright, with which our catechism begins, I should apprehend it would be most prudent to go immediately to the great fundamentals. However, pray to the Lord, whose work you work; and he who is all-wise will direct you, he who is all-powerful will prosper you. Pray give my very affectionate compliments to ——. Through the everlasting righteousness of our Redeemer, I hope to meet them in the world of glory; and there he that is feeble will be as David Yours sincerely, &c,

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LETTER LXIV.

Weston-Favell, April 5, 1750.

Dear Sir,—When you meditate on Hosea iv. 6, 7, [namely, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me; therefore will I change their glory into shame;] when, I say, you meditate on this terrifying text, compare it with Hosea xi. 8, 9; xiii. 9, 12; xiv. 1, 2; [namely, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee,"] Hosea xi. 8, 9.

In the next passage, Christ shows the only remedy for our misery; [namely, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his sin is hid,"] Hosea xiii. 9, 12.

In the last passage is prescribed the method of applying the remedy to your own soul; [namely, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips,"] (or spiritual sacrifices of the heart, not calves with horns and hoofs,) Hosea xiv. 1, 2.

Pray take these texts into frequent consideration, or else you will do a threefold injury, viz. to the divine mercies; to the Redeemer's merits; to your own comfort.

Be it that guilt is great; yet, is it boundless? is it infinite like the kindness of God through Christ? Remember what message

our Lord sent to Peter after his fall; what offers he made at Jerusalem after it had murdered the Prince of peace; how eminently useful and happy he made David, after the commission of enormous crimes. He is the same gracious, long-suffering, sin-forgiving God, to-day, yesterday, and for ever.

Beware, dear sir, that you add not unbelief (the greatest of sins, the most provoking of sins, the most destructive of sins) to all your other offences. We have trampled upon the divine laws, and defiled our own souls; but let us not charge the divine declaration with FALSEHOOD, let us not make God a LIAR. I am sure God loves you, and Christ intercedes for you; else whence this searching of your heart, this acknowledgment of guilt, this self-condemnation, and thirst after pardoning and sanctifying grace.

Another proof, to me a very evident and pregnant proof, that the blessed God has a very tender and particular concern for your eternal welfare, is his disconcerting your schemes; than which nothing, I think, could be more effectually calculated to waft you along the smooth stream of insensibility and pleasure into the pit of perdition.

Let this, though a thorn in the flesh, be a token for good. He that has begun to rescue you will accomplish his gracious purpose. Ere long I trust this new song will be put into your mouth, "The snare is broken, and I am delivered," Psalm cxxiv. 7. Be of good comfort, dear sir, for with the Lord there is mercy and plenteous redemption, Psal. cxxx. 7.

Read by way of consolation, Manasseh's humiliation, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. And see likewise God's gracious dealings, even with Rehoboam himself, 2 Chron. xii. 6, 7.

Do not indulge dispiriting ideas, or have hard thoughts of the God of everlasting compassion: Oh how weak is our faith! Read and study well that excellent and comfortable little tract, *Liborius* Zimmermannus de eminentia cognitionis Christi.* Converse with some experienced Christians, and remember what our blessed Saviour has promised, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. We never make any doubt but our friends (especially if they be the distinguished servants of Jesus) will fulfil their promises; yet we question (fie upon us, fie upon us for our unbelief) whether the divine Master himself will accomplish his word!

I am, dear sir, with much esteem, and with much concern for your present and eternal welfare, yours very sincerely, &c.

* See Letter LXXII.

LETTER LXV.

Weston-Favell, May 27, 1750.

DEAR SISTER,—The country is now in its perfection. Every bush a nosegay, all the ground a piece of embroidery; on each tree the voice of melody, in every grove a concert of warbling music. The air is enriched with native perfumes, and the whole creation seems to smile. Such a pleasing improving change has taken place; because, as the Psalmist expresses it, God has sent forth his Spirit, and renewed the face of the earth. Such a refining change takes place in mankind, when God is pleased to send his Holy Spirit into the heart. Let us therefore humbly and earnestly seek the influences of this divine Spirit. All our sufficiency is from this divine Spirit dwelling in our hearts, and working in us both to will and to do. Without his aids, we are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing. Would we believe in Christ to the saving of our souls? we must receive power from on high, and be enabled by this divine Spirit; for no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, or exercise true faith on his merits, but by the Holy Ghost. Would we be made like unto Christ? It can be done only by this divine Spirit. We are transformed into the same image, says the apostle, not by any ability of our own, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Would we be set on the right hand of our Judge at the last day? This is the mark that will distinguish us from the reprobates, and number us with his faithful people. For unless a man, unless a woman, have the Spirit of Christ, they are none of his. But, since we infinitely need this enlightening and sanctifying Spirit, is the God of heaven equally willing to give it? He is; indeed he is. To obtain this gift for us sinners, his own Son bled to death on the cross. That we may be made partakers of this gift, he intercedeth at the right hand of his Father; and he has passed his word, he has given us a solemn promise, that if we ask, we shall receive it. See, remember, and often plead in prayer, Luke xi. 13. From your affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER LXVI.

June 28, 1750.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—If you chide, I must accuse. Pray where was your warrant, where your commission to impress me into this journey? However, as becomes a good Christian, I forgive you and your accomplice ——.

At St. Alban's I was weary and dispirited; was loth, could not prevail on myself to desire Dr. Cotton's company at the inn, and was scarce able to crawl to his house. Believe me, I sincerely honour, and cordially love, the worthy doctor. Though I am naturally shy, I should want no solicitations to wait on so very ingenious and improving a friend; a pleasure I promise myself, if Providence brings me back alive. We got to London about three o'clock on Saturday. I took up my lodgings, not at my brother's after the flesh, but with the brother of my heart. On Sunday he preached with his usual fervour, and administered the sacrament to a great number of very serious communicants. He delights in the work of the ministry, and embraces every opportunity of preaching the everlasting gospel. He is indeed in labours more abundant. Dear sir, what a pattern of zeal, and ministerial fidelity, is our excellent friend! and God rewards him with joy unspeakable. God also fulfils to him, in a remarkable manner, his gracious promise, "They that honour me, I will honour." This day he was most respectfully entertained at the houses of two noblemen. What a most exalted satisfaction must he enjoy in attending these great personages, not to cringe for favours, but to lay upon them an everlasting obligation; not to ask their interests at court, but to be the minister of their reconciliation to the King of kings! Thus far was wrote on Sunday night, but was hindered from finishing soon enough for the post.—*Monday morning*: Yesterday our indefatigable friend renewed his labour of love, and with such assiduity, that I had not spirits to attend what he had strength to execute. He preached to a crowded audience, and yet multitudes went away for want of room. In the midst of this audience was a clergyman in his canonical dress, a stranger; his name I could not learn; he behaved with exemplary seriousness, and expressed much satisfaction. One day last week I was most agreeably surprised. Drinking tea at a friend's house, a person knocked at the door; the servant brought word that it was a stranger, who desired to speak with Mr. Hervey. And who do you think it was? One whom I tenderly love, but never expected to see again. It was the accomplished and amiable Mr. ——. We took sweet counsel together at Gaius, mine host's, and wished one another a happy meeting in the world of glory. My fellow-traveller saw your letter, and bid me tell you, that if you are chained to the oar, the chains are of your own making. Dear sir, preach the glorious gospel. Be an ambassador of the most high God. Devote yourself to this most important, most noble service, and your divine Master, I hope, will furnish you with employ, and open a door for your usefulness. The fruit of such labours will abide, and our friend is a proof in what peace, in what joy, they are sown. My animal nature is so very, very feeble, that I find no benefit from the change of air, nor from the enjoyment of the most pleasing society. Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXVII.

London, Sept. 4, 1750.

DEAR SIR,—Our dear friend —— is much engaged in making interest to succeed the minister of ——, who, though not stone dead, is ill enough to alarm the hopes of neighbouring preachers. O that we may every one contend who shall bring most glory to the crucified King of heaven, and love most ardently his all-gracious and infinitely amiable Majesty! A strife this, which will not foment, but destroy malignant passions; in which strife angels will be our competitors, honour and joy the everlasting prize.

I wish our dear friend H—— the rich anointings of God's Spirit in composing, and the powerful presence of God's Spirit in delivering his infirmary sermon. My most cordial love is ever his, and ever yours.

Thank you I do sincerely, for your prayers to God in my behalf; and oh how shall I thank sufficiently him who procured access for us through his blood! We often remember you, and wish and pray that you may be a burning and a shining light in your generation. Dear friend, adieu.

LETTER LXVIII.

Sept. 11, 1750.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your last favour. It was without date, but very welcome. We have lost our zealous friend for several days. He has been displaying the banner of the gospel at ——, and gathering together the dispersed of Israel. We admire the hero that wins battles, takes towns, and leaves trophies of his victories in every place. But where will all such toils, and the very remembrance of them be, when the monuments of his labours endure for ever in heaven?

Thanks for your subscription: I have procured more of another friend. I shall soon be a poor man, here are so many necessitous objects. And who can bear to be in affluence, while so many fellow-creatures are in deplorable want? Especially if we remember him, who, though he was

rich, for our sake became poor; and had not where (O marvellous, marvellous abasement!) had not where to lay his head.

This night dear Mr. —— is with us; returned from his expedition, full of life, and rich with spoils; spoils won from the kingdom of darkness, and consecrated to the Captain of our salvation. I have been prevailed on to sit for my picture. If ever portrait was the shadow of a shadow, mine is such. O that I may be renewed after the amiable image of the blessed Jesus! and when I awake up after his likeness, I shall be satisfied with it: This wish is breathed in a language to me unusual. I generally comprehend my dear friend in such petitions, and make his eternal interests inseparable from my own.

On Sunday I heard the admired Mr. ——. His text was Rom. v. 1.; his doctrine evangelical. The faith which purifies the heart, and works by love; the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, comprehending both his active and passive obedience; the operation of the blessed Spirit in producing this sound and lively faith, were the substance of his discourse. I commit you, my dear friend, to the tender mercies of our God, and the powerful word of his grace; remaining inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER LXIX.

London, Oct. 23, 1750.

My dear Friend,—As your stay in town was so short, we could not expect to see you. On Sunday afternoon your old acquaintance Mr. —— called upon me, sat about an hour, inquired after you, and talked as became the Christian character, and the sacred day. The conversation was perfectly pleasing; but the subjects, whether we were led to them by chance, or directed to them by Providence, were peculiarly noble and important. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. Job xix. "Behold my servant shall deal prudently," &c. Isa. lii. We expect to see our dear friend —— in a little time. O that we may meet each other, and daily converse on the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace! I say no more about poor Mrs. ——; perhaps my concern for her may be uncommonly tender, because there have few days passed since I knew her, in which I have not made mention of her name in my prayers for the afflicted. May the God of wisdom teach you, and the God of power enable you, to do always such things as are acceptable in his sight, through Jesus Christ. And may the Father of compassions make her sorrows bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and issue in everlasting joy! I hope the truly valuable Dr. —— and his family took knowledge of you, that you had been with Christ. Let us study, let us labour, to spread abroad the savour of his blessed name, who suffered the vengeance due to all—to all our sins. That his presence may be with you, and his love be in you, is the invariable wish of your affectionate, &c.

LETTER LXX.

London, Nov. 15, 1750.

My dear Friend,—I have communicated your two messages to ——; he is now with his old acquaintance at ——. On Sunday he preached morning and afternoon at L—— church. May his word prove a seed of life and immortality to the hearers. On Tuesday he and Mr. —— breakfasted with us: the talk turned principally upon the mystic writers. Dr. —— began to warm a little to hear Mr. —— inveigh pretty sharply against them; but by giving a soft answer, and making considerable concessions in their behalf, Mr. —— cooled and qualified all. He spoke with remarkable command of temper, and, I think, with great solidity of judgment. I wish it may lessen our valuable friend H——'s attachment to those authors, which I believe is immoderate, and I fear is pernicious. I heartily wish your children may recover, and live to be a comfort to their father, an honour to their religion. I have received Dr. D ——'s remarks; very judicious, and equally faithful. I scarce know any friend who has so true a taste, and so much sincerity. *Fiet Aristarchus* is the character he deserves.

Yesterday a serious dissenter from the country came to see me. God had freed him from a spirit of bigotry, and made my book acceptable to him. O that we may all love one another, and bear with one another! so fulfil the law, and follow the example of Christ. In the new Jerusalem, that city of the living God, all our little differences of opinion, as well as all the remainders of corruption, will fall of. In the light of God's countenance we shall see the truth clearly, and enjoy the life, the life of heaven and eternity perfectly. O that we may love that amiable and adorable Being every day, every hour, more and more! who, though the king immortal and invisible, gave his own Son to bleed and die for worms, for rebels; for you, my dear friend, and for your unworthy, but truly affectionate, &c.

LETTER LXXI.

Nov. 27, 1750.

My dear Friend,—Present my very grateful acknowledgments to our obliging friend Mr. ——. I rejoice in his lines, as they are a pledge of his affection and friendship; but I really am under apprehensions from them, as they are to be a public encomium on my character, lest they should make me think more highly of myself than I ought to think. O! may the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, and dwells with the humble heart, vouchsafe to defend me from all the insinuations of pride. To be sure this is a trying occasion; for *laudari a laudatis* is no common honour. I would beg leave to postpone the publication of the verses till the mezzotinto plate is finished, and the print ready to be sold; because, if such a recommendation appears at such a juncture, I am persuaded it will cause a demand for the picture, and further its sale. Good heavens! who would ever have thought that so mean a name, and so obscure a person, should appear in the world with such an air of significancy? O that it may be for the glory of that ever blessed and adorable Being, who manifests his transcendent excellency most chiefly in shewing mercy. When you heard of ——'s death, did you not immediately think of the prophet's declaration, "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field?" Did you not also ardently desire and resolve to seek for an assured interest in the promises of that word which endureth for ever? May the God of grace seal those promises to our hearts by his blessed Spirit, and witness with our spirits that we are the objects of his love and heirs of his kingdom? Then we may defy death, and boldly bid the king of terrors do his worst. —— is making an excursion to —— and to ——. May the Lord God of Hosts go forth with his servant, and make him terrible to the infernal enemy, as an army with banners; welcome to poor sinners, as the refreshing dews after parching heat. How my soul longs to be employed in the same sacred, blessed cause! Does not yours also throb with the same desires? I can no more. Supper waits for me. Adieu. All spiritual blessings be multiplied upon you, and ever yours, &c.

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LETTER LXXII.

December 8, 1750.

My dear Friend,—Why do you say Zimmermannus is too comfortable for you? The comfort of Christianity is, the sweet allurement to draw us to heaven, and the powerful instrument to fit us for heaven. If our affections are attached to the world, the comfort of Christianity is ordained to wean us from its vanities, and win us to God. If we have sinned, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most sovereign means of wounding our hearts, and bringing us to repentance. When Nathan said unto David, "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die;" then it is supposed he penned the 32d psalm, and poured out his soul in unreserved confession. When the blessed Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, then his conscience smote him deep; then he went out and wept bitterly. And how did his dear Master look? was it a resentful, upbraiding, menacing glance? Quite the reverse. Is this your promised fidelity? this your kindness for your friend? Ah, Peter! Peter! I feel more from your perfidy than from all the insults of my enemies. But I know your weakness, and I am going to die for your guilt. Willingly, willingly I lay down my life, that this sin may never be laid to your charge.—Such was the language of that gracious look. I do not wonder that it fetched a flood of tears from his eyes. I find it impossible to refrain on the bare meditation on it. O that the adorable Redeemer may manifest his all-forgiving goodness in our souls, and sure it will overcome our most stubborn corruptions. What can withstand such heavenly love? I know ——; and think you have a peculiar privilege in having opportunity and ability to succour so sincere a Christian. He will more than repay you with his prayers. Whatsoever you do for him, I am persuaded will be done unto Christ. And who can do enough for him who despised the shame, and endured the cross for us? Your writing paper came safe; and I would have returned it to the stationer as too coarse, but has, since its arrival, been seized; seized in the king's name, by one of the king's officers. Pray, have you taken care to pay duty? have you not been deficient in some instance or other? O, said Gaius mine host, when he heard of its coming back, It is good enough for me; it will just suit my purpose; I wanted such a supply: so it is in his hands, to be employed in the service of a great King, whose name you can guess, whose goodness you have experienced, and for whose honour, I hope, we shall all be very zealous. What say you? will you turn the forfeiture into a free gift, by sending your full consent to the deed? Our dear friend has been visited with a fever; attended by the doctor every day this week; but, blessed be God! is, we trust, upon the eve of a thorough recovery. He talks of preaching to-morrow, but I shall use my utmost interest to dis-

suade him. Let him desist for a while, that he may persist for a long season. We have but a small share of ——'s company. O that we may meet where we shall part no more, sin no more! Adieu! Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXIII.

Dec. 20, 1750.

My very dear Friend,—Your letter found me, after a considerable delay in its passage, where do you think? Where I never expected to go any more; found me at London! From whence I write this, and return you my sincerest thanks. Prevailed on by the repeated importunity of my friends, I came by easy stages to town, in order to try whether change of air may be of any service to my decayed constitution; for my worthy physician Dr. S—— has declared, that nothing which he can prescribe is likely to administer any relief.

I have reason to be convinced, from the accounts which your letter brings, and from the reports which I receive in this place, that here we have no continuing city. Thanks, everlasting thanks to the divine Goodness, which has prepared for us a mansion, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; a mansion whose builder, whose maker, and whose glory is God. Not only the disappointment, but even the acquisition of our desires, bespeaks the emptiness of the world. But what a complete felicity, what an all-satisfying portion, will the enjoyment of God be! When I awake up after thy likeness, (and am admitted to stand in thy beatific presence), I shall be satisfied with it.

I pitied as I read poor Miss ——'s case. There cannot be a keener distress than a conscience that is awakened, and a heart that desponds. The spirit of a man will sustain his other infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? A wounded spirit was the bitterest ingredient even in the cup of our Lord's exquisitely severe sufferings. He that bore the racking tortures of crucifixion without a complaint, cried lamentably, wept blood, when the arrows of the Almighty were within him. Then his soul was sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful, sorrowful even unto death. This dejection of our adored Master should be our consolation, his agonies are our ease; he was deeply sorrowful that we might be always rejoicing. To believe that he was wounded for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities; that he was destitute, afflicted, tormented for our sake; that by his vicarious and most meritorious obedience unto death, he has obtained everlasting redemption for us; firmly to believe this is not arrogance, is not presumption, but our bounden duty, as well as our inestimable privilege. This is his command, says St. John, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. Never, never was any command more gracious, or more worthy to be written on the tables of our hearts. Let us not, my dear Mr. ——, by indulging unbelief, O let us not dishonour the boundless mercy, and the inviolable fidelity of God; let us not depreciate the infinite merits, and all-prevailing intercession of our blessed Mediator; but say with the lively poet, Dr. Watts, in his Hymns,

> O! for a strong, a lasting faith,
> To credit what the Almighty saith!
> To embrace the promise of his Son,
> And call the joys of heaven our own!

You inquire about my new work intended for the press. It is a great uncertainty whether my languid spirits, and enfeebled constitution, will permit me to execute my design. It is a pleasure, however, to hear that I am sometimes admitted to converse with you by my book. May the divine Spirit accompany every such conversation; and teach our souls to glow with gratitude to that transcendently great and gracious Being who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; who stretched out his arms on the cursed tree, and laid the foundation of our happiness in his own blood. Please to present my most respectful compliments to Mrs. ——, your worthy neighbour Mr. ——, and his nieces. Give me leave, instead of wishing you a merry Christmas, to wish them and you all that joy which the holy prophet felt, when, in an ecstasy of delight, he cried out, "To us a child is born! to us a Son is given!" All the glories of heaven unite in his wonderful person; all the blessings of time and eternity are the fruit of his precious incarnation. Adieu, my dear sir, and cease not to pray for your ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER LXXIV.

London, Dec. 22, 1750.

My dear Friend,—Be so kind as to let your servant look out for some person of Collingtree, and deliver to him the inclosed letter. He will probably find some such person on Monday at ——; and I would have the letter conveyed by Christmas, that it may furnish my people with matter for conversation at their hospitable meetings. Our excellent friend follows the advice of the Preacher—whatsoever, of a charitable or godly nature, his hand findeth to do, he does it with his might; as one that is deeply convinced that there

is no wisdom nor device in the grave, whither we all are hasting. Does not so amiable a person, such an indefatigable servant of Christ, such a compassionate friend to mankind, does not he deserve encouragement?

We have just been to hear a very excellent discourse upon Zech. iv. 7. Mr. ——, who made one of the congregation, sends his compliments to you, and to Dr. ——; which when you present, be pleased to add mine. Who do you think I lately drank tea with? The two ladies before whom you put me so extremely to the blush. May neither they nor I be put to everlasting shame and confusion. I did what was in my power to prevent it, by recommending that adorable Saviour to their affections, in whom whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed. They commissioned me to transmit their compliments to you. You have thanks and prayers (the reward which a prophet gives) for the writing paper. What account can you give us of Lady ——'s health? Never, never will the physician's skill be employed for the lengthening of a more valuable life. May Almighty Goodness bless those prescriptions, and command her constitution and our zeal, ανεθαλλειν!—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXV.

Dec. 29, 1750.

My dear Friend,—This time last week I took pen in hand to beg; now I should be ungrateful if I did not resume it, in order to return my thanks, which I do most sincerely, in my own name, and on the behalf of my excellent host. He is now engaged in company, and cannot possibly steal a quarter of an hour to make his acknowledgments. The limner has been with me twice, and is to give the finishing touches on Monday. How slowly, and how patiently, these artists advance! A pattern for us. So may we have the image of the amiable Jesus gradually instamped on our hearts, till death gives the finishing stroke, and makes us completely like our Beloved. In the mean time, we have need of patience. Patience must be exercised towards ourselves; and God, the blessed God, is unspeakably patient towards us all. Mr. —— is willing to undertake Zimmermannus. I would have it thrown into the form of a dialogue. Why do you entertain such harsh thoughts of the dearest, most benign, and gracious of all beings? I can no more.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXVI.

Dear Sir,—I return you thanks for the perusal of your pamphlets. Be pleased to accept the two little volumes which accompany your other books, as an expression of my gratitude to your pen, and sincere affection to your person. May I request the favour of you, good sir, sometimes to implore the blessing of a gracious God upon the author, and his weak attempts: that the one may walk suitably to his holy profession, and high calling; that the other may please the reader for his good to edification. This will be a singular favour, and shall be readily returned by, reverend sir, your affectionate friend and humble servant, &c.

LETTER LXXVII.

London, Dec. 24, 1750.

Dear Mr. Nixon,—I am ashamed to see so obliging a letter from so valuable a friend lie so long unanswered. I delayed my grateful acknowledgments to you on this subject, till I could see what would be the issue of our design. As you propose to recommend my picture by your ingenious verses, I should rather chuse to have them inserted (with your permission) in the magazines and public papers, than to have them affixed to the copperplate. This practice, though once customary, is now, I believe, seldom used; and for me to revive it, when it does me such distinguished credit, would be too vain-glorious; otherwise, I assure you, dear sir, I should be glad to have a memorial of our friendship engraved on brass, or a more durable metal. And give me leave to declare, that though I was exceedingly pleased with the character you gave of my book in your excellent anniversary sermon, yet I was much more delighted with your acknowledging me as your friend, and suffering it to be known that I have a share in your affection.

I propose to make a long stay in town, and shall promise myself the pleasure of your company at my brother's. Have you ever met with a little poem, entitled Sunday Thoughts? The author is a very worthy man, and the poem not beneath your regard. Shall I wish my worthy friend a merry Christmas? This compliment will be paid you by multitudes. Rather let me wish that Christ Jesus, the ever blessed Immanuel, may be formed in both our hearts! Renewed after his amiable and divine image, may you see many revolving happy new-years below, and at last have an abundant entrance into the new Jerusalem,

which is above. Breathing such wishes, I remain, dear sir, your much obliged, and very affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXVIII.

London, Jan. 3, 1751.

Dear Sister,—I have taken my pen in hand to write to you, and yet have no news to transmit. I have nothing to send but my good wishes, and my best advice.

The old year is gone; and if we look back, what a nothing it appears! Departed as a tale that is told. Thus will our whole life appear, when our end approaches, and eternity opens; but eternity will never expire, eternity will last world without end. When millions, unnumbered millions of ages are passed away, eternity will only be beginning. And this short life, this little span, is the seed-time of the long, long eternity. What we sow in this state, we shall reap in the eternal state. Should we not therefore be careful, very careful, to improve our time, and make the best provision for an eternity of happiness? Should we not be careful to get faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; to get the love of God shed abroad in our hearts; and our souls renewed according to the amiable example of our blessed Redeemer? This, and nothing but this, is true religion. Going to church, hearing sermons, and receiving sacraments, profit us nothing, unless they promote these desirable ends. Fix, dear sister, this truth in your memory. A true faith in Christ, an unfeigned love of God, and a real holiness of heart, are the greatest blessings you can desire. Without them we shall not, we cannot, enter into the kingdom of heaven. These you should incessantly, you should earnestly seek, through the whole advancing year; and these I most sincerely wish you, who am your very affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER LXXIX.

London, Feb. 5, 1751.

Dear Mrs. ——, I received your valuable letter, and thank you for it. I am exceeding glad, and bless the unspeakable goodness of God, if he has made my poor ministry in any degree serviceable or comfortable to your soul. I accompany my former labours (if such extremely feeble attempts may be called labours,) with my repeated prayers; and bear my little flock on my supplicating and affectionate heart all the day long. O that the gracious God may fulfil in them all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power!

I rejoice to find that you know the truth. May you know it more and more; be established in it, and experience the efficacy of it. May the truth make you free! free from the prevalence of unbelief, the dominion of sin, and the oppression of sorrow! Give glory to God for opening the eyes of your mind, and bringing you to the riches of Christ. Take to yourself the comfort of this inestimable blessing, and by no means reject your own mercy. Pray do not harbour hard thoughts concerning the blessed God, nor cherish desponding apprehensions concerning yourself, though always frail, and in every respect imperfect. The great and good Father of our spirits knows whereof we are made; he remembers that we are but dust, and will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss. Extreme to mark! so far from it, that to those who seek him in sincerity, seek him through his dear Son, he is tender and compassionate beyond all imagination. "As a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him," Psalm ciii. 13.; and "as a mother comforteth her son, so will the Lord thy God comfort thee," Isa. lxvi. 13. Since we want loving-kindness and mercy to follow us all the days of our life, blessed, for ever blessed be the God of heaven, in these he delighteth, Jer. ix. 24.

O "cast thy burden upon the Lord," says the Holy Spirit. Cast it upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an art which the Christian should be diligent to learn and watchful to practise. Christ is a Saviour, but we neglect to make use of him; we are come to him, but we forget to walk in him. When guilt accuses us, or guilt overtakes us, instantly let us fly to Christ, as the Israelites, when wounded, looked to the brazen serpent. There, let us say, there is the propitiation for this abominable sin. For this, and for all my other iniquities, his heart was pierced, and his blood spilt. The vials of wrath, due to my provocations, were poured upon that spotless victim; and by his stripes I am healed. If our own obedience is deplorably defective, so that we are sometimes ready to cry out with the prophet, "My leanness! my leanness! woe is me!" let us turn our thoughts to the great Mediator's righteousness; this is consummate and divine; this was wrought out for us; this is imputed to us; in this all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and in this should they glory. If your prayers are dull and languid, remember the intercession of Christ. He ever appears in the presence of God for you; and how can your cause miscarry which has such an advocate? If the poor widow was heard, even

by the unjust judge, shall not the dearly beloved Son of God prevail when he makes intercession to a most gracious Father? a Father who loves both him and his people. If you want repentance, want faith, want holiness, Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, and to give all these desirable blessings. He has ascended up on high, has led captivity captive, and received gifts, spiritual gifts for men, yea, even for his enemies, for the rebellious. It is his office to bestow these precious graces on poor sinners; and he is as ready to execute this office as the mother is ready to administer the breast to a sucking child. Do you read the Scriptures? Still keep Christ in view. When dreadful threatenings occur, say, These I deserved; but Christ has bore them in my stead. When rich promises are made, say, of these I am unworthy; but my Redeemer's worthiness is my plea; he has purchased them for me by his merits. All the promises of God are yea and amen (sure and certain to the believing soul) in Christ Jesus.

To make such a perpetual application of Christ, is to eat his flesh, and drink his blood. Thus may you, may I, may all my dear people, be enabled to pass the time of our sojourning here below! deriving our whole spiritual life, our pardon and sanctification, our hope, and our joy, from that inexhaustible fountain of all good. Though I am not with you in person, I am often with you in spirit; and daily commit you to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls; who is ten thousand thousand times more condescending, compassionate, and faithful, than your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXX.

Dear ——, I received your kind letter, and am glad to find that you, and Mrs. ——, and Mrs. ——, often meet together, and, like the people mentioned by the prophet, speak one to another of the things of God. O let us exhort one another to faith, to love, and to good works; and so much the more, as we see the day, the day of eternal judgment, approaching. Ere long we shall hear the shout of the archangel, and the trump of God. O let us imitate the wise virgins, and get oil in our lamps, true grace in our hearts; that we may be prepared for our Lord's second coming, and not dread, but love his appearing.

My departure from Northampton was sudden and unexpected. Could I have seen my people, and given them my parting advice, it should have been in the words of that good man Barnabas, who exhorted all the disciples, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Cleave, my dear friends, to the Lord Jesus Christ; cleave to his word; let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and be your meditation all the day long. Let the Bible, that inestimable book, be often in your hands, and its precious truths be ever in your thoughts. Thus let us sit, with holy Mary, at the feet of Jesus; and, I hope, we shall experience his word to drop as the rain, and distil as the dew.

Cleave to his merits. Fly to his divine blood for pardon; it is the fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness. It purges from all guilt, takes away all sin, and, blessed be God, it is always open, always free of access. Fly to his righteousness. Let us renounce our own, and rely on his obedience. What unprofitable servants are we! how slothful in our whole life! how imperfect in every work! But as for Christ, his work is perfect; it is complete, and infinitely meritorious. In this shall all the seed of Israel, all true believers, be justified; and in this shall they glory.

Cleave to his Spirit. Seek for the divine Spirit; cry mightily to God for the divine Spirit. Let them that have it pray that they may have it more abundantly, and be even filled with the Spirit. This blessed Spirit reveals Christ, strengthens faith, quickens love, and purifies the heart. Christ died to obtain this Spirit for us; he intercedes for us that we may receive it; and his heavenly Father, for his sake, has promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask it. He has promised (O glorious privilege!) to give it more readily than parent gives bread to a hungry child.

Cleave to his example. Study his holy life, eye his unblamable conduct, observe his amiable tempers; look to this heavenly pattern, as those that learn to write look to their copy; and God grant that we all, beholding with open face the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord!

Thus let us cleave to Christ the Lord; cleave with full purpose of heart, incessantly, closely, inseparably. Let us say with our father Jacob, I will not let thee go. Let us imitate the Syrophœnician woman, whom no discouragements could divert from her purpose. Temptations, difficulties, all the assaults of our enemy, should make us hasten to, and abide in the stronghold, the city of refuge: And he has promised, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He will gather us with his arm, and lay us in his bosom. He will guide us by his grace, and receive us into his glory. There, in those happy, happy

mansions, may we, and many, very many of my dear flock meet, and never be parted more! This is the heart's desire, and the daily prayer of their and your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXXI.

1751.

Dear ——, And are you very weak? is sickness in the chamber, and death at the door? Come, then, let us both sit down with dissolution and eternity in view, and encourage one another from the word, the precious word of God. I have as much need of such consolation as you, my dear friend, and may, perhaps, have occasion to use them as soon.

What is there formidable in death, which our ever blessed Redeemer has not taken away? Do the pangs of dissolution alarm us? Should they be sharp, they cannot be very long; and our exalted Lord, with whom are the issues of death, knows what dying agonies mean. He has said, in the multitude of his tender mercies, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," Isa. xli. 10. This promise authorizes us to say boldly, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me," Psalm xxiii. 4.

Are we afraid to enter into a strange, invisible, unknown world? It is the world into which our divine Master is gone; where he has prepared everlasting mansions for his people, John xiv. 2. Luke xvi. 22. and has appointed his angels to conduct us thither. Having such a convoy, what should we dread? and, going to our eternal home, where our all-bountiful Redeemer is, why should we be reluctant?

Are we concerned on account of what we leave? We leave the worse to possess the better. If we leave our earthly friends, we shall find more loving and lovely companions. We shall be admitted among the "innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, that are written in heaven," Heb. xii. 22, 23. Do we leave the ordinances of religion, which we have attended with great delight? leave the word of God, which has been sweeter to our souls than honey to our mouths? We shall enter into the temple not made with hands, and join that happy choir, who rest not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," Rev. iv. 8. And if our Bible is no more, we shall have all that is promised, we shall behold all that is described therein. If we drop the map of our heavenly Canaan, it will be to take possession of its blissful territories. "That city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof," Rev. xxi. 23. O, my friend! blessed, for ever blessed, be the grace of our God, and the merits of his Christ! We shall exchange the scanty stream for the boundless ocean; and if we no longer pick the first ripe grapes, we shall gather the copious, the abounding, the never-ending vintage.

Do we fear the guilt of our innumerable sins? Adored be the inexpressible loving-kindness of God our Saviour! our sins have been punished in the blessed Jesus: "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 6. He his own self bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. So that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1. O that we may be enabled, with the apostle, to make our boast of this Saviour, and to triumph in this faith! "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us."

Is judgment the thing that we fear? To the pardoned sinner it has nothing terrible. The Lord Jesus, who keeps his servants from falling, "presents them also faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," Jude ver. 24. Observe the sweet expressions, *presents faultless*, and *with exceeding joy*. Justly therefore does the apostle reckon it among the privileges of the Christians, that they are come to God the Judge of all, Heb. xii. 23.; for the Judge is our friend, the Judge is our advocate, the Judge is our propitiation, the Judge is our righteousness. And is it not a privilege to come to such a judge as will not so much as mention our iniquities to us, but condescend to take notice of our poor unworthy services? who sits on the great tribunal, not to pass the sentence of damnation upon us, but to give us a reward, a reward of free grace, and of inconceivable richness?

Let me conclude with those charming words of the evangelical prophet, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for her Redeemer, her all-gracious Redeemer, hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins," Isa. xl. 1, 2. May the God of our life and salvation make these Scriptures

be unto us a staff in the traveller's hand, and as a cordial to the fainting heart, that we may be strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; that we may glorify him in death, and glorify him for death; because death will introduce us into his immediate presence, where we shall be sorrowful no more, sinful no more, at a distance no more; but be joyful, and be like our Lord; love him with all our souls, praise him to all eternity. Let us then be of good cheer, soon in our heavenly Jerusalem we shall meet again. Because God is faithful, inviolably faithful, and infinitely merciful, who hath promised, promised to you, and promised to your affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—My kindest respects to Mr. ——, and Mrs. ——; bid them be of good courage, and go on their way rejoicing, for their Redeemer is mighty, his merits are unspeakable, and his love is unchangeable. My most respectful compliments wait upon Mr. —— and Mrs. ——. What a pleasure should I think it, was I able to execute the ministerial office, to bring home to their parlours the glad tidings of an all-sufficient Saviour, as well as to preach them in the pulpit! Polly, I hope, loves her Bible; may the word of Christ dwell in her richly; and may he be with your father and mother, now they are old and grey-headed.

LETTER LXXXII.

Dear ——, I hope this will find you a little better in your health; but if it should find you in a weak and languishing condition, I hope a gracious God will sanctify what it contains to the comfort of your soul.

Often consider, if you die, you will leave a world full of sin; a condition full of frailty, ignorance, and misery; a body that has long been a heavy burden, a sore clog, both to your services and to your comforts: and why should any one be greatly unwilling to leave such a state? If you die, you will go into an unknown world; but the comfort is, you have a kind and faithful friend gone thither before—Jesus Christ, your best friend, and the lover of your soul, is the Lord of that unseen world. Joseph's brethren were not afraid to go down into Egypt, when they knew that their dear brother was governor of the country. And since your most merciful Saviour is ruler of the invisible world, be not afraid to leave the body, and depart thither. It is said, the spirit of old Jacob revived when he saw the waggons sent to carry him to his beloved son; and the poor languishing believer may look upon death as the waggon sent by Jesus Christ to bring his soul home to heaven.

But after death comes judgment, and this is terrible. Consider, who is the Judge. Was the father that begat you, was the mother that bare you, or the friend that is as your own soul; was any one of these to be the Judge, and to pass the sentence, you would not be apprehensive of rigorous proceedings, you would expect all possible clemency. Mercy, in this case, would rejoice against judgment. But, to our unspeakable comfort, we are informed by the Scriptures, that a glorious Person, far more merciful than a father, far more compassionate than a mother, far more affectionate than a friend, is to decide our doom—even the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us with an everlasting love; who declares, that a woman may forget her sucking child much sooner than he forget to be merciful to those that put their trust in him; for thus it is written, "God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, even Jesus Christ," Acts xvii. 31.

The Judge calls himself our Husband, the Bridegroom of poor believing souls. And will the Bridegroom deliver to destruction his own bride, whom he has bought with his blood, and with whom he has made an everlasting covenant? Isa. liv. 5.

The Judge vouchsafes to be our Advocate. And will he condemn those for whom he has long interceded? will he condemn those for whom he poured out his prayers when he was on earth, and on whose behalf he has constantly pleaded in the presence of God? 1 John ii. 1.

The Judge condescends to be our Head, and calls the weakest believers his members And did ever any one hate his own body? Did ever any one delight to maim, or take pleasure to ruin his own flesh, and his bones? Col. i. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 27.

The Judge has been our Victim, the sacrifice for our sins. And will he consign those to damnation, for whom he endured the agonies of crucifixion? If he has given himself for us, will he not with this gift freely give us all things? give us pardon at that awful day? give us the crown of glory, which fadeth not away? Heb. ix. 14, 26.

Farther, to confirm your faith, and establish your hope, it will be proper to consider what you have to plead. The proud Pharisee made his abstaining from gross iniquities, and his punctuality in some external performances, his plea. The blinded Jews went about to establish their own righteousness, and depended on this broken reed for acceptance. But we have a surer foundation whereon to build our comfortable expectations.

If arraigned on the foot of guilt—great guilt—manifold guilt—aggravated guilt—long contracted guilt; we have an atone-

ment to plead, a sacrifice of unknown value, a propitiation glorious and divine. We have the blood of the Lamb to plead; blood that taketh away not one sin, or a few sins, or a multitude of sins only; but (O delightful truth!) taketh away all, all, all sins. Yes, it taketh away all sins from the believer, be they ever so numerous; all sins, be they ever so heinous; 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5.

Should the law take us by the throat, and make that severe demand, Pay me that thou owest: It is paid, we reply, by our divine Surety. An incarnate God has been obedient in our stead. In the Lord, the Lord Redeemer, have we righteousness. And can the law insist on a more excellent satisfaction? Does not this magnify the law, and make it honourable? "By the obedience of one, (that is, Christ) shall many be made righteous;" Isa. xlv. 24. Rom. v. 19.

Should it further be urged, Without holiness no man shall see the Lord: Is not holiness the thing that we have longed for? It is true, we have not attained to holiness; spotless and undefiled holiness, neither could we in the regions of temptation, and in a body of corruption. But has not our guilt been our sorrow, and our indwelling sin our heaviest cross? Have we not groaned under our remaining iniquities, and been burdened with a sense of our failings? And are not these groanings the first fruits of the Spirit? Are not these the work of thy own grace, blessed Lord! and wilt thou not consummate in heaven what thou hast thus begun upon earth? Do we not desire heaven, chiefly because in those blessed mansions we shall sin no more; we shall offend our God no more; be no more forgetful of a dying Saviour; no more disobedient to the motions of a sanctifying Spirit? And shall we be disappointed of this hope? It cannot, it cannot be. They that hunger and thirst after righteousness, are not filled while they abide in the flesh; therefore there remaineth the accomplishment of this promise—they will assuredly awake up after the likeness of their Lord at the great resurrection day, and in another world be fully, everlastingly satisfied with it.

I must now come to a conclusion: But I cannot conclude without wishing you all joy and peace in believing. Though your flesh and your heart fail, may God be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever! I daily, I frequently make mention of you in my prayers; and, what is better than all, the dearly beloved of the Father remembers you now he is in his kingdom. I am your very affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXXIII.

[The following letter was sent to the preacher by a cottager in a country village; and is here printed, to show how thankfully the poor receive the preaching of the gospel, and to preserve so remarkable and useful a letter from perishing.]

REVEREND SIR,—I humbly beg your pardon for presuming to write to you. Being one of your hearers, I was very much affected with your good sermons, having known and experienced the truth of them, viz. That persons must be convinced of their *undone* state by NATURE, and brought into a state of *concern*, or *self-condemnation*, before they will seek and *earnestly* desire the knowledge of Christ crucified. To one who feels the condemning power of the LAW, Christ is precious. Such have tasted the bitterness of sin; for till then they *are alive without the law*, as St. Paul saith, Rom. vii. 9, not seeing that the LAW requires *perfect* obedience, and that THEIRS at the best is *very imperfect*. Hence the best of us in our carnal state are striving to be justified by our own *works;* yea, though we cannot but know that we often break the laws of God, Rom. iii. 20, 28.

But then we think, It is true I am a sinner, and there is none without sin. Thus we do presume upon our seeming obedience, not considering how great a CHANGE must be wrought upon our soul by repentance; and that we must be united to Christ by faith, and *partake of his likeness*, without which Christ, as to us, is dead in vain, Gal. ii. 21. And when the Holy Spirit has convinced us of our misery by sin, (John xvi. 8,) and need of Christ, then, usually, we are thinking TO DO something to *purchase* an interest in him; not considering we must be *humble supplicants* at his feet, waiting for *every thing* we want at the throne of grace—repentance, pardon, sanctification, redemption—as purchased by Him: Eternal life is the *gift* of God, Rom. vi. 23.

It is the *humbled* person who will accept of Christ in all his offices; not only as a priest to atone for sin, but also as a prophet to teach, and a king to rule over him, and subdue all his sins. The covenant of grace answers all our wants: there is not only *mercy* to *pardon*, but also *grace* to *sanctify*, and renew our nature. It is the *humbled* believer who can sincerely say, "Christ is the power of God unto salvation," Rom. i. 16.

And now I think nothing more needful than for clergymen to preach as *you* do; for though Christianity is generally professed among us, yet many seem as unconcerned about these things as if there were no such truths in the gospel. This is the way of preaching which has ever been most effectual to the converting of sinners; and may

the blessed Spirit attend the word preached, "purifying the hearts of your hearers by faith," Acts xv. 9. That the righteousness of Christ, accepted and applied to themselves by a lively faith, may entitle them to heaven, Rom. v. 19; and that their *sincere*, though *imperfect* obedience, may evidence their title to be true and real, is the hearty desire of, reverend sir, your most humble servant.

To *true believers* the LAW is set forth as a rule of *manners*, not as a law of *condemnation*, for there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1, 6; or, in other words, those who *love* Christ, *love* his commandments, as kind rules of life, not obeying (like legal people) with reluctance, and out of fear of being punished. There is not, perhaps, a greater or more important truth, than that in proportion as our faith in the Redeemer, evidenced by our works, increases, so our fear of death proportionably decreases.

LETTER LXXXIV.

DEAR ——, You need make no excuse for recommending Mr. —— in his distressed condition. I am pleased to see you so tenderly concerned for a brother's welfare; and I am glad you have used the freedom of applying to me; seeing divine providence has put it in my power to help a disciple, a child, a member of Christ. I purposed to have given him ——, and to have lent him three; nor should I have been very rigorous in exacting the debt, provided there was but little ability to repay. But lest the fear of not being able to repay should create anxiety in an honest heart, and lessen the comfort of a seasonable supply, I make him a present of the whole; heartily wishing that the same gracious God who inclined a stranger's heart to bestow it, may also prosper his endeavours to improve it. And if he often calls to remembrance that Almighty power and goodness which made a few drops of oil at the bottom of a cruse, and a little handful of meal that was the gleaning of the barrel, a lasting support to the prophet, and to the poor widow and her son, I doubt not but that he will be enabled to fix his dependence upon the same everlasting Father, for needful success in trading: so that, by God's blessing, I hope this little stock, frugally managed, may, through his kind Providence, put him in a way of procuring necessaries in this wilderness, till he comes to the fulness of the heavenly Canaan.

I think every instance of kindness shown to us, or exercised by us, should enlarge our apprehensions of the divine benevolence. What is a grain of dust to the whole earth? what is a drop of water to the great ocean? or what are a few days to the countless ages of eternity? Less, unspeakably less is all created kindness, compared with the boundless goodness of God in Christ Jesus. For by him we have access to the Father, being reconciled by his blood shed on the cross. We are adopted and received into the church, whereof Christ is the head. Being thus in the favour of God, he delighteth in hearing the prayer of faith, which those who believe in Christ daily put up to the throne of grace. O how great is his loving-kindness and tender mercy! He is exalted, that he may have mercy upon all that call upon him in sincerity and truth. He waiteth to be gracious. He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, for past ingratitude and great unworthiness. O how great are these blessings which he giveth! Blessings, in comparison of which silver is as clay, and gold as the mire of the streets. He giveth grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them who live a godly life; from them who are accepted in the beloved, and love him who first loved them. I shall add that charming declaration of the beloved disciple, and earnestly wish that we may learn by happy experience, and feel in our souls what it means, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." Let me beg my dear friends to remember at the throne of grace your affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER LXXXV.

DEAR SISTER,—I have taken my pen in my hand to write: but what shall be the subject? News I have none; or, if I had, my brother would communicate it in his conversation. Let me imitate a royal example. It was once said by a renowned king, *My song shall be of mercy and judgment:* of the same let my letter treat. The former was very lately the topic of some agreeable discourse with a young gentleman. We observed how necessary it is to be firmly persuaded of the infinitely rich mercies of God in Christ Jesus. This will make us delight to think of him, and encourage us to fly to him: Whereas, if we have a jealousy that he bears us ill-will, or designs our ruin, we cannot take pleasure in him, or place our confidence in him. Therefore the condescending God has given us repeated and solemn assurances of his pity, his grace, his tender mercy in Christ Jesus.

Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. He makes it his very name. Intimating, that a man may forget his own name, before the blessed God can cease to be merciful to them that fear him.

Ezek. xxxiii. 7. 11. He confirms his divine good will to us by an oath. He swears by his very life, that he desires our happiness, and seeks our salvation. Here are two immutable things, the name and the oath of God. Can we have stronger confirmation of his loving kindness?

I think, if it be possible, we have. *He has so loved us*, saith the Scripture. How hath he loved us? So as no words, no, not of his own all-wise Spirit, can express; nothing but the unspeakably precious effects; so as to surrender his own Son to die, that we might live; to be made subject to the law, that we by his obedience might be made righteous; to become a curse, that we might inherit the blessing. Read what the wife of Manoah very justly alleges, and apply it to the point before us, (Judges xiii. 23.) for I can no more; I hear the coach coming to carry me out on a visit.—Yours, &c.

LETTER LXXXVI.

My dear Friend,—I am glad to find that the beloved traveller called at your house, and gave you so much of his company. Cold as the weather was, did not your heart burn within you? burn with zeal and love for that all-glorious God, whom he (excellent man) so faithfully serves in the gospel of his Son?

May Mrs. —— increase in humility, be more convinced of guilt, more sensible of depravity; and then she will grow in every other grace. Proud minds suffer the curse imprecated on the mountains of Gilboa; while humble souls are like the valleys spread forth by the rivers, or as a field which the Lord hath blessed.

I think you should not have shown her the free remark which I made; it was well meant, and she is well disposed, but human nature is very, very depraved. And perhaps there is no greater instance of it, than our proneness to take offence at the least disparaging hint; nay, sometimes to fancy ourselves wronged, if we are not extolled to the skies. I heartily wish the blessed Jesus may give this young lady the ornament of a meek and humble spirit; that being lowly in her own eyes, she may be exalted by the great God.

I see so much indigence, and so many distressed objects, that I begrudge myself all unnecessary disbursements of money. Who would indulge too much, even in innocent and elegant amusements, and thereby lessen his ability to relieve, to cherish, and comfort the Lord Jesus, in his afflicted members?

I wish you could have preached at Collingtree. My poor people long for the sincere milk of the word. You would have a congregation, all of them honouring you, most of them attentive to you, and many of them edified by you. It grieves me, it pains me at my very soul, that I am dismissed, or rather cut off from the honourable and delightful service of the ministry. But to be resigned, perhaps, is better than to labour; and an adoring submission, for me at least, more proper than a zealous application. O may I bow my head, and dutifully stand in the lot which the almighty sovereign pleases to assign!—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER LXXXVII.

London, Saturday night.

My dear Friend,—I congratulate you on ——'s recovery. Why do you call her ——? It is a strong temptation to vanity. She must be deeply ballasted with humility, not to be puffed up at such a title, which assimilates her to one of the most lovely and accomplished characters that ever was described.

O that we all may be recovered from that lethargic indolence which deadens our attention to the one thing needful! What a God have we! how immensely glorious, and how little do we reverence him! What a Saviour! how unutterably gracious! and how little do we love him!—What promises! how inviolably faithful! yet how feeble is our affiance in them!—What a heaven! how transcendently delightful! yet how languid are our desires of it! O that the blessed, blessed Redeemer may baptize us with the Holy Ghost, as with a flaming fire, to quicken, animate, and kindle into a glow of devotion, these benumbed souls of ours! I must add no more, only that I am, with great sincerity, though in great haste, inviolably yours &c.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

My dear Friend,—I am surprised at what you say relating to dear ——. What evil hath he done, or wherein has he offended, that disesteem should be his lot? Yet what are such instances of contempt, compared with the reproaches and insults offered to the all-glorious Redeemer? God, I trust, will bless his sermon; and so much the more as it is regarded by some people with an evil eye. O what a comfortable consideration is it, that the success of our discourses depends not upon our own ability, which is as nothing; depends not upon the favour of men, which is very capricious; but depends wholly upon the influence of

that almighty Spirit, whose presence is unlimited, and power uncontrollable!

My father had engaged Mr. —— to supply at Collingtree: I hope he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Adieu, my dear friend, adieu.

LETTER LXXXIX.

London, Feb. 23.

Sir,—Mr. —— and Mr. —— may have tried, and may repeat their attempts, to alienate the affections of my Collingtree hearers. I am under no concern with regard to myself. *Fragile cupiens illidere dentem, offendet solido*, will, I believe, be the issue of their endeavours. I am only sorry, for the people's sake, that they should squander away their ministerial talents and ministerial labours to so poor a purpose. Let them be more incessant in warning every man, and teaching every man, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Thus let them seek to win their affections, and I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, in their success. Dear sir, the way to secure the love of others is, to love them, to pray for them, and with a willing assiduity to set forward their true happiness. This, whenever I was amongst them, my people will confess, I did not cease to do. And the God of heaven knows I daily bear them on my heart, and often recommend them to the tenderest mercies of our everlasting Father. Never, therefore, be apprehensive of my losing either their esteem with regard to my conduct, or their affection with regard to my person. O that their precious souls were as firmly united to Christ, as their favourable opinion is secured to me! Well, should neighbours undermine us, and friends forsake us, the adorable and all-condescending God is faithful. He changeth not. His word of grace endureth for ever. He loves his people with an everlasting love. And O what worms, what dust, what mere nothings, are all men, are all creatures, before that infinitely blessed Author of all perfection! What a sense had the Psalmist of this weighty truth, when he poured forth that rapturous exclamation, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none, there is nothing on earth, that I desire in comparison of thee!" May this, my dear friend, be the continual language of your heart; and of his, who hopes to be, both in time and to eternity, affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER XC.

Wednesday morning, Mile's-lane.

Dear Mr. Nixon,—Your obliging letter found me at my brother's in Mile's-lane, where I propose to abide to the end of the week: and here your entertaining and improving company would be a favour, not to myself only, but to the whole family.

I am indebted to your good-nature for so candidly accepting the small but free observation made in my last. I am going to run myself farther in debt, by proposing to your consideration what now occurs to my thoughts. The enclosed queries I submit entirely to your judgment, and from your determination shall make no appeal.

I have read Elihu; and very much admire his zeal for that most comfortable doctrine, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ imputed to sinners for their justification. I highly honour also his distinguished veneration for that incomparably excellent book the Bible. Surely his works will be a means of causing the study of those λογια ζωντα to revive. Do not you think the style is masculine, and the manner enlivened? As to the Hutchinsonian peculiarities, I do not pretend to be a competent judge, and dare not peremptorily condemn them. Yet they seem to be so very finely spun, and to have so large an alloy of fancy, that I know not how to admit them for sterling truth. I am truly concerned to hear of Mr. ——'s and his lady's illness. Dear sir, what a fading flower is health, and what an expiring vapour is life! May you be an instrument of bringing souls to the knowledge of the adorable God, and to the faith of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; then they will, in another state of things, possess a vigour that is subject to no decay, and enjoy that life that knows no end. I am, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—Is "lively oracles" an exact translation of the above-mentioned Greek clause?

LETTER XCI.

London, March 28, 1751.

My dear Friend,—You depend, you say, upon my promise: and see how readily it is performed. And if you depend on the execution of a promise from a frail, frail creature; will you not much more expect accomplishment of promises, made by that adorable Being "whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth?" O, that we may not dishonour God's goodness, disparage his veracity, and depreciate his dear Son's

unspeakable merits, by unbelief, base, vile, destructive unbelief!

I have not an opportunity of communicating your news to our dear friend. He has left London. It is not known when he will return. He is not expected till some months are expired; and who knows how many may be gone into eternity before that period is arrived!

You ask how it fares with my health? You may remember, that I have more than once answered such an inquiry with silence; for I do not like to be upon the complaining string, and I cannot say my health is either restored or improved. When your letter came (not till Tuesday about five o'clock) it found me in a state of extreme languor. I had written nothing, done nothing since dinner. Though I took up an easy and entertaining book, I was obliged to lay it down again. Thus I spend, rather thus I lose, many hours: so that between intervening company, and debility of spirits, I make but a very slow, scarce any progress in my intended work.

I have no news, though at the great mart of intelligence. My sister is safely delivered of a son; which puts one in mind of the glorious piece of news, celebrated by the angels, and foretold with a rapturous delight by the prophet, "To us a Child is born; to us a Son is given. His name shall be the Mighty God;" and yet his office shall be, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. May this news be ever sounding in the ears, and ever operative on the hearts of my dear friend, and of his ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER XCII.

Tottenham, May 30, 1751.

My dear Friend,—I am now at my brother's country house. Pray who is Mr. ——, the writer of the letter enclosed in yours? He asks me to get him a curacy; little aware that I am but a curate myself. I believe the world has a notion, that I am a dignified, or a beneficed man at least. Dear sir, may it be your benefice and mine to do good to souls! and our highest dignity to glorify the ever-blessed Redeemer! who for our sake had not where to lay his head, till he was numbered with the transgressors, and laid in the silent grave.

I hope your health is established; and how does your soul prosper? Do not you delight to think of, to talk of, to have communion with, that wonderful, that amiable Being, whom to know is wisdom, whom to enjoy is happiness; happiness, not to be described by words, only to be understood by experience? Oh that we may follow on to know him! Then we have a promise; a promise more stable than the foundations of nature, that our "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." Gold has no value, and diamonds lose their lustre, when compared with those unsearchable riches of Christ, which Mr. —— so largely enjoys himself, and so freely offers to others. His ministry is signally owned by his condescending and almighty Master. Many, I am told, of the superior, as well as lower orders in life, attend his ministry. And if there be efficacy in united prayers; if there be zeal in the Lord God of Hosts, for the honour of his dear Son; if there be faithfulness and compassion in our exalted Saviour, his labours will, they will be blessed. May they, every day, every hour, be blessed more abundantly! Most cordially yours, &c.

LETTER XCIII.

Tottenham, July 2, 1751.

My dear Friend,—I hope you have done with Mr. ——: I hope your house is sufficiently ornamented. I think it is rather overstocked with decorations. Now let us be good stewards of Jesus Christ; employ what we can spare for the honour of his blessed name, and comfort of his indigent people. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive riches as well as blessings and praise."

Pray do not mention me to Mrs. ——. Though I honour and compassionate her, I am not fit to visit her, nor qualified to edify her. This is with me the trying season of the year, and my animal nature is all relaxation. O that I may be strong in faith! that precious faith, that "where sin hath abounded, grace will much more abound."

Do not you sometimes see our dear friend ——? I find he has been at Bristol lately, to distribute, I do not doubt, the waters of life, far more precious and healing than the waters of that medicinal spring. Let us do likewise. "For yet a very, very little while (μικρον οσον οσον) and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Then opportunities of spiritual and bodily charity cease for ever.

I believe it is four months since I heard from Mr. ——. How precarious human interchanges of kindness! what a blessing that the way to heaven is always open! Whenever we will, we may have access to God through the blood of his Son. And "he never faileth them that seek him."

How does Mr. —— go on? Do not you sometimes stir up the embers in his heart, if so be the coals may glow, and the fire at length burn? I hope your conversation is

blessed to Mrs. ——. Glad to find she admits Mrs. —— to her company; a godly sensible woman, who understands, relishes, talks savourily and intelligently on the truths of the gospel: Is discreet likewise; knows how to keep a becoming distance, and will not make a wrong, an assuming use of a lady's condescension. May the God of heaven bless them both, and give them to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And what I pray for them, I pray for my dear friend. Ever yours, &c.

LETTER XCIV.

Tottenham, July 14, 1751.

My dear Friend, —I am sorry to hear your account of Mr. ——. See what snares are around us. How the devil endeavours to obstruct our usefulness, by blemishing our credit. May the ministers of Christ be upright and undefiled in the way! or else they will not be able to reprove and exhort with all (no, nor with any) authority. The God of power and faithfulness says of his church, says of his people, " I the Lord keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it: I will preserve it night and day," Isa. xxvii. 3. May this promise be our shield! be fulfilled to us evermore! Do not you go on, my dear friend, to lay up these precious pledges of heaven in your memory, and enrich your heart from them by frequent meditation? They are the seed of faith. By these we are to be " made partakers of the divine nature!" Partakers of the divine nature! volumes cannot explain what is comprised in those few words. May we know what they mean, by happy, happy experience!

I pity poor Mr. ——, knowing what it is to be in a state of languishing. Ah! ah! my dear sir, lay up a stock of comfort, get your graces lively while animal nature blooms. When the blast of sickness smites, and our strength becomes labour and sorrow, how miserable must be our condition without an interest, an established interest, in the all-glorious Redeemer!

Why do you cherish distrustful thoughts of the blessed God? Is he not boundless goodness? Is not his goodness greater than the heavens? Does not his mercy, that lovely attribute, endure for ever? All the kindness of the most endeared relations, compared with the tender compassions of a God in Christ, are no better than cruelty itself. Read the last chapter of Hosea. " Hide it within your heart." Turn it into prayer to the King of heaven; and I hope it will be to your soul as the dawning-day after a darksome night.

Our dear friend has met with uncommon favour and acceptance. Excellent man! How does he work while it is day! How sweet to such a labourer will be heaven's everlasting rest! There may you meet him! and there find, as a monument of infinitely free grace in Christ, your truly affectionate, &c.

LETTER XCV.

Oct. 18, 1751.

My dear Friend,—Two of your letters are now before me, who expected long ere this to have been before the Judge of quick and dead. Blessed be God I am got down stairs, and the day before yesterday went abroad in a coach. Oh! what great troubles and adversities hast thou shewed me! yet didst thou turn and refresh me; yea, and broughtest me from the depths of the earth again. Oh! my dear friend, how shall I be thankful? May that infinitely good and gracious God, who has given me such cause, give me power to be grateful. May I be enabled to devote every moment of that life which he has prolonged, and every faculty of that body which he hath preserved; devote them wholly to the honour of his blessed name.

Poor ——'s case I commiserate. The charge attending my illness will be considerable; but I am not without hopes that my father will be so good as to defray it, then my hands will not be straitened: O that my bowels may never be straitened, but may I " draw out my soul to the hungry."

I am glad to hear that a seventh edition of Dr. Stonehouse's book is demanded. May it go forth in the name, in the strength, and for the honour of the blessed Jesus, and may it prosper! though, as you observe, he and I think differently on some points; nor is the doctor an admirer of my favourite author Mr. Marshall. The acceptance, however, which God has given to his and to my own writings, should send both of us oftener to the throne of grace, and quicken our applications to the divine Goodness, that his all-powerful Spirit may accompany our instructions, and make them a real blessing to our readers.

I write as a poor prisoner that lately expected to have the sentence of death executed, but has now got a short, uncertain reprieve. May I never forget how much I shall want an assured faith in the all-glorious Redeemer, when that awful change approaches. Let us labour after such a firm establishment in Christ, such an unshaken affiance in his merits, and such an unfeigned love of his name, as may make it

gain to die, and the day of our dissolution better than the day of our nativity. Poor Dr. ——! Oh! may he and his afflicted partner find consolation in the faithfulness, the goodness, the unsearchable riches of Christ! These, apprehended by a sweet, assured, soul-reviving faith; these, I say, are our sovereign support under all troubles, and our most effectual preservative from all temptations. We believe; blessed blessed Jesus, help our unbelief! I am, my dear sir, ever yours, &c.

LETTER XCVI.

London, Mile's-lane, Dec. 3, 1751.

Dear Mr. Nixon,—It is probable you may have heard of my late dangerous sickness; and it is more than probable, nay, I look upon it as a certainty, that your good nature has admitted this circumstance as an excuse for my silence. Indeed, dear sir, I was sick, and nigh unto death. Little did I think of writing any more to my friends, or of being written any longer among the living. Oh that I may devote the life that has been prolonged, devote it wholly to the God of my health and my salvation!

I received by Dr. —— your quotation from Plato, proving that the preposition ἀντι bears a vicarious signification. For which be pleased to accept my thanks. It is a most reviving and delightful truth, that Christ has suffered in our stead, and bore all our sins in his own body on the tree. When I was lately upon the verge of eternity, and just going to launch into the invisible world, I could find consolation in nothing but this precious, precious faith. If all my iniquities were laid upon the beloved Son, they will never be laid to my charge in the day of judgment. If the blessed Jesus made full satisfaction for my transgressions, the righteous God will never demand two payments of one debt. What an anchor for the soul is such a belief! how sure, how steadfast! May it be our solace in life and our security in death!

A volume of letters, written by the Earl of Orrery to his son, has very much captivated the attention of the public. Dr. Brown's Remarks too upon Lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics are, I think, equally worthy of universal acceptance. It is a refined entertainment to peruse such elegant and judicious compositions; but how flat are they all, how jejune and spiritless, compared with the sincere milk of the word, the lively oracles of God. I hope they will always prove a whet to our spiritual appetite; quicken our desires, and heighten our relish of that heavenly manna which is spread over every page of the Bible. I am, dear sir, your very affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER XCVII.

London. Jan. 14, 1752.

My dear Friend,—I know you will excuse my long silence, and acquit me on the receipt of this letter, though I own myself in your debt for another. When I have a lucid or a lively interval, I think it my duty to employ it in attempting to finish my little work; which, alas! proceeds as slowly as my blood creeps heavily through my veins. Happy, happy they, who have firmness of nerve, and fertility of thought, and are enabled to devote them both to their gracious Redeemer's service.

Please to pay my best thanks to Dr. Cotton for his very delicate Visions. I wish they may do good, and promote virtue; then, I am persuaded, they will answer the benevolent intention of the author. I wish, at the same time, that he would be a little explicit and courageous for Jesus Christ. He deserves it at our hands, who for our sake endured the cross, and despised the shame: he will recompense it into our bosom by owning us before his Father and the holy angels. Nor can I ever think that the spread of our performances will be obstructed by pleasing him who has all hearts and all events in his sovereign hand. A vision upon death, without a display of Christ, seems to me like a body without a heart, or a heart without animal spirits. I am sure, when I was lately (as myself and every one apprehended) on the brink of eternity, I found no consolation but in Christ. Then I felt, what I had so often read, that there is no other name given under heaven whereby man may obtain life and salvation, but only the name, the precious and inestimable name of Jesus Christ. Oh! that its savour may be to us, both living and dying, "as ointment poured out."

Tell Mrs. ——, that she has not offended me; but I am grieved that I should give her occasion for such a suspicion.

You refer me to 2 Esdras v. 33. "And I said, speak on, my Lord; then said he unto me, thou art sore troubled in mind for Israel's sake: lovest thou that people better than he that made them?" It is a sweet passage, a noble and comfortable truth; and the apparent doctrine of Scripture, however found in an apocryphal book. Oh! that we may seek more assiduously to our all-condescending and omnipotent friend. He will never upbraid us for our importunity; he will never disappoint our hope; he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think; and, blessed for

ever be his name, as his power, so is his love to his people, his children, his heirs. In this blessed number may he rank my dear friend, and his ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER XCVIII.

Mile's-lane, March 24, 1752.

My dear Friend,—I received your favour. I congratulate you on your success in your profession. Moses says, "It is God who giveth power to get wealth." May such accessions of prosperity enlarge your heart with gratitude, and attach your affections to our divine benefactor! I am sorry to hear your account of dear ——. O that we may be taught φρονειν εις το σωφρονειν. "Lord lead me in a plain way," was the prayer of a noble sufferer. May the thing that he prayed for be the desire of our heart, and guide of our life.—I will very readily give him some Bibles; if he (for he is, if I mistake not, a member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) will send me an order in his name, a dozen shall be at his service. I shall think my own books are published to good purpose, if they enable the author to distribute the invaluable book of God.

Upon reflection, I charge myself with folly for putting it into Mr. ——'s power to communicate a certain rumour. The wise man says, humorously and sarcastically, "Venture to conceal a secret, and behold it will not burst thee." Intimating withal, that a secret in most people's breast is like fermenting liquor in a cask, which must have vent, or else it will burst the vessel. Therefore,

Quid de quoque viro, et cui dicas, sæpe caveto.

Mr. ———'s last piece I have not read through. I cannot say I am fond of that controversy. The doctrine of the perseverance of Christ's servants, Christ's children, Christ's spouse, and Christ's members, I am thoroughly persuaded of. Predestination and reprobation I think of with fear and trembling. And if I should attempt to study them, I would study them on my knees.

I wish you would ask Dr. S———'s opinion about Eph. iv. 16. with relation to the anatomical propriety of the passage; and, with his, give me your own, I know not what to do about publishing.—May the Father of lights direct me! and not suffer me, either to write improperly, or to print precipitately! With thanks for your letter, and with prayers for your increase in faith, in love, and holiness; or in that "kingdom of God, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," I am, ever yours, &c.

LETTER XCIX.

Mile's-lane, 1752.

Dear Mr. Nixon,—I am obliged to you for the favour done me by your letter, and for the honour done me by your verses to be engraved under my mezzotinto picture. I should have acknowledged both these obligations sooner, if my printseller had not been dilatory in publishing the picture; which is now transmitted to Dr. Stonehouse, and desires your acceptance.

I cannot forbear thinking that what is called honour is a little capricious and whimsical. I, for my part, had taken my final leave of her; expected none of her favours, and was become familiarly acquainted with contempt. How is it then that she singles out a person whose name has long ago been struck out of her list; and bestows her caresses upon a mean creature, that has been used to sit on the dunghill? Oh that it may be for the glory of Christ's grace, Christ's wisdom, Christ's power! May I serve to the Sun of Righteousness as a cloud is subservient to the sun in the firmament, which, though all-gloomy in itself, exhibits a rainbow; and thereby shows the world what beautiful colours are combined in that magnificent luminary.

You are pleased to inquire after my little work; dear sir, add to your kind inquiries a prayer to God, that it may be executed under the anointings of his spirit, and appear (if ever it appears) under the influence of his blessing. My late sickness laid an absolute embargo upon it for a considerable time; and has so shattered my feeble constitution, that I proceed like a vessel that has lost its rigging, and is full of leaks. However slowly I advance in this essay, may I grow daily in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and meet you, dear sir, in that happy, happy haven, where we both would be. Till then be pleased to rank in the number of your sincere and affectionate friends, your obliged humble servant, &c.

LETTER C.—To his Mother.

April 6.

Honoured Madam,—I received your favour of the 4th instant. Am very sorry to find my father is so ill. Hope and earnestly pray that the great eternal Lord of life and death will rebuke his disorder, and restore him to health. You need not doubt

of being remembered in my supplications to the throne of grace: O that they were better! O that they proceeded from firmer faith, and were accompanied with greater fervour? Poor and weak as they are, they are often put up in behalf of my honoured parents, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may strengthen them with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; may give them an humble resignation to his blessed will; enable them to rejoice even in their tribulations, and make all things work together for their good, their exceeding great and everlasting good.

I have, in obedience to your orders, put my affairs in readiness to leave the city; but hope there will be no occasion for such a speedy removal. But if I should come, alas! what can I do? My weakness is inconceivable. None can know it but the all-searching God. I am evidently worse, now the milder weather is advancing.

I am glad to hear my sister holds well. God always mingles our cup of affliction with some sweetening drops. None but Christ, that dear and adored Redeemer, none but Christ had gall without any honey, and vengeance without any mercy. Blessed be his most holy name for enduring all kind of misery, that we might want no manner of thing that is good. I am, &c.

LETTER CI.

Tottenham, Oct. 18, 1751.

Dear Sir,—What shall I say, or how shall I excuse myself? I seem to be in the condition of Pharaoh's butler, who remembered not his good friend Joseph, but forgat him. Yet be assured, dear sir, that I have not forgot your kindness; I have retained a warm sense of gratitude in my breast. The reason of my not acknowledging your favour sooner, was this,—I proposed to have transmitted my piece to your hands, (that part of it at least which was to be enriched with your own thoughts,) that it might have the advantage of your critical revisal, and judicious corrections.

But extreme weakness of body has retarded me in accomplishing, has almost rendered me incapable of prosecuting the work; to all which infirmities, the providence of our all-wise heavenly Father has been pleased to superadd a violent fever, which confined me for eight weeks, and brought me to the very brink of the grave. I beg of you, dear sir, to accept my best thanks for your letter, and its valuable contents; though late in their arrival, they are very sincere in their tender. I hope you will give me leave to be obliged to you for one favour more. If ever the Divine goodness shall enable me to complete my design, allow me to put it under your examination; I shall send it abroad into the world with much less trepidation, with much greater satisfaction, if it has undergone the scrutiny of your judgment, and received the correction of your pen. I am, at least I wish to be, sensible of my own incapacity for handling the glorious, the divinely excellent truths of God's everlasting gospel. If the apostle, who had been caught up into the third heaven, could not forbear crying out with so much vehemence, "Who is sufficient for these things?" what, O what shall I say! Indeed, I have much fear and trembling of heart, lest I should give some wrong touch to the ark; or by any imprudent, though officious kiss, betray my divine Master to his enemies, rather than recommend him to the world. Good sir, assist me with your prayers, that if I write, I may be anointed with that unction from the Holy One, which may teach me all things, and lead me into all truth, which may furnish me with the tongue of the learned, and give me the pen of a ready writer.

Have you seen Mr. Taylor's late Treatise on the Sacrifice and Atonement of Jesus Christ? If you have, I should be glad to know what remarks occurred to your mind on the perusal. As you are a lover of natural philosophy, I wish you would consider the blessing of Joseph, Deut. xxxiii. 13—16, and favour me with your sentiments upon that beautiful passage. I should not make either this or the preceding request, if I had not the highest opinion of the freedom and fidelity of your temper, and the accurate discernment of your understanding. As the blessed God has been pleased to deaden your sense of hearing, may he daily quicken your spiritual senses to discern both good and evil. May he give you to hear the sweet and still voice of his good Spirit witnessing with your spirit, that you are the child of God and an heir of glory! And would you implore the same blessing for your unworthy friend, it would be a kindness most gratefully to be acknowledged by, dear sir, your much obliged and affectionate servant, &c.

P.S.—We have put one of Mr. Moses Browne's children apprentice to a handsome business; and it will be a pleasure to do so worthy a man all the service that lies in my power.

LETTER CII.

London, Mile's-lane, Dec. 22, 1751.

Dear Sister,—Yesterday in the afternoon, Mr. —— and his mother called upon

me: he offered to convey a letter, or any message, to Weston. I could not neglect this opportunity of sending you my best wishes, and the congratulations of the season.

Please to thank my mother for her kind letter. The wine was to have come last week, but my brother forgot to give the necessary orders, until it was too late. I hope no such disappointment will happen, if we live to see the end of this week. I wish you much of the divine presence, and joy of the Lord in using it. May we all drink of those living waters which Christ Jesus has promised in his gospel, of which they who drink shall thirst no more; but they shall be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Pray let me know what those living waters mean?

I have no present to make you this Christmas, unless you will accept one from God's holy word. In the 9th chapter of Isaiah it is foretold, that poor sinners shall not only have a good hope, but shall even rejoice before God; rejoice with exceeding great joy; such as the husbandman feels, when he gathers in his harvest, and receives the reward of all his toil; such as the soldier experiences, when he has conquered his enemy, and is dividing the spoil.

What shall be the source of this joy? their worldly wealth? Alas, riches make themselves wings, and fly away. They profit not in the day of wrath.—Their carnal pleasures? These are always froth, and frequently gall. To be enamoured with these, is death.—Their own good deeds? These are a broken reed, a filthy rag; and should cover us with confusion, not fill us with conceit. Whence then is this joy to flow? From Christ, wholly from Christ: he is the rich gift of God, he is the pearl of great price; the only consolation of sinners, and the supreme joy of his people. Therefore the prophet adds, in the language of triumph and exultation, "To us a child is born; to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This Child is Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of all our comfort, the spring of all true delight. He is the Son of the Most High, yet given to be made man, to be made a sacrifice, to be made a curse, for us. So great, that the government of universal nature is upon his shoulder. The sceptre of supreme authority is in his hand; he is "Head over all things to his church." So glorious, that his name shall be called Wonderful. God and man in one matchless and marvellous person, clothed with clay, yet possessed of all the fulness of the Godhead: like Jacob's ladder; whose foot was fixed on earth, while the summit was lost in the skies. So gracious, that he is the Counsellor, to instruct ignorant creatures, and by his word and Spirit make them wise unto salvation. "The Mighty God;" to subdue our iniquities, to write his laws in our hearts, and make us partakers of a divine nature. "The Prince of Peace;" reconciling us to God by his death, and making peace by the blood of his cross; by applying these blessings to our consciences, filling us with that peace of God which passeth all understanding. "The Everlasting Father;" to cherish us under the wings of his providence and grace, to make all things work together for our good, and prepare for us an everlasting inheritance; even the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. O may the adorable Redeemer be all this to us! The prophet repeats this expression, *To us.* This circumstance is of the last importance. Then only is Christ our Fountain of life, and full of delights, when he is all this, does all this, to us, even to us.

Let this Scripture be the subject of our meditation amidst the approaching solemnity. And may an everlasting sense of its blessings give an additional, a heavenly relish to all our other entertainment! I am your affectionate brother, &c.

LETTER CIII.

DEAR SIR,—It is not the diffieulty of answering Dr. ——'s questions that makes me avoid it, but the disagreeable nature of the office; as it will oblige me to shew that he entirely mistakes both the nature of the Scriptures, and the nature of man. He would make Dr. ——'s and Dr. ——'s sentiment of things the touchstone of divine revelation. What is level to their apprehensions, must be right; what comports with their notions, must be true. At this rate, they are not doers of the law, but judges. On the contrary, if they do not understand the doctrine of union wi h Christ, or the fitness of free justification to promote holiness, it is because their understandings are darkened; it is a sign, that they want the eye-salve; a proof, that their senses are not exercised to discern between good and evil.

Dr. —— has Roman virtue; but indeed he very much wants the eye-salve. He sees no glory and comeliness in Christ, but much in his own conformity to the commands of his Maker. While such sentiments possess the mind, people have no eyes to discern the beauty of free grace. Christ is just as insignificant, as the physician's offering to prescribe for a person in

perfect health. I am sure, my poor, lame, mangled conformity to my Maker's commands, fills me with shame, and would make me hang down my head as a bulrush. But my Lord's death, my Lord's obedience, my divine Lord's merit, encourages me, imboldens me, and enables me to say, Who shall condemn me? Be pleased, by the bye, to compare Dr. ——'s foundation for comfort and confidence with St. Paul's, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Who is in the right I leave you to determine. I will only venture to assert, that Paul of Tarsus had as much conformity to the commands of his Maker as our amiable friend. Oh that he was less amiable in his own eyes; and knew himself to be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." See Rev. iii. 17.

1*st*, "A persuasion of our reconciliation to God, previous to our performance of holy duties." Dr. —— asks, what is the foundation of such a persuasion? To which I answer, the doctrine delivered by St. Paul, Rom. v. 10. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." From this passage he will see, that reconciliation to God is previous to our performance of holy duties. It is a blessing procured for enemies; and to say, that enemies have performed holy duties, is to confound the difference between rebels and subjects; is to make rebellion and allegiance the same. Nay, more, this blessing has no manner of dependence on our performance of holy duties, because it is procured, not partially, but wholly procured by the death of Christ. It is not said, when we, who were some time enemies, began to perform holy duties; but when we were enemies, while we were enemies, and considered only as enemies. Then, even then. —Wondrous grace! grace worthy of a God! Will not such grace incline the rebels to throw down their arms?

The Doctor, having laid down some premises, makes this inference: "Hence the phrase of our reconciliation to God, when we have renounced our sins." But does this inference tally with the apostle's declaration, or is it the proper consequence of his doctrine? Let not the acute disputant, but the wayfaring man, judge.

"Our blessed Saviour," adds the Doctor, "directly asserts, that the performance of religious duties is the sole evidence of reconciliation." We are not inquiring about the evidences of reconciliation, but about the way to acquire them. To determine what are the evidences of a cure, is easy enough; but to prescribe the expeditious and certain method of working the cure. this is the thing we want. Here, according to my poor opinion, Mr. Marshall excels as much in the spiritual, as Dr. —— in the animal *Therapeutica*.

The Doctor urges our Lord's words, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Wandering from the point again. The question is, How we shall be animated, strengthened, and enabled to do them?

Upon this subject reason tells us, that such a discharge of religious duties can alone convince a Christian of the sincerity of his profession. It may be so: but pray, Madam Reason, do not be impertinent, we did not ask your opinion upon the point; if you would speak to the purpose, you must tell us, how we may be enabled to discharge these religious duties. Does your ladyship know, which is the first religious duty? I question it; be content therefore, to receive information from Scripture: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." This is the first religious duty: now tell Dr. —— and me, tell us honestly and explicitly, how we can perform this duty? Is it possible to love the Lord, to love him with all our heart, if we look upon him as incensed against us, unreconciled to us? Is it possible to love him, when we apprehend ourselves to be under his wrath, or suspect that he will prove an enemy to us at the last?

The Doctor having a higher opinion of reason* than I, is a greater favourite with her; I would therefore beg to know of him, what reply she makes to this interrogatory; and I promise beforehand, that I will stand to her award, if she can point out any method of practising this duty, different from that proposed by Mr Marshall; then my favourite author and myself will submit to the charge of enthusiasm.

2*dly*, "A persuasion of our future enjoyment of the heavenly happiness, previous to our performance of holy duties."

I ask Mr. Hervey, "What is the foundation of such a persuasion?" Mr. Hervey answers, Our free justification through Jesus Christ, which we receive under the character of ungodly persons; consequently before the performance of good works, Rom. iv. 5. I answer again, The free promise of God: "God hath given unto us eternal life," 1 John v. 11. But is not this promise founded on our own duties and obedience? No; but on the duties and obedience of our great Mediator. "This life is in his Son."

In the first book of the sacred writings is this important interrogatory, made by God himself, "If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Here I beg leave to ask, in my turn, Which is the person who does well? Dr. ——, who would persuade us to reject the gift of God, 1 John v. 11. and not believe his word? or Mr.

* Reason, I mean, in her present fallen state.

Marshall, who would engage us to credit the divine declaration, and receive the divine gift? The apostle says, by not believing this record, "we make God a liar," 1 John v. 10. And shall we call this doing well? or is this the way to be accepted?

The Doctor farther urges, In the very last chapter of the same sacred volumes we are told, "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life." Let me ask again, Does the Doctor remember what the commandments of the Almighty are? He may see them reduced to two particulars, and ranged in the exactest order, 1 John iii. 23. The first of these commandments is, "That we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." Let the Doctor only interpret this precept, tell me what is included in this injunction, and I am inclined to think, he will find each of Mr. Marshall's preliminary articles contained in its import. To believe in Christ, is to live under a persuasion that he has died to reconcile me to God; that he has obeyed to obtain eternal life for me; and intercedes in heaven that I may receive the Holy Ghost the Comforter. Take away these ingredients from faith, and its spirit evaporates; its very life expires; you have nothing left but a mere *caput mortuum*.

The Doctor charges us "with spiritual pride." But is it pride to confess ourselves ungodly wretches, and, as such, to receive free justification from infinitely rich grace? "With presumption and unwarrantable persuasions." But is that a presumptuous claim, or that an unwarrantable persuasion, which is founded on the infallible promise of God, and implied in the very nature of faith? He bids us beware, lest we be the dupes of our own credulity. We thank him for the friendly admonition; and, to show our gratitude, we would suggest a caution to our worthy friend, that before he argues on a religious subject, he would gain clearer ideas of its nature. He talks of reconciliation, as implying concern and grief. Here he fights with a shadow, and a shadow of his own raising; no mortal ever affirmed or dreamed of any such thing. Reconciliation is neither more or less than a removal of offence, and a restoration to favour. He mentions Mr. Marshall's three propositions as the requisite signals of faith; whereas they are the constituent parts, the very essence of faith: they differ as much from a signal, as the florid blood and lively spirits differ from the bloom on the cheek, or the sparkle in the eye. He tells us, "That the faith of the Jews was one thing; but after our Saviour's death, the faith of the Gentiles was another." St. Paul, who was a Jew by birth, and an apostle of the Gentiles by office, tells us the very reverse. There is one faith, of which Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, was and is the invariable object. "To him give all the prophets," as well as all the apostles, "witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Believing in Christ, we see, is the one, constant, unalterable way, in which both Jews and Gentiles, the hearers of the prophets and the converts of the apostles, obtained pardon, life, and glory.

Had Dr. —— observed this caution, he would not have spent so many needless and random words on the third proposition, which proceed upon an absolute mistake of the point. "We advocates for self-sufficiency in man!" I wonder how the ingenious Doctor can entertain such a suspicion, especially as he knows we have subscribed, we believe, and we maintain the tenth article of our Church. He has blamed us for this belief; therefore he should, in all reason, blame himself for those extravagant excursions of his pen; which are just as far from sobriety and fact, as the Antipodes are from the latitude of London. Our maxim and Mr. Marshall's meaning is, Though less than nothing, though worse than nothing in ourselves, we can do all things through Christ's strengthening us. I am, &c.

LETTER CIV.

Saturday morning.

SHALL I beg you to tell Dr. ——, that his beautiful Visions* were, by Dodsley the bookseller, put into the hands of a very pious and ingenious friend of mine, who proposes an alteration in the ninth line of the sixty-ninth page of the fifth edition, where he would read Jesus instead of virtue.

> At that important hour of need,
> Jesus shall prove a friend indeed.

But I am not of his opinion, unless an uniform vein of evangelical doctrine had run through the whole. This, I must confess, I could have been glad to have seen in so elegant a poem, where Spenser's fancy, and Prior's ease, are united. And I hope if the Doctor should ever write any more poetry, he will take this important hint into his consideration. Indeed he ought; for even in his Vision on Death, he has not paid the least regard to Christ our Redeemer, the conqueror of death. I presume they sell according to our wishes. May they, under the blessing of a most

* See Letter XCVII.

gracious God, impart good to the world, and bring gain to the author!

If I mistake not, you are a subscribing member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; will you be so kind as to procure for me a dozen of Bibles, and a dozen of the Bishop of Man on the Lord's Supper? I give away this to communicants, because it has the communion-service in it; and because it is more evangelical, and less exceptionable than the generality of what are called preparations for, or companions at the sacrament; too many of which books, by long prayers for each day in the week, and by injudicious representations, have sometimes, I fear, a contrary effect to what was intended. I had once a design, nor have I wholly laid it aside, of extracting from Jenks' Office of Devotion, the few leaves he has there wrote so pathetically on the sacrament, and of printing them with the communion service, after the manner of the Bishop of Man; adding on the sides suitable observations of my own, to supply Jenks' deficiencies. I propose likewise to add what Marshall says on the subject, and insert from the Bishop of Man his short, yet striking meditations on some well-chosen texts of Scripture, which will be of service to every one; particularly to those who are unaccustomed to meditate, or have no talents for it, and consequently want such an assistance to employ the time while others are receiving the bread and wine. What says my *fidus Achates* to this? Give it a place in your thoughts; and however we may determine on this, let us determine to cleave more closely to the Lord, and wait upon our God continually. "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens." Let this be our pattern, and such our practice. To his tender care, and continual guidance, I commit you; and am cordially yours, &c.

LETTER CV.

London, Mile's-lane, April 9, 1752.

Dear Sir,—Soon after I received your last favour, we were visited by a very alarming providence: a fire broke out in a sugar-baker's workhouse, part of which communicated with my brother's house, and the whole was separated from us only by a court-yard, four or five yards in breadth. Three engines played from his house, and another stood ready in the dining room, in case of any unexpected exigency. We were all consternation and confusion; in the hurry, I mislaid, somewhere or other, your valuable letter, and cannot recover it by any search. I wish you would be so kind as to direct me once more to the Magazine in which your chronological observation is inserted. I shall be more particularly pleased to see difficulties of this nature cleared up; because the works of a very celebrated genius are lately published, in which he very much decries the chronology and history of the sacred Scriptures; I mean some posthumous volumes written by the late Lord Bolingbroke.

You will excuse me for not making my thankful acknowledgments sooner. The objections you started, and the answers you gave, were richly worth preserving; I am truly sorry that the afore-mentioned disaster has, I fear, deprived me of them. Have you no copy taken for your own satisfaction? With relation to my intended work, if it was in your hands, I believe you would not think it expedient to add any thing more of the argumentative kind. I fear I have been too prolix already; and if ever I should be so happy as to obtain your revisal of it, should be very desirous that you would make very free with the pruning-knife. I have no vindication, but some excuse for my delay in writing. I catched such a cold, on the late terrifying occasion, (being obliged to wade through water, in order to escape the fire), as confined me to my chamber several weeks. I mentioned to you Taylor's Treatise of Original Sin. As you have not seen the work, give me leave to transmit, as fully as I can recollect, one or two of his objections to the orthodox opinion. God is the Maker, the true and immediate Maker of all men, Job xxxi. 15. Now it is impossible that God should make our nature, and yet not make the qualities and propensities which it has when made. Therefore, whatever principles, or whatever seeds are implanted in our constitution, they cannot be principles of iniquity nor seeds of sin; because they are all infused and planted by our infinitely good and holy Creator. Such passions, appetites, propensities, cannot be sinful, because they are necessary and unavoidable, (and that cannot be sinful in me, which I can nowise avoid, help, or hinder), neither can they render us objects of God's wrath; for it is infinitely absurd, and highly dishonourable to God, to suppose he is displeased at us for what he himself has infused into our nature.

What says St. James? (James iii. 9.) "Therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God." The similitude of God signifies those moral endowments which distinguish the possessor, both from the brutes and the devils; and in this image, or vested with these qualifications, men are made. What then becomes of the doctrine of original sin?

St. Paul speaks of people that had their understanding darkened, that were alienated

in their minds, were haters of God, &c. But this is affirmed of the idolatrous heathen. The very Gentiles, according to St. Paul's account, "Shew the work of the law written on their hearts, their consciences meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Here then are Heathens who have the work of the law (not barely discerned by their understanding, but) written on their hearts; have both the knowledge and the love of its moral precepts; with an awakened tender conscience, ever ready to act the part of an impartial reprover, or a zealous advocate; and what higher character can you give of your first-rate believer? They are also said to "do by nature the things contained in the law;" an irrefragable proof that our nature is not so depraved in point of inclination, nor so disabled with regard to its executive powers, as the doctrine of original sin supposes.

Let me request the favour of your sentiments upon the preceding objections. Your ingenious remarks on Deut. xxxiii. 13, &c. I received; I prize, and I thank you for them. May the gracious God, for a recompense, lead you farther and farther into the unsearchable treasures of wisdom hid in the Scriptures, and fill you with all wisdom and spiritual understanding. I comfort myself in thinking, that you do not in your prayers forget, dear sir, your much obliged, and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CVI.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 14, 1752.

Reverend Sir,—Little did I think, when I recommended to the public the Observations on ——*, that I should be so agreeably and amply recompensed for my occasional note—recompensed with a letter from the author; which, I assure you, was extremely welcome, not only on account of the same strain of elegance which runs through and adorns your book, but for the tender which it brought me of a very valuable accession to the small number of my friends. Your friendship, dear sir, I accept as a privilege, and shall cultivate with delight. Only I must, in common justice, forewarn you of one particular, That your social intercourses with James Hervey, will be an exercise of charity, rather than an advantageous traffic to yourself. Besides other reasons which I might too truly allege for the support of this hint, a long continued habit of indisposition, and bodily weakness, has laid a heavy hand on my animal spirits, which (take my word for it, since I hope you will never know it by experience,) both cramps the exertion, and obstructs the improvement of the intellectual faculties. You remember, however, who has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" which, I think, will hold good when applied either to the treasures of the mind or the riches of fortune.

Your approbation of any thing in my slight remarks will give me singular satisfaction; yet I should be no less obliged for your free thoughts on what should have been added, expunged, or altered. Let this, dear sir, be the first fruits of our friendship. Point out my blemishes, and supply my defects. Applause may be more soothing to my vanity; but such kind corrections will be more pleasing to my judgment, and more serviceable to our common cause. It is scarce probable that a second edition should be published, as the first was numerous; but if there should be such a demand, I am sure your animadversions would enrich and ennoble it.

I thank you for your Reflections on the Scriptures, which are perfectly just, and peculiarly animated. I cannot but wish that the vindication of their dignity, and the display of their excellency, had fallen to your share. This, I trust, is a service reserved for your pen, to be drawn with ten-fold energy and success on some future occasion. And may you, when called to such an important work, be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use!"

I bless God for the just notions you form concerning the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of his enlightening influences; without which the Scriptures will be a sealed book, and even the word of life a dead letter. Men of superior abilities too often lean to their own understanding, and reject the guidance, the teachings, of the Holy Ghost; not because these are not mentioned, insisted upon, promised in the gospel; but because they fancy themselves capable of comprehending, without any supernatural aid, τα μεγαλεια τυ Θευ. But may we, sir, be sensible, ever sensible, that all our sufficiency is of God; and not blush to be the humble pupils of the heavenly teacher, who "hideth these things from the wise and prudent, but revealeth them unto babes." I am desirous of being taught by the labours of learned men; more desirous of being taught by the written word of revelation; but, amidst all, and above all, to be taught of God; or, as our Liturgy very boldly, but not improperly explains the prophet, "taught by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit."

I am pleased to hear from ——, that

* Probably the Observations on Tacitus commended by Mr. Hervey, in his Letter to a Lady of Quality.

you are situated near that worthy gentleman Dr. ———, whose works praise him in the gate; to whom belongs that noble character, "The liberal person deviseth liberal things;" to whom, I trust, will be made good that inestimable promise in its fullest extent, "By liberal things shall he stand." They shall be his witnesses at the day of eternal judgment, that his faith in Christ Jesus has neither been empty, barren, nor dead. When you have the pleasure of waiting on him, be so good as to present him with my most respectful compliments.

You are not under the least obligation to me, for bearing my testimony to your late performance. It is a debt which I owe, for the delight I received in perusing it. I wish it may soon come to a second edition; and, if my attestation to its merit is a means of introducing it into the hands of my readers, I do not doubt but it will do an honour to my taste. The present which you promise me will be very acceptable; but, my dear sir, if you have a family, or your circumstances should not be affluent, I beg you will not think of it. You see I follow your example, and speak, not as a new acquaintance, but as a bosom friend.

Should it ever be in my power to do you any service, I can suggest a method whereby you might repay, more than repay the favour. That is, by taking the trouble of revising a little work which I have upon the anvil, and bestowing upon it your free remarks. A few touches from your pen would, if the thing be not incorrigibly bad, very much improve it. Had I not seen a display of your judgment and delicacy in the Observations, &c. I should not have asked such an instance of your friendship; whereas now I cannot but earnestly desire it, shall highly esteem it, and shall very thankfully acknowledge it.

"Not by might, nor by strength, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." And we may truly say, not by polished diction, or brilliant sentiment; not by the arts of persuasion, or the force of reasoning; but by God Almighty's blessing, our attempts are prevalent, and our books successful. This is my comfort, and this my confidence:—as an author, I would aim, singly aim, at the glory of my Divine Master, and the furtherance of his everlasting gospel. Then I would resign the issue of my endeavours wholly to his providence and grace, who can, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, perfect his praise. Nevertheless, I would by no means neglect the recommendations of a graceful composition. I would be glad to have the apples of gold, which are the truths of our holy religion, conveyed or set in pictures of silver. For this we have the genius of human nature, which, generally speaking, must be pleased, in order to be profited. For this we have the precedent of the wisest of men, who "sought and found out acceptable words," even when that which was written was the truth of God. If it is consistent with your other engagements to oblige me in this very substantial manner, ——, who undertakes to transmit this letter, has promised to convey a little parcel to your hands.

I wish you, sir, what the eloquent apostle styles, (Col. ii. 2.) "the riches of the full assurance of understanding;" and, turning my wishes into prayers, take my leave, and profess myself, reverend sir, your truly affectionate friend and brother, &c.

LETTER CVII.

My dear Friend,—The apostle warns us not to be "carried about with every wind of doctrine." I think Marshall has answered great part of Dr. ——'s letter (see pages 96, 97 of the 8vo edition). Pray desire Dr. ———, at his leisure, to show wherein he suspects Marshall to be unscriptural. You may depend upon it, I shall appeal from the Doctor's determination, unless he supports it by Scripture. The poor and unlearned generally understand the gospel better than the accomplished scholars; because it pleases God, by the foolishness (see 1 Cor. i. 21.) of preaching, to save them that believe. God long ago foretold, that but few would understand and receive evangelical truth: "Who hath believed our report?" says Isaiah: Very, very few. To this St. Paul adds; "Not many wise, not many mighty are called." The attributes of the Deity will stand clear from all just impeachment, if we demonstrate that his doctrine is most excellently calculated to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour, and promote filial obedience. Let the objections and misapprehensions of such learned and ingenious men teach us to distrust our own ability; not to lean to our own understandings, but seek more earnestly for the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Dr. ——— thinks the doctrine delivered in Marshall's book to be inconsistent with Scripture, and repugnant to reason: whereas I think it contains the very marrow of Scripture; consequently, is reason in its highest refinement. I daily experience it to be the medicine of my better life, or the most sovereign means to comfort the conscience and purify the heart. If the Doctor had leisure, I should be glad to hear what a person of his fine sense and keen discernment could say against my favourite author.

Have you any author of eloquence and spirit who has written either a treatise or

sermon on the subject of true holiness, its nature, its necessity, its excellency? If you could furnish me with such a treatise, I would endeavour to put his displays of holiness into Theron's mouth, and Aspasio should show the manner of acting, all on evangelical principles. Has Atterbury said any thing of this kind, or Foster in his sermons? I wish you would search your own stock of ideas. Search your most admired Arminian writers, and produce the noble qualities, the important duties, which constitute the dignity or the happiness of our nature; and I will undertake, I will attempt at least, to point out the expeditious and easy way to them, all on Mr. Marshall's plan.

The Doctor is strangely vague in his argumentation. On the two first topics he does little else but ramble; the last he absolutely mistakes. I do not affirm that we have sufficient strength. I wonder how he could suppose this, when he knows it is our persuasion that we have not power so much as cordially to will that which is good. But a persuasion that God will give us sufficient strength, this is the point we plead for, the privilege to which we stand entitled by the gospel.

You forgot, my dear friend, to send me Jennings on Original Sin. If you think Mrs. —— is in want, I will very willingly give her two guineas. Who would not give away their superfluities for his sake who gave his very life for our sins? O that I had also strength of body, that I might spend what is more valuable than gold in his sacred service! But forbear, my soul: his will be done. I hope God may incline your heart to review those manuscripts, and strengthen your judgment to discern their improprieties. I really have no fondness to appear again in print; I had much rather decline what requires any labour of the brain. But since I have proceeded so far in the work, since there is some expectation of it, and many prayers put up for it, I cannot be easy when I offer to discontinue it. Do, my dear friend, give me a little of your time, take some pains in my behalf; it is the last trouble of this kind I shall ever give you. For should this piece be finished, never, never will I attempt another. Who knows, but if you help me in this work, I may converse with you when I am dead; and perhaps a very weak hint from the pen of an old friend may be blessed to your comfort, when he is gone hence, and no more seen! Till then, after then, and for ever, I hope to be affectionately yours, &c.

P. S.—Pray let me hear the issue of your interview with the gentleman. I hope the God of wisdom and of power will give you an irreproachable conduct, and a decent boldness. Why should we be "afraid of man that shall die, and the son of man that shall be as grass; and forget the Lord our Maker, who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth?" Fear not; you have done nothing in this whole affair but what, I am verily persuaded, is pleasing to him whose loving-kindness is better than life.

Oh that it was worth your while to wish, and that it was safe for me to grant, an absolution of my sentence against you; but you must not come to hear me so long as the small-pox is in your town, as many of my people will be terrified at your presence. I will tell you one good thing that was in our sermon last Sunday: this portion of Scripture, viz. "With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption," Psalm cxxx. 7. And this, all this is for you, my dear friend, and for thee, my sinful soul. O let us receive the blessings; let us embrace the blessings! For it is our gracious Master's will, by these sweet, inviting, generous methods, to win us from a deluding world, and win us to his blessed self.—Adieu.

LETTER CVIII.

Dear Sir,—My poor father is in some respects better, but he is as weak and helpless as ever. Most of his time passes in a kind of dosing sleep. He has no inclination to talk; takes little notice of persons or things. I hope his great work is done, his interest in Christ secured, and his soul sanctified by grace. For indeed, such a state of languishing is as unfit to work out salvation, and lay hold on eternal life, as to grind at the mill, or to run a race. Oh that we all may give diligent attention to the things which belong to our peace, before the inability of sickness, and the night of death approaches. I sent for the poem on Sickness, by Mr. Thomson of Queen's College, Oxford, and was surprised to find it a four-shilling and sixpenny piece. It is, I think, a loose and rambling performance; some good lines, but a great deal of it nothing at all to the purpose; not comparable, in point of elegance, propriety, and beauty, to his Hymn on May. However, I would not have it depreciated, methinks, because it speaks worthily of the Christian religion, and the Rock of our hopes, Christ Jesus.—Adieu, my dear friend, ever yours, &c.

LETTER CIX.

Dear Sister,—I hope this will find my father better. I heartily wish, and daily

pray that the God of everlasting compassions may comfort him under his sorrows, may sanctify his afflictions, and restore him to his health, that he may recover more spiritual strength before he goes hence, and is no more seen.

I sent my brother some books, and humbly beseech the Giver of every good gift to accompany them with his heavenly blessing; for what he blesses is blessed indeed.

I could be truly glad to hear your complaints are removed; but if they continue, do not be discouraged. "Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth." God had but one Son without sin, but none without sufferings. Oh that his infinite goodness may sanctify your tribulations, that they may be a means of weaning you from the world, and bringing you to Jesus Christ! Then you will one day say with the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."—I am, &c.

LETTER CX.

Dear Sir,—Your observations are perfectly just, and Dr. Doddridge's remarks are admirably judicious; his alterations are indeed excellent and charming. Oh, may they be equally impressive on me as I transcribe them, and on all that may hereafter read them! Many most solid and valuable corrections has the Doctor already made in my little piece, but, in my opinion, these are beyond them all. I cannot but wish he had leisure to have went through the whole with his improving strokes; but, as the business of his academy and ministry is so various, and so important, I cannot prevail with myself to make such a request. I will try, and do the best I can to proceed on the plan which he has formed, and to follow *(magno licet intervallo)* the example he has set. Be so good as to make my most grateful acknowledgments: Let your tongue speak, for really my pen cannot write, how greatly I am obliged to him. I will venture to turn, what was used formerly as an imprecation, into a wish and a blessing on this occasion, "May God do so to him, and more also!"

Oh that our writings may be accompanied with the blessed Spirit; and that the spirit of our writings may be operative on our hearts, and apparent in our conversation.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CXI.

Mile's-lane, Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—If I am tolerably well, I will wait upon Dr. C—— on Tuesday morning. He has a delicate genius, and I dare say he is an excellent physician. O that his fine parts may be grafted into the true olive tree, and bring forth fruit unto God. If Providence permits us to meet, I hope to have some evangelical discourse with him.

Sure you could not go to London without putting to your heart some of your own important questions, under the heads of self-examination. Have you indulged yourself in needless amusements, needless diversions of any kind? Have you employed your time usefully to yourself or to others? My dearest friend, remember in what book, by whose hands, several such like questions are written! I fear you have not so much as spoke one word for Christ since you have entered the metropolis, though you must have had so many opportunities. O why do you thus bury your sprightly talents in a napkin? Edify your neighbours by your conversation. What a loss has Mr. —— and Mr. ——, and others of your correspondents, sustained by your forgetting or disusing the language of Zion? I have lately purchased Lowman's Exposition of the Revelation. Give me leave to refer you to the fifth verse of the second chapter, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and do thy first works." Pray lend me Lowman on the Civil Government of the Hebrews, which I hear is a most excellent book, and illustrates many obscure passages in the Bible.

Do you keep a diary as you used to do, a secret history of your heart and conduct, and take notice of the manner in which your time is spent, and of the strain which runs through your discourse? Do you minute down your sins of omission as well as of commission, and observe the frame of your spirit in religious duties? Do you register your most secret faults; those faults to which none but your own conscience is privy, none but the all-seeing eye discerns? And do you often review these interesting memoirs? remembering, at the same time, that for all these things God will one day call you into judgment. Keeping a diary is the way to know ourselves, and of all other preparatives it best disposes us to prayer, and to seek in earnest after that blessed Redeemer who died to save sinners, and through whom alone we can ever expect to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Adieu, my dear friend. God in heaven bless and protect you! I hope to see you ere long; and am, in the mean time, with true regard, yours faithfully and affectionately, &c.

LETTER CXII.

Weston, Feb. 3, 1753.

DEAR SIR,—I am greatly obliged for your repeated favours, and truly sensible of my obligations. I have not acknowledged them so punctually as I ought; but I hope you will excuse this neglect, and ascribe it to the real cause, ill health and weak spirits, which cramp my mind, unnerve my hand, and make me trespass upon the candour of all my correspondents. Why did I say hope? I see you do excuse me. Of this your last letter, transmitted to Mr. Moses Browne, is a clear and pleasing proof, which I safely received, and for which I sincerely thank you; as I bless the God of grace, and the God of wisdom, for giving you so friendly a temper, and so discerning a judgment.

The little piece* which you have so judiciously retouched and improved, was not written for public view; but I thought, after frequent prayer to God for direction, and attending to the workings of his Providence, it was his will that it should be published. I was sensible of its many defects, but upon his Almighty power I depend for its usefulness; he can bid even a worm thresh the mountains, and make his strength perfect, illustrious, triumphant, in the most abject weakness. Blessed be his holy name, that the servants of Jesus Christ, and the advocates for his sacred cause, have such an arm to rely on. If another edition should be required, I will take leave to enrich my piece with your remarks; and let me beg of you to favour me with your opinion in relation to some additions which I have occasionally penned. Page 111, after line 22, add,—But what shall we say to a mistake in the sacred chronology; a palpable mistake pointed out by his lordship, proved to be such by the testimony of profane history —Samaria said to be taken by the king of Assyria, twelve years after the Assyrian empire was no more? For my own part, I make neither hesitation nor scruple to reply, If Isaiah and Herodotus† vary; if the authors of the Kings, the Chronicles, and several of the prophets, differ from the Greek historians, I am under no difficulty in settling my judgment and taking my side. When profane writers agree with the sacred, I admit both accounts; when they disagree, I reject the former, and acquiesce in the latter. Nor can I tax myself with any thing unreasonable or arbitrary in this proceeding; for surely those writers who are able to foretell future events, must deserve the preference in relating past. Those witnesses who dwelt on the spot, and were personally concerned in affairs, are more to be relied on than those who lived in a distant country, and wrote in a distant age. With regard to the case specified by my Lord Bolingbroke, I believe the attentive reader will find the error, not in the sacred chronology, but in his lordship's apprehension. The kingdom of Assyria was not at that period no more; but, like the Irish or Scotch crown to the English, united to the Babylonian; of which, when the holy writers treat, they call it sometimes by one name, and sometimes by the other.

Page 15, after established, insert, "If Isaiah speaks by divine inspiration, when he says of the formidable Sennacherib, The Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to the slaughter of Midian; surely that memorable defeat, recorded in the book of Judges, must be an undoubted fact. Could the Spirit, which is infallible, give such a sanction to a story which was fictitious?" When the same Isaiah prays in that elevated and ardent strain, "Awake, awake; put on strength, O arm of the Lord! awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old! Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it, which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep? that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" can we reasonably imagine, that the prophet would plead lying vanities before the God of truth; that he would ground his own and his countrymen's faith on a popular romance; or on what my lord calls, "a purely human, and therefore fallible," narrative?

Does not the blessed Jesus describe the manner, and illustrate the efficacy of his own death, by the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, and its all-healing virtue on the wounded Israelites? Does not the holy apostle enumerate several of the most wonderful miracles, wrought for the deliverance, the preservation, the chastisement of Israel, and from these occurrences deduce the most important admonitions, urge the most forcible exhortations? Such references, made by such persons, not only suppose, but prove more than bare illusions; they are also ratifications; and demonstrate with an evidence, clear as the wisdom, firm as the faithfulness of an incarnate God, that the writers of these accounts have neither deceived us nor were deceived themselves. Should it be said, that these passages are chiefly in the Mosaical history, and therefore give no authority to the other historical memoirs; I would ask, Does not St. Paul (Rom. ii. 23,) quote a passage from the book of Kings? Does he not build upon the passage as a sure and indubitable truth? Does he not dignify the book with

* This little piece was, Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the History of the Old Testament, in a Letter to a Lady of Quality.

† Herodotus does not differ from the prophet Isaiah and the Scripture account of the empire of Assyria; it is Cresias and Justin that vary from it.

what I may term the incommunicable character in writing; and style it, by way of superlative eminence, the Scripture? Is it not undeniably certain, that the Jewish youths, and Timothy among the rest, were instructed in the historical as well as the prophetical volumes of the Old Testament? Does not the best of judges recommend all those volumes to our highest estimation, by pronouncing them holy writings? Does he not clearly manifest their divine extract, when he so nobly displays their divine effects; they "are able to make thee wise to salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ?" What then shall we think of Lord Bolingbroke's declaration, which I could not read without grief, and cannot transcribe without horror: "The Bible history appears to every one, who reads it without prepossession, and with attention, to be nothing more than a compilation of old traditions, and an abridgment of old records." In short, my lady, the doctrinal and historical parts are indissolubly, &c.

Page 20, line 18, after the word "vigilance;" and instead of the eight following lines, insert, The number of whose verses, especially in the Pentateuch, was computed; and the arrangement of the very letters, for the space of many centuries, known; whether, before the coming of Christ, the spirit of prophecy, which confessedly existed in the Jewish Church, was not sufficient to prevent, or else sure to detect, any corrupt innovations; whether, after the coming of Christ, the jealous eye which the Jews and Christians had on each other, was not an insurmountable bar against any material alterations.

Page 21, line 2, after "composition," add, "Though we should rescue our sacred books from the imputation of spurious additions, this will not, with my lord at least, either establish or retrieve their character." They contain, he says, a very imperfect account of the Israelites themselves, of their settlements in the land of Canaan, of which, by the way, they never had entire, and scarce ever peaceable possession. The sacred narrative is a summary account of the Jewish affairs; but is it therefore to be censured as an imperfect account? It is an epitome, rather than a complete history; but has it not all the qualities of a perfect epitome? Those particular facts are selected which have a more especial reference to the interests of religion and the kingdom of the Messiah; in which the Divine Providence is most eminently conspicuous, and from which mankind may be most effectually edified. Instead of finding fault with the writers for not being copious, when their professed aim was to be concise, a true critic would rather admire the felicity of their narration; which, though a foreign history of the remotest antiquity, relating to a people of the most singular manners and peculiar customs, expressed in an absolute dead language, and comprised in the shortest compass, is nevertheless so clear, so intelligible, and so very satisfactory.

But they contain a very imperfect account of the Israelitish settlement in Canaan. Is it possible for a person who has read the book of Joshua to advance such a position? Was ever any thing of the kind described more minutely or with greater accuracy? Here we have the general distribution of the land, and the extent of each particular allotment. The borders of the several divisions are marked out as with a line, and the cities in the several cantons mentioned by name. In short, this whole transaction is so circumstantially displayed, that some readers, agreeing with my lord in their disaffection to the Bible, but diametrically opposite in their taste of literature, have thought it particularized even to tediousness. However, this particularity of description was highly expedient, not only to supersede any such objection as his lordship has raised, but also to ascertain, by an unalterable standard, the boundaries of the tribes; to prevent any encroachments upon the inheritance of each other; and to demonstrate the wonderful agreement between the ancient prediction of Jacob, the more recent prophecy of Moses, and the situation, the limits, the produce of the territories respectively assigned to the patriarchal families. Jacob foretold, that Zebulon should dwell at the haven of the sea, whose portion actually lay on either side of the sea of Galilee, and extended to the Mediterranean. Moses foretold, that the Lord should dwell between Benjamin's shoulders, or the temple be placed at the extremity of his borders. But I would refer my reader to Gen. xlix. and Deut. xxxiii. in which chapters, compared with the distinguishing circumstances of the several tribes, he will discern a most surprising spirit of prophecy, planning out with precision what was afterwards determined by lot, and foreshowing with exactness what was not come into existence.

The Israelites, it is added, never had entire, and scarce ever peaceable possession of the land. This, my lord imagines, must imply an inconsistency between the divine promise and the issue of things; therefore, to animadvert upon it, he digresses from his subject. But how will his lordship's animadversion comport with the testimony of Joshua? Just as well as light consists with darkness. The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that

he sware unto their fathers; Joshua xxi. 43, 44. Is it not demonstrable from Joshua's topographical draught of the country, and from the habitations allotted to the several tribes, that they possessed the bulk of the land? What little remained in the occupation of the Canaanites, bore no more proportion to the heritage of Israel, than the addition of a fringe, or the insertion of a loop, bears to the whole dimensions of the garment. That they possessed all this and that they possessed no more, were circumstances equally consonant to the prophetic declarations of Scripture. The one a punctual execution of the minatory; the other an evident accomplishment of the promissory. He that said to their pious progenitor, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever," Gen. xiii. 14, 15; for ever, is evidently promised on condition of their obedience; whereas, in case of disobedience, the very reverse is threatened, Deut. iv. 25, 26.; the same said unto their degenerate offspring, "Else if you do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you; know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you," Joshua xxiii. 12, 13. My lord must forget this last particular, or neglect to compare it with the preceding; otherwise he would have seen, in these prophecies and their corresponding events, a signal manifestation of God Almighty's goodness, justice, and faithfulness; goodness, in giving what he gave; justice, in withholding what he withheld; and faithfulness in both dispensations.

As for peaceable possession, we have already heard the witness of Joshua; a very sufficient witness, one would presume, as he was generalissimo of the Jewish forces, and superintendant-general of the affair. However, let us search the records of the nation: here we meet with long periods of peace, under the government of their first illustrious commander, and under the subsequent administration of their judges; "The land had rest from war," Joshua xiv. 15. "The land had rest forty years," Judges iii. 11; "The land had rest eighty years," Judges iii. 30. We find the same face of public repose in the reigns of David and Solomon, Asa and Jehosophat; and not of one only, but of every righteous and religious king; or, if peace departed for a season, victory supplied its place, and success crowned their arms. The blessing of national tranquillity was never promised to the Israelites absolutely, but upon condition of fidelity to their Almighty Sovereign. Whenever they were entitled to it, by virtue of this promise, and their corresponding obedience, they never failed to enjoy it. Whenever they forfeited their title, either by revolting to idolatry, or confiding in idolaters, they were constantly punished with intestine commotions or foreign invasion. What shall we infer from hence? a conclusion any way prejudicial to the sacred annals? No; but greatly to their glory. From hence it appears, that they are indeed the annals of heaven: A register, not merely of political conduct, but of divine dispensations: The awful and important memoirs of a real Theocracy, in which, according to the emphatical language of Isaiah, "the Lord was their Judge, the Lord was their Lawgiver, the Lord was their King."

But these facts, my lord complains, are related in a confused manner. To which I can answer, We have each reign in the proper order of time. The parentage of the sovereign is specified, and his general character given. We are informed at what age he ascended the throne, and how long he swayed the sceptre; who were the eminent persons, and what the remarkable incidents, which distinguished his government; how he died, and where he was buried. Is this confusion? where then shall we look for regular arrangement? Perhaps his lordship means the interchangeable narration of occurrences in the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. This, I own, is observed in the latter parts of the sacred history. But this can no more be called confusion, than the disposition or varying colours in some beautiful piece of mosaic can be called irregularity. It is rather a fine contrast, or that pleasing diversification in the series of historical writing, which my lord's poetical friend so justly admires in the decorations of a rural seat:—

> Here order in variety you see,
> Where all things differ, and yet all agree.—POPE.

Page 61, to line 19, suppose I subjoin the following note: "Joshua and Samuel wrought miracles: Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold future events. Though it is not absolutely certain that all the sacred historians were prophets, yet it is highly probable, from 1 Chron. xxix. 29. This, however, is unquestionable, that their writings were reviewed and approved by men of prophetical gifts; and the approbation of such judges must give a sanction, little inferior to the authority which their own compositions would claim."

Page 71, at the top of the page, add, My lord tells us, "That the Scripture history contains an account of the divisions and apostasies, the repentances and relapses, triumphs and defeats of the Israelites, under the occasional government of their

judges, and under that of their kings, and of the Galilean and Samaritan captivity." Whether this is mentioned by way of derogation, let the judicious reader determine. I would beg leave to observe, that these occurrences, related in the scriptural manner, with a continual regard to the superintending hand of Providence, are some of the most weighty and interesting materials that can enrich the historical page. None so well calculated to teach nations, to admonish kings, and improve posterity. His lordship might have said, with the utmost veracity; and, I think, in common justice he ought to have said, They contained also the most unparalleled instances of national success and personal achievements; the most beautiful and affecting pictures of virtue, delineated through all its branches, in a multiplicity of living characters; than which nothing can be better accommodated to excite the attention, and charm the imagination; to touch the heart, and impress the passions; to inflame them with the love, and mould them into the image of universal holiness.

Here we behold a people always destitute of cavalry, the main strength of the battle; yet always a match, and more than a match, for their most powerful adversaries, so long as they maintained a dutiful reliance on their God: A people, who left their frontiers naked and defenceless at three stated solemnities in every year; yet never were invaded at this critical juncture by their most vigilant enemies, so long as they persisted in obedience to their almighty Protector: A people, whose very land, as well as its inhabitants, was wonderful—both the scene and the subject of miracles; for, after five years unintermitted tillage, (which one would imagine should have exhausted its prolific powers), it yielded constantly a double increase, in order to supply the demands of the succeeding year; when, by the Divine appointment, all was to lie fallow and uncultivated. Here we behold men of such singular and exalted piety, that they walked with God, and were translated into the realms of glory without passing through the gates of death: Men of such undaunted courage, that they have rebuked princes, confronted angry monarchs, and smiled at the severest menaces of a tyrant, whose bare frown has made the world to tremble: Men of such heroic abilities, that one of them has slain hundreds; another of them has put his thousands to flight;-and both by the most contemptible weapons; a third, without any weapon, has given chase to the roaring lion, and the raging bear; and rent them to pieces, or smitten them to the earth: Men, that have been empowered to shut or open the sluices of the sky; have commanded the ground to expand her horrid jaws, and swallow up the living; or bid the grave unlock her adamantine doors, and restore the dead: Men, who have walked amidst the burning fiery furnace, as composed in their spirits, and as secure in their persons, as if they had been taking the air in some calm, sequestered, shady bower. In a word, here is a detail of such marvellous things, as no eye hath seen performed in any other nation under heaven; no ear has heard related by any other annalist or biographer whatever; and, though they are the very sanctity of truth, yet such as never entered into the imagination, even of romance itself, to conceive. "Ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth; and ask from one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as these great things are, or hath been heard like them," Deut. iv. 32. This, though spoken of the miracles wrought in Egypt, and the wonders manifested in the wilderness, is applicable to almost the whole tenor of the scriptural history. My remarks, &c.

Your opinion with relation to the preceding paragraphs will be received as a favour, and attended, I hope, with a blessing. I find I am blamed for animadverting on his lordship's style, (page 36.) for not giving his lordship the title of Noble, not treating him with a respect due to his dignity. I have trespassed, it is farther alleged, against the rules of candour and benevolence, page 33, 34, and page 86. I know you have a large share of patience; may the Lord Jesus (of whose fulness his saints receive even grace for grace) multiply upon you, both this, and every other fruit of the Spirit! Pray, what do you apprehend to be the precise meaning of St. Paul's expression, Rom. i. 17. "From faith to faith," as it is translated?

I should be much obliged if you would let me know, what are some of the most valuable books which you have met with on various subjects of importance? what little treatise is most proper to put into the hands of illiterate people? what are some of the most judicious and improving compositions in biography? what the most sound and weighty authors, that might be recommended to a young student in divinity? You see I am always in the begging strain; the language of my letters is like the horse-leech's two daughters, Give! give! All I can do by way of return is, to beseech the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God, to give you all spiritual blessings in heavenly things. To do this, with all the ability which God shall bestow, will be as truly pleasing to, as it is justly due from, dear sir, your much obliged, and very affectionate friend

LETTER CXIII.

Weston-Favell. May 19, 1753.

Dear Sir,—I have lately been somewhat busied in preparing a sermon to be preached before the clergy, at our archdeacon's visitation; and to my weak nerves and languid spirits a little business is a toil. A commentator, with whom I wish you may long be unacquainted, has taught me the meaning of Solomon's description, "The grasshopper shall be a burden."

This, I hope, will apologize for my delay in answering more fully your last very obliging favour. More fully, I say, because, in a former letter, I acknowledged the receipt of a parcel with your remarks. Let me once more, dear sir, return my sincerest thanks for those judicious and delicate observations. They are so valuable, that I cannot but be very desirous to have the other parts of my proposed work undergo the same scrutiny, and receive a polish from the same hand. If this kind office will not too much interrupt your own studies, give me a permission to send another packet; and withal a direction, how I shall transmit it to you most expeditiously.

You will easily perceive, from several hints, perhaps from the whole tenor of my writings, that your new friend is what people would call a moderate Calvinist. Your sentiments, in some particulars, may differ from mine. Freely object wherever this is the case: I assure you I can bear, I shall delight, to have my notions sifted; nor am I so attached to any favourite scheme but I can readily relinquish it, when Scripture and reason convince me it is wrong. When I see wise and learned men forming opinions different from mine, I hope it will make me diffident of my own judgment; teach me "not to lean to my own understanding;" and prompt me to apply more earnestly for that blessed Spirit, whose office it is "to lead into all truth."

I shall be glad to hear that the work you have in hand is going on with expedition. What a privilege will it be, and what a distinguishing favour, if the great eternal God vouchsafes to make use of our pens to bring any glory to his name, or impart any spiritual good to his people! To no occasion is the wise man's exhortation more applicable: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." I have a treatise entitled, Dr. Hildrop's Husbandman's Spiritual Companion; but never read a page in it, nor ever heard a character of it. I have a discourse upon the same subject amongst the writings of Mr Flavel: it is a long time since I saw it, and then I only dipped into it, so that I cannot pretend to give a character of it; only I think, in general, that Flavel abounds with fine sentiments, exalted piety; and his language, for the most part, is expressive and beautiful.

Possibly you will wonder that I should have had the treatise you inquire after so long, and not have perused a single page of the book; and you justly might, in case I had bought it: but it came to me by inheritance. My study is composed of the books that were collected by my grandfather; among which [illegible] tudes that I shall continue long as I live, though they [illegible] at my right hand and my left every day. I want to be better acquainted with God's holy word; to have its inestimable truths lodged in my memory, its heavenly doctrines impressed upon my heart; that my tempers may take their fashion from it, that my private conversation may be seasoned with it, and my public ministrations enriched by it. Thus, dear sir, may the word of Christ dwell in us richly!

Will you give me leave to lay before you a plan of the work? (part of which has already received, and the remainder humbly requests your improving touches): viz. Sincere obedience not sufficient for our justification. The design of God's law, to convince of sin, and bring to Christ. Some farther objections urged and answered:* the whole summed up. Our friends part, but agree to correspond. Theron, more attentively observing his heart and life, is convinced of his guilty state; and begins to see the necessity of a better righteousness than his own; desires to see what can be alleged in support of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. This occasions some letters from Aspasio, wherein the point is proved from the Articles and Homilies of our Church; from the writings of our most eminent divines; from the Old and New Testament. The excellency of this righteousness displayed, both from its matchless perfection and the dignity of the Author. A letter or two from Theron, by way of carrying on the epistolary intercourse, relating to the wonders of creation, as they appear both in the sea and on the land; chiefly calculated to manifest the goodness of the Creator, not without a view to the main subject. The influence of this righteousness on moral virtue and evangelical holiness. Our friends brought together again. Theron under discouraging apprehensions. The freeness of grace, and of the gift of righteousness. Discourse on faith, by which we are united to Christ, and

* See page 847.

interested in his righteousness. The noble, beneficial, and delightful use to be made of this doctrine. Theron relapses into sins of infirmity; his faith shaken; supports proper for such a state. Sanctification; its nature, its principles, its progress. Aspasio seized with a sudden and fatal illness; his sentiments and behaviour in his last moments. These, dear sir, are the stamina of my intended piece. Oh that he, who educes so many millions of elegant leaves, lovely flowers, and graceful plants, from the seeds of spring, may enable this enfeebled hand to dilate, fill up, and finish the whole!

As soon as I conclude this epistle, I write to a very ingenious friend of yours; with whom, several years ago, I had begun to form an acquaintance; but my departure from Oxford, and other accidents, interrupted the intercourse for several years; and I was informed, to my unfeigned sorrow, that Mr. —— was dead. But a letter lately received from him most agreeably undeceived me, and brought a very welcome overture for a renewal of our correspondence. God Almighty grant, that all our social communication may be a happy means, not only of cherishing our affection, and refining our taste, but also of quickening our love to the blessed Jesus, and animating our zeal for his sacred interests; or, as the apostle expresses my wish, with an energy which no language but his own can reach, that they may be subservient and effectual εις παροξυσμον αγαπης και καλων εργων.

One or two articles I forgot, in exhibiting to you my plan. But this* will direct where they are to be introduced. "The corruption of our nature demonstrated, first from Scripture, then from experience. Between which, to relieve or entertain the reader, is inserted a dialogue on the admirable formation and economy of the human body." The visitation sermon I mentioned in the beginning, though perfectly plain and artless, is in the press. It will wait upon you in the next parcel, as soon as I have the favour of your answer. It is printed for the relief of a poor afflicted child, as a short advertisement will inform the world. The person to whose management it is consigned, informs me, that he has given orders for an impression of two thousand, besides a hundred and fifty which I have bespoke for myself. Would this circumstance recommend it to your beneficent and worthy friend Dr. ——? I may now no longer look upon it as a discourse delivered by me, but as an agent for the miserable, and an advocate for the distressed. I should therefore be very glad, and much obliged, if he would (in case he approves the performance) purchase some of them in order to give away. Of this he may be assured, that by every one of which he shall so dispose, he will do a real act of charity to a diseased and crippled youth; and I shall not cease to pray, that the God of infinite goodness may accompany the piece* with his divine blessing, and make the gift an act of spiritual charity to the reader's soul. Be pleased to present my most respectful compliments to the Doctor; and give me leave to expect, not a line, but a sheet filled with your thoughts. Then I shall promise myself one thing more, that you will, in the speed of your favour, as well as in the worth of its contents, exceed, greatly exceed, dear sir, your truly affectionate, and very much obliged friend, &c.

* See page 846.

LETTER CXIV.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 18, 1753.

Dear Sir,—I have now procured some franks; and lest the want of this vehicle should retard the delight and improvement which I always receive from your correspondence, I take leave to enclose one. It is for your use, but my benefit.

I received the parcel, and owe you my thanks for the present. I wonder that you should be backward to gratify Mr. ——. Certainly you have truth on your side. The arguments are nervous and conclusive, clearly and (for the most part) concisely stated, urged with propriety and a becoming warmth; yet without any of that "wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God," but rather (for I apprehend there is a μειωσις in the expression) obstructs its advance, both in ourselves and others. If I was in your case, I would let my arrow fly as far as Providence is pleased to carry it; and I beseech the blessed God to prosper it, that it may give a mortal blow to error, and co-operate with his own holy word in being profitable προς ελεγχον. Now I mention Mr. ——, pray let me desire you to ask, when you write to him again, whether he received, some months ago, a letter from me. If it miscarried, I shall with pleasure supply its place with another; for though I have now but very few correspondents, and my enfeebled constitution will allow me to write but few letters, I shall strive hard to keep up an intercourse with those gentlemen from whom I expect to have my taste refined, or my mind improved. And among that number I reckon Mr. ——.

I shall sincerely rejoice to hear that your eye is strengthened, and your health confirmed. How valuable are these blessings!

* His sermon, entitled "The Cross of Christ the Christian's Glory."

especially to those who employ them for the honour, and devote them to the service of Christ. I wish you had taken minutes of what you saw most remarkable in your tour through Westmoreland and Cumberland. A description of those counties would be very acceptable to us, who inhabit a more regular and better cultivated spot. Described in your language, and embellished with your imagination, such an account might be highly pleasing to all; and grafted with religious improvements, might be equally edifying. Such kind of writings suit the present taste. We do not love close thinking. That is most likely to win our approbation which extenuates the fancy, without fatiguing the attention. Since this is the disposition of the age, let us endeavour to catch men by guile, turn even a foible to their advantage, and bait the gospel hook agreeably to the prevailing taste. In this sense, "become all things to all men."

Permit me to ask, Whether you have yet seen *Witsius de Œconomia Fœderum?* I wish, for my own sake, that you was somewhat acquainted with this author; because, if you should be inclined to know the reason and foundation of my sentiments on any particular point, Witsius might be my spokesman; he would declare my mind better than I could myself.

Conversing some time ago with a very ingenious gentleman, he made an observation which I think is new and curious; I should be glad of your opinion, whether you think it rational and solid. It was upon these words, Βαπτισμων διδαχης, επιθεσεος τεχειρων, Heb. vi. 2. This passage is generally supposed, especially by the writers of the established church, to denote the sacrament of baptism, and the rite of confirmation. With regard to the latter, my friend queried, Whether the practice of confirmation can be allowed to constitute one of the fundamentals (θεμελια) of Christianity? With regard to the former, can it be shewn, that the apostle, in any other place, calls the ordinance of baptism βαπτισμοι, in the plural number? May not then the clause more properly refer to two eminent Jewish usages; the various purifications made by washings, and the imposition of hands on the peculiar victims? The one of which represented a purity of heart and life; the other was expressive of a translation of punishment from the offerer to his sacrifice. Then we have signified, in language familiar to the Hebrews, and by images with which they were perfectly acquainted, the sanctification of the Spirit, and the substitution of Christ in our stead. What seems to corroborate this conjecture is, the vast importance of these two articles. They are the two grand distinguishing peculiarities of the Christian scheme: without them, every treatise upon fundamentals must be extremely defective.

I am much pleased with your remark on a certain learned ——. The heart surely should be engaged in the preacher's office, as well as the head.

> Are passions then the Pagans of the soul?
> Reason alone baptized, alone ordain'd,
> To touch things sacred?

The great apostle was fervent in spirit, as well as cogent in arguing. He beseeches, conjures, and charges his people. He adds prayers to his entreaties, and tears to his prayers. When he reasons, conviction shines; when he exhorts, pathos glows. May your discourses, dear sir, be strong with the one, warm with the other, and by both be happily instrumental "to turn sinners from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins," Acts xxvi. 18. We have very wet unkindly weather for the harvest. May it teach us all to see our dependence on that Divine hand, which giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons. May it stir us up to long more ardently for that inheritance which is incorruptible, as well as undefiled; whose character is perfection, and whose duration is eternity. Into this, dear sir, may you, and many of your hearers, many of your readers, in due time, have an abundant entrance! and there find, as a monument of mercy, and a trophy of redeeming grace, your truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CXV.

Weston, Oct. 28, 1753.

And must I resume my correspondences? Does my dear Mr. —— join with several other friends, to render me inexcusably rude, if I neglect writing any longer? Then, with the Divine assistance, I will again take up my pen, though an incessant series of infirmities has wore it to the very stumps; for which reason I had thrown it aside, with an intention to continue silent and inactive, as a dead man out of mind.

To make some reparation for my past negligence, I acknowledge your late favour without any delay. Yesterday I received it, and to-day I answer it; even though I might justly plead weariness as an excuse for a dilatory conduct. I have this afternoon been preaching to a crowded audience. The Lord Jesus Christ grant it may be an edified one! You would be surprised, and I believe every body wonders, that I am able to officiate for myself. I am so weak, that I can hardly walk to the end of my parish, though a small one; and so tender, that I dare not visit my poor neighbours, for fear

of catching cold in their bleak houses; yet I am enabled on the Lord's day to catechize and expound to my children in the morning, and to preach in the afternoon. And every Wednesday evening, hay-time and harvest only excepted, I read prayers, and give them a lecture-sermon in Weston church. This is the Lord's doing, or, as your favourite book expresses it, this is owing to "the good hand of my God upon me." Join with me, my dear friend, in adoring his grace, and pray, that if my life is spared, my capacity for his service may be prolonged; that, if it be his blessed will, the day which puts an end to the one may put a period to the other.

I thank you for your news from the west. I assure you it is highly pleasing to hear, especially concerning the prosperity of my old acquaintance. I often think of them, and with deep regret for my unprofitableness among them. Blessed be God for ever and ever, that both they and I may have a better righteousness than our own. May we all grow in grace, and ere long meet in glory!

You need not doubt but it is a pleasure to my heart to remember, in my best moments, that valuable and valued friend, with whom I have frequently taken sweet counsel on earth, and with whom I shall quickly be admitted into the heaven of heavens; there to behold the glory, the inconceivable and eternal glory of him who loved us both, and has washed us from our sins in his own blood.

God has been pleased to pity the poor youth for whose relief the visitation-sermon I preached at Northampton was printed. Through his good providence, an edition of two thousand is disposed of; besides a supernumerary provision of two hundred, destined to the use of my parishes. Nay, the manager for the distressed object is venturing upon another edition. See, dear sir, if God will bless, who can blast? If he will further, what can obstruct? A feather, a straw, if he pleases to command, shall be a polished shaft in his quiver. Trust not therefore in eloquence or argument, in depth of thought or beauty of style, both which are confessedly wanting in the present case; but "trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

I am surprised that any attendant on the —— of —— should inquire after my sermon, unless it was to criticise, censure, and expose; because there was really given too much occasion, both to his —— and all his friends, to resent what some time ago I seemed to have done. In the midst of the controversy between the —— and ——, there was put into the —— Journal a paragraph from a letter of mine, consisting of a pretty high encomium on Mr. ——. As though I should, unchallenged and unprovoked, step forth to confront your ——; or should think to bear down a —— objections by my single authority. This was also inserted in the most offensive manner; not as an extract from a private epistle, without the consent or knowledge of the writer, but introduced as my own act, and subscribed with my own name.

I have found no reason to retract one jot or tittle of what was said. And God forbid that I should be ashamed of that incomparable minister of Jesus Christ; than whom I know no man on earth who has more of the amiable and heavenly spirit of Christ. Nor do I remember to have met with, in all my reading, a person, since the days of miracle and inspiration, so eminently zealous, or so extensively useful. Yet to obtrude his character on the public, at such a time, and with such circumstances, had such an air of officiousness, self-conceit, and arrogance, as must necessarily disgust others, and is what I would absolutely disavow.

This, I afterwards learned, was done by a well-meaning and most pious man; but, in this particular, very injudicious. It is much to be desired that religious persons may have wisdom with their zeal; eyes in their wings, that, as far as is consistent with the exercise of integrity, and the discharge of duty, we may give no offence, neither to the Jew nor to the Greek, nor to the church of God.

Accept my sincerest thanks for your promoting the spread of my sermon; and continue your prayers for its enfeebled author, that if the most high God vouchsafes to employ him in any other work for the honour of his dear Son, he may be enabled to find out acceptable words, and that which is written may be words of truth. My affectionate compliments wait upon Mrs. ——. May you and yours dwell under the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty! I am, dear sir, most cordially and inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER CXVI.

Weston, May 5, 1754.

DEAR SIR,—Some time ago, Mr. Moses Browne was so kind as to transmit to me three of your letters, which gave me both pain and pleasure. Pain, to think how I had neglected to cultivate so valuable a correspondent; pleasure and improvement from the perusal of your truly judicious remarks on Mr. Kennicott's performance, and Mr. Goodby's attempt. The latter, I am afraid, is not sensible of the great importance, and no small difficulty, of writing a proper comment on the whole Bible. To explain and illustrate, with any tolerable justice, a book so very sublime, so

vastly comprehensive, surely should be the the work, not of a few months or years, but of his whole life, were his abilities ever so distinguished. I should be extremely sorry to see that glorious gift of heaven come abroad into the world, with such a collection of remarks as might be more likely to depreciate than minister to its universal acceptance.

You are pleased to mention my intended work, and to offer your kind assistance; an offer which, I assure you, I highly value: I desire nothing so much as to have the same impartiality of criticism exercised upon my manuscript, as you have bestowed upon the aforementioned writings. When my piece has been enriched by your corrections, and if it receives your imprimatur, it shall go to the press without delay, as there is a likelihood of a large demand for the work both at home and abroad. This consideration makes me timorous and diffident, especially as my incessant infirmities and unconquerable languors render me sadly unfit for the support of so weighty and so grand a cause. If it was not for such a declaration in the word of truth and life as this, "Not by might, nor by strength, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord," I should totally despair of any success. Excuse, dear sir, this hasty scribble; strengthen the feeblest of all hands engaged in the divine Jesus's service; and pity a man whose head aches while he writes to you, and heart almost fails when he writes for the public; but is, amidst all his weaknesses, your very sincere and much obliged friend, &c.

LETTER CXVII.

Weston-Favell, May, 20, 1754.

My dear Friend,—Your letter was good news from a far country, and made doubly welcome by a long preceding silence, and by the valuable hand that brought it.

Mr. —— gave me his company one afternoon. We talked of Christ Jesus and his beloved minister at —— O that our conversation may be edifying, and build us mutually up in our most holy faith! He was so obliging as to present me with the picture of the late worthy Doctor. I hope, when I view it, I shall be reminded of the inscription of Sennacherib's statue; Ες εμε τις ορ ων ευσεβης εςω: * or rather, that it will address me with the apostle's admonition, "Be ye not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

Mr. —— has likewise transmitted to me seven of your sermons, six on common, one on superfine paper. For the latter I sincerely thank you; for the former, I desire you will give me leave to pay you. I propose to gratify and oblige my friends with them; and it seems utterly unreasonable that I should be generous at your expense. I admire and applaud your noble reliance on God and his providence; and were you a single man, I would not offer to interpose a prudential hint. But perhaps the other amiable parts of yourself may not have the same steady and triumphant faith. For their sakes, therefore, it may be advisable to take the ant for a pattern, and lay up something against a rainy day.

I heartily wish that good Providence on which you depend, may spread your piece and prosper it in the world. Sure you should suffer it to be advertised in some of the principal newspapers. I dare say you desire, you covet, you are ambitious to do good, and be extensively useful. As this then is a commodious open door, let not my friend's modesty or self-diffidence shut it.

I have no desire to reconcile you, dear sir, to systems, human systems, of religion; I know other devout and godly persons that dislike them. They have been serviceable to my soul; and whenever I read them, I think they are blessed to my improvement and comfort; only let us all concur in prizing the blessed book of God. May we enter into its treasures more and more, and shed abroad the sweet savour of its doctrine in every place! Above all, my dear Mr. ——, may we never cease to testify of him who is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the Scripture, and the soul and centre of the whole Christian religion; who is, by infinite degrees, the most grand and amiable representative of the eternal Godhead to the church; and the only source of pardon and acceptance, of wisdom and goodness, of grace and glory to the believer.

I rejoice to find, that you take in good part my very free remarks, and very feeble attempts to criticize. Indeed, I did not doubt but you would. I send two or three manuscripts, and beg of you to exercise the same frankness of admonition, and the same impartiality of censure upon them. My bookseller tells me it cannot be comprised in less than three volumes. I have always had an aversion to so diffusive a work. Many will not have ability to purchase them; many not have leisure to read them; and to some, I fear, the very sight of three volumes would be like loads of meat to a sickly or squeamish stomach. Yet I cannot contract the work, and reduce it to the size of two, without omitting those parts which are intended to entertain the reader, keep him in good humour, and allure or bribe him to go on. What would you advise?

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* Whoever looks upon me, let him worship God.

I have not seen Lord ———'s works. And since their character is so forbidding, their tendency so hurtful, I shall not attempt to see them. I do not question but the great Physician will provide an antidote for this poison, and the almighty Head of the church will enable his disciples to tread on such serpents.

I am this day a prisoner in my chamber, and write in much pain. Blessed be God for that world where all tears will be wiped away from our eyes, and "there will be no more pain." And blessed be God for a Saviour, who is the way to those happy mansions, and the door of admission into them. O that every thing may lead my dear friend and me more and more to Christ. In him alone, peace, and rest, and true joy, are to be found.

I send letters viii. ix. x. xi. and Dial. xv. xvii. Do, my dear sir, improve, polish, and enrich them. And if God Almighty blesses them, if our adored Redeemer vouchsafes to work by them, I will thank you not only in these regions of sin and mortality, but when I meet you before the throne of the Lamb, and amidst the angels of light. Till then, may the Father of mercies keep you as the apple of his eye, and make you a polished arrow in his quiver. Believe me to be, dear sir, your sincere, obliged, and affectionate brother in Christ, &c.

LETTER CXVIII.

Weston, May 30, 1754.

Dear Sir,—Yesterday I received your valuable letter. I thank you for the comfortable prayer; it exactly suits my circumstances. May I be enabled to breathe it from my very soul in faith, and may it enter into the ears of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Pray, make no apology for the length of your letter. Whenever you favour me with an epistle, the more you suffer your pen to enlarge, the more you will oblige and improve your correspondent. I wish you success in finishing your chronological and historical treatise, and shall be much pleased to peruse it.

Your solution of the difficulty in Acts vii. is very ingenious, and subserves the purposes of piety. But do you think the patriarchs would inter the Sichemites in a burying place that belonged to a stranger; and not rather deposit them in their family vaults, or the sepulchres where their ancestors lay? I should be glad to see the sequel of your dissertation concerning the fallen angels. I send herewith four of my Dialogues, which I beg of you to examine with a kind severity. I do assure you I can bear to receive censure from a friend, and will kiss the lips that administer it, especially when it is intended to preserve my attempts to further the glorious gospel from the contempt of the public. I will, ere long, send you in a frank a general view of my plan, which in the execution is become too prolix, and cannot be comprehended in less than three volumes of the same size with the Meditations, unless some judicious friend will help me to curtail and abridge. I am very unwilling to publish a work consisting of three volumes: I apprehend this will obstruct the sale not a little. Be so kind as to serve my essays as you have treated Mr. Goodby's expository notes; take the pruning-knife, and freely lop off the luxuriant parts. Your notes on Taylor of Norwich I return with thankful acknowledgments; you will see what use I have made of them. I had penned more animadversions upon that piece; but, upon a review, I found they would swell the work too much. I have a note, Dial. iv. page 4, that is directly to the point; would you advise me to retain it? I had expunged it. I have directed the printer to restore it, but *hesitantur hoc.* You will receive half a dozen of a little collection of scripture promises,* which I lately printed in two small bits of paper, chiefly for the poor, to be pasted, one at the beginning, and the other at the end of their Bibles, or indeed of any pious book. Perhaps you may know some to whom such a present, though minute, may be welcome. As soon as you return these manuscripts, if I have your approbation, I purpose to employ the press. In the mean time, it shall be my prayer to God, that he may give you a right judgment in all things. Your most affectionate, &c.

LETTER CXIX.

June 12, 1754.

My dear Friend,—Do you wonder why I have not acknowledged the receipt of your last? Indeed it deserved a most speedy and a most grateful acknowledgment; but I was unwilling to interrupt your thoughts with fresh inquiries. Your thoughts, I hope, have been employed in discovering the Rev. Dr. ———'s mistakes, and in teaching him what that means which our Lord gave as the commission to his ministers, "Preach the gospel."

I received your present from Mr. ———; but I shall not want any memorial of your friendship, so long as you will give me leave to consult you about difficult passages in

* This collection is inserted, page 714, under the title of *Promises to be pasted at the beginning and end of a Bible.*

Scripture; and these memorials, I assure you, will not be transient: I shall carefully preserve them; and when their number and size is a little more increased, shall form them into a volume, which will be more valuable to me than any book in my study.

The anecdotes of your own life are very welcome; if you could add others, they would be still more pleasing. As you are well acquainted with ancient history, have you met with any account of the four monarchies; concise, taking in only the most memorable and striking facts; and still more particularly calculated to explain the prophecies of Scripture, and demonstrate their exact accomplishments? This, with a succinct detail of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, would, I think, be a very pretty historical furniture for young minds.

I think all your criticisms please and improve me, that only excepted which relates to 1 Cor. ix. 24. While I was writing this, Mr. P——, the bearer, came in; for which reason you will give me leave, for the sake of enjoying his company, to conclude: only let me add, that I purpose, if I live till the beginning of next week, to finish what I intended to say in a letter by the post; which very probably may anticipate what now comes from, dear sir, yours, &c.

LETTER CXX.

Dear Sir,—I think one guinea is full enough for giving away to a person whose character we are ignorant of. There are too many *(dolet dictum!)* to whom an alms in the way of money is only an administration of fuel to their lusts. Not that I presume to fix such a charge upon the present petitioner; yet this conviction makes me cautious, where I have no assurance of the person's sobriety. Had it not been for his father's worth, I should have almost thought it my duty to have shut my hand, till I received some more satisfactory recommendation. We are stewards of our Master's goods, and discretion is requisite in the discharge of such an office, as well as fidelity.

I fancy, my dear friend, you did not take notice of an unbecoming expression which dropt from your lips while I sat at your table. You was a little chagrined at the carelessness of your servant, and said to him with some warmth, "What, in the name of God, do you mean?" Such expressions from your lips will be much observed, and long remembered. I need say no more; you yourself will perceive, by a moment's reflection, how faulty they are in themselves, and how pernicious they may be to others. May the good Lord pardon and deliver you from evil! and may both of us more frequently meditate on this important text, "Set a watch before our mouths, and keep the door of our lips!" Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CXXI.

June 14, 1754.

My dear Friend,—Before this can reach your hands, you will, in all probability, have seen Mr. P——. He is really an ingenious gentleman, has a lively apprehension, a penetrating judgment, as well as a large share of reading. May the almighty Spirit vouchsafe to sanctify those endowments; and make our interviews, not an occasion of ambitiously displaying our talents, but of building up one another in our most holy faith! I can hardly agree to my friend's proposal for altering the translation of 1 Cor. ix. 24. May it not be an incitement to the utmost diligence? *q. d.* The contenders know, that though many run, yet one alone can receive the prize; therefore they exert all their strength and all their speed, each hoping, and each striving to be that distinguished happy one: So likewise do ye.—Or may it not be an encouragement, drawn from the prospect of general success? *q. d.* How much greater reason have you to run the Christian race, since not one only, but all may receive the prize of your high calling! Of these interpretations, the former seems most suitable to the tenor of the apostle's discourse. What do you apprehend to be the precise sense of that expression, ἐστε ἐν αὐτῳ πεπληρωμενοι, Col. ii. 10. Is our translation exact? Or should it be rendered, "ye are filled with him, filled by him?" filled with wisdom, holiness, &c. I was reading Psalm civ. and a doubt arose concerning the meaning of those expressions, "He layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; He maketh the clouds his chariot." Does the Psalmist intend to signify the same thing by waters and clouds? Or by waters does he mean somewhat different from the fluid which composes the clouds? Houbigant finds fault with our translation of *Dure et incredibiliter Arias, contignavit aquis;* he would correct it according to his usual way, by altering the original, *Nos legimus cooperiens: Sic legunt præter Syrum, omnes in Polyglottis.* What think you of verse 19, *going down?* Is that all which the sun knows or observes? Would not that be a very imperfect discharge of his office? May not the original

phrase denote his going, his circuit, his whole journey? Comprehending, not only his setting, but his rising, his meridian, and all his stages; together with his passage from one tropic to another, and his distribution, not only of day, but of seasons also, through the various regions of the globe? Is this word *seasons* rightly translated? By seasons we generally mean the four grand distributions of the year, into spring, and summer, autumn and winter. But these, you know, are neither occasioned by the influences, nor regulated by the appearances of the moon. I could be glad to see, from your critical pen, a correct translation of this fine psalm; together with such remarks as may explain what is difficult, and illustrate what is beautiful. Next Saturday I hope to send your manuscript. In the mean time, let me promise myself a remembrance in your prayers, and expect the favour of a letter, which will be thankfully received, and highly valued by, dear sir, affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CXXII.

Weston, June 21, 1754.

Dear Sir,—Before this arrives, I hope my parcel transmitted according to your direction will have reached your hands; and my Dialogues will have received the free correction and the friendly improvements of your pen.

As, through my many and repeated infirmities, I had long discontinued and have often intermitted my intended work, I am informed from London, that the abettors of the Socinian scheme have been pleased to triumph in my disappointment; imagining that, through fear or inability, I had laid aside my design; and insinuating, that I had changed my principles, or was conscious of the weakness of my cause. From these gentlemen, if my essay should appear in public, it may expect a severe examination, and probably a violent attack. I hope your friendship will anticipate their inveteracy; and remove those blemishes which might give them a handle for censure, or a ground for insult. My prayer for my kind corrector is, that the Lord Jesus Christ, whose sacred honour and precious interest are concerned, would give him "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might." Is there not a peculiar force and beauty in this last metaphor? How would you develop and set it forth to common view? I have just had occasion to consider that remarkable expression in Psalm xv.; methinks the Bible translation does not recommend itself to my judgment: I am better satisfied, and more edified with the version used by our Liturgy; only it seems not to have preserved the strength of the original. However, I will say no more upon this point; because, if I live to send another packet of probationary manuscripts, you will see my sentiments on this particular incorporated with the work.

What is your opinion as to publishing three volumes? Mr. Moses Browne and another friend pronounce in the affirmative; though I am much afraid that this circumstance will clog the sale. There are several pieces that are a kind of excursion from the principal subject, calculated to relieve and entertain the reader, yet not without administering some spiritual benefit. A whole dialogue upon the wonders of wisdom, power, and goodness, displayed in the contrivance and formation of the human body. Two or three letters, pointing out the traces of the same grand and amiable attributes in the constitution of the earth, the air, and the ocean. These I am afraid to lop off, lest it should be like wiping the bloom from the plum, or taking the gold from the gingerbread. To you I say gingerbread, though I would not say so to the public; for I really think the taste of the present age is somewhat like the humour of children: Their milk must be sugared, their wine spiced, and their necessary food garnished with flowers, and enriched with sweetmeats. In my next I hope to lay before you a summary view of my whole design. I forget whether I enclosed in my last, one of the little collection of Scripture Promises which I caused lately to be printed, for the benefit and comfort of my people. I would have them pasted into their Bibles; and may the God of all grace command them to be mixed with faith, and ingrafted into their hearts. If I have already desired your acceptance of one, these I now send may be for your friends. I fancy a short but lively discourse upon each of the eight heads, and the texts selected, might, after they have been committed to the memories of the people, be acceptable, and what the apostle calls "a word in season." "Angry at the length of your letters!" No, dear sir! They are, as Tully said of Demosthenes's orations, "The longer the more valuable." I am your obliged friend, &c.

LETTER CXXIII.

My dear Friend,—Thank you for sending the cuts designed for the Bible. All my hope with regard to them is, that they may remind some beholders of the transcendent excellency of the sacred writings. I propose, by the next post, to write to Mr. ——. I would very willingly present

him with my picture, as you desire it; but I really think my picture, if much better done, is not worth a frame. And, I own, I do not much like giving away what savours more of vanity than benevolence.

Cannot you get a little leisure to peruse part of my intended work? I have, for a month or six weeks, been prosecuting it in earnest. I have sent four of the Dialogues transcribed by my amanuensis. Do steal a little time from the multiplicity of your medical engagements to examine them; retrench, where I am redundant; clear up, where I am obscure; polish what is uncouth. I hope Mr. —— will do me the same favour; and may the God of wisdom give both my friends and me a right judgment in all things. I have seen Mr. ——'s answer. God be praised that I had no occasion for controversy. I have not seen Mr. Moses Browne this many a day. The last time he was with me he talked about reprinting his Sunday Thoughts, and adding a third part, which he had finished, and which completes his scheme. I would have the three parts printed in a neat pocket volume. Have you read his Poem on the Universe? I think it is the most pleasing, and, indeed, the best thing he ever wrote. I hope the God of heaven will smile upon his endeavours, and animate us all to labour in his dear Son's cause, and prosper the labours which he himself excites. And if God will prosper, who shall obstruct? "If he will work, who can let it?" My dear friend, let our eyes be ever looking unto the hills from whence cometh our help; to that omnipotent Being who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; to that all-gracious Being who spared not (unparalleled, stupendous goodness!) spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us both. O that we may dearly love him; firmly trust in him; and desire nothing so much as to know him now by faith, and after this life have the fruition of his glorious Godhead!—To his everlasting compassions I commit my friend; and am inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER CXXIV.

Weston, July 8, 1754.

Dear Sir,—Your favour of June 28, is now before me, and demands my sincerest thanks; and mine, I assure you, are of the sincerest kind. I am sensible it is not in every one's power to do such acts of kindness; and if Providence vouchsafes to smile upon my essay, they will be of the most lasting, the most extensive, and the most important nature. If I live till next Saturday, I propose to transmit to you six more of the Dialogues, which will open a new field for your friendly hand to weed, cultivate, and improve. Exercise the same benevolent severity upon them, and continue to retrench, as well as to reform.

I am obliged for your criticisms; and oh! that I may be imboldened by the extract from your intended work. No man, I believe, stands in more need of such encouragements than myself. Timorous by nature, and made abundantly more so by a long series of unintermitted languors, and a very debilitated constitution, for which reason, I promise myself, you will commend the writer and his attempt to that great Jehovah in whom is everlasting strength; and for your kind assistance I shall think myself bound to praise his adorable Majesty, and to pray that he would "fill you with all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

I will, since I have the concurrence of your judgment, and I hope the guidance of our Lord Jesus Christ, determine upon three volumes. How long do you apprehend it will be before your chronological and historical piece will be finished? I hope it will abound with explanations of Scripture, and be rich with short, but striking improvements. May you continually enjoy that unction from the Holy One which teacheth all things! And, oh! that its precious influences may descend upon, dear sir, your much obliged and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CXXV.

July 13, 1754.

Dear Sir,—I hope my last letter, wherein I apprized you of a parcel to be transmitted to you, is in your hand. Here are six Dialogues. May the everlasting and wonderful Counsellor enable you to search them as with a candle, and make them such as he will condescend to bless! I have dropped several objections and answers; yet I fear too many are still retained. A multiplicity of objects dissipates the attention either of the eye or the mind. Are what the painters call the two unities preserved? one principal action and one grand point of view, in each piece? Does Theron speak enough; or with such weight, and such a spice of the *sal Atticus*, as might suit his character? Here and there a touch of wit or genteel satire in him, I think, would be graceful, especially in the first part, before he is brought to a conviction of his guilt. I hope you will not only find out

all the faults, but that you will point this arrow, and trim its feathers; and may the arm of the Most High launch it, that it may be the arrow of the Lord's salvation. I am, dear sir, affectionately and gratefully yours, &c.

LETTER CXXVI.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 27, 1754.

Dear Sir,—I have read part of your chronological manuscript,* and I bless God for giving you such a penetrating and comprehensive mind. To confess the truth, it is beyond my power to follow, even in those researches where you have surmounted the difficulties and cleared the way; but there are many things which I understand, and with which I am delighted; insomuch that, if you do not intend to publish it, I should very much desire a copy of it. But what should hinder the publication? Why should not the learned world be improved by what is profound, and the whole world be edified by what is easy? I have no acquaintance in this neighbourhood who is versed in chronological inquiries, and capable of judging of your computations and arguments; otherwise I would obtain for you his opinion. Mr. Moses Browne (author of the Sunday Thoughts) will gladly peruse it. Will you excuse me though I add no more? A gentleman waits for me below, to transact an affair of which I understand but very little; he is come to take my parsonage-grounds, in order to plough them for woad, an herb much used by the dyers. May prosperity attend his plough; but, above all, may it attend yours and mine, which would open the ground for the seed of the everlasting gospel. I am loath to miss a post, loath to defer my thanks for your last very valuable favour, otherwise you would not be put off with such a hasty scrap from, dear sir, your most obliged and affectionate, &c.

LETTER CXXVII.

October 2.

Sir,—I have perused the greatest part of Dr. Hodge's Elihu. It is wrote, I think, in a masculine and noble style; is animated with a lively spirit of piety; and urges, with a becoming zeal, some of the grand peculiarities of the gospel. I hope it will prove a blessing to both the universities; and be a means of testifying, to both those learned bodies, the truth as it is in Jesus. Dear Mr. —— has been gone from us almost a fortnight. What a burning and a shining light is he! Burning with ministerial zeal, and shining in all holy conversation. I hope our dear friend ——'s sermon was attended with a blessing; and may the blessing be greatly increased by the publication! May the drop become a river, and the river become a sea!—I was yesterday with five or six young students, and this day with three ingenious gentlemen of the laity, two of whom are acquainted with the Hebrew. Our conversation turned wholly upon that superexcellent and delightful subject, "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent." Oh, may that almighty Being, who has every human heart in his hand, sanctify our discourse to our eternal advantage! And let us, my dear friend, talk for him, write for him, and live for him, who "died for our sins, and is risen again for our justification." May his Spirit be your continual guide, and his favour your everlasting portion! Ever yours, while, &c.

LETTER CXXVIII.

Dear Sir,—The gentleman who versified part of my Meditations is Mr. Newcomb of Hackney. I thought it exceedingly well executed; much superior to his ode on the final dissolution of the world, which he has since published.

As to Bishop Fowler's Design of Christianity, he has, as far as I have read, good sense, clear language, and sometimes fine striking sentiments. But I most cordially embrace the proposition, viz. "That faith justifieth only as it apprehendeth the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ," which he most peremptorily condemns. Please to cast your eye to the fifth line of the next paragraph—(the Bishop's words are, "Imputation of Christ's righteousness consists in dealing with sincerely righteous persons as if they were perfectly so, for the sake of Jesus Christ;)—and compare his "sincerely righteous persons" with St. Paul's declaration, Rom. iv. 5, that Christ justifieth the ungodly. When you have perused and considered Bishop Fowler's treatise thoroughly, please to let me have it again; especially as you and Mr. H—r apprehend he has given better directions for the attainment of true holiness than Mr. Marshall. Thanks for young Mr. C—'s sermon. He is a correct writer, but wants the main thing. "Christ is all in all." He either forgets, or understands those words in a

* The manuscript which Mr. Hervey here takes notice of is called "A short Chronicle of the most remarkable events from the beginning of the world to the building of Solomon's Temple."

manner very different from my apprehension. Mr. G—t has much good sense, but to me his sermon reads flat: in his discourse, likewise, I wished to have seen more of our Immanuel's glory. I am, &c.

LETTER CXXIX.

Weston, Oct. 20, 1754.

Dear Sir,—I received the parcel safe, and desire to bless God's providence for not suffering the manuscripts to be lost in their passage, as they had like to have been; and to thank my kind friend for his judicious remarks. Herein is enclosed Dialogue xvi. I durst not venture to commit this to the press without submitting it to your correction. Dear sir, examine it with a critical severity; and may he, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, enable you to discern and rectify what is amiss. It is, as you will easily perceive, a subject of the last importance. O that, in handling it, I might be "a workman that need not be ashamed." Pardon my scraps of answers, to your large and valuable letters. I hardly know how to get a moment's leisure, so very intent am I now on the publication of my book. I have not been able, for want of time, to read over this transcript: I hope the copier has not made any great mistakes. Be so good, dear sir, as to favour me with your remarks on this manuscript as soon as you possibly can: you need not return it, only send me your remarks. But you will please to preserve this, for fear of an accident happening to the other copy.—I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately, &c.

LETTER CXXX.

Thursday, noon.

My dear Friend,—I am glad Dr. C—— got time, and took the trouble of overlooking the manuscripts. He has the judgment of a critic, and the freedom of a friend. Moses Browne is persuaded by the bookseller to print his poem on the Universe, and his Sunday Thoughts, in one volume, and intends to entitle it, The Works and Rest of Creation; with the addition of some more particular explicatory and subordinate title. I objected to this general title; made a query, whether it was strictly proper? or, if proper, whether sufficiently significant? Instead of it, I proposed, The Works of Creation, and Rest of the Sabbath.

Dr. Gill shall tell you my sentiments, in relation to Wesley, on the perseverance of the saints. Both their pamphlets on this subject I send you. Whether his replies and interpretations in the first part are sound and satisfactory, judge you; the considerations suggested in the latter part, I think, are full of weight, rich with consolation, and worthy of a place in our memories and in our heart. May our own meditation fix them in the one, and the Spirit of our God implant them in the other!

I am entirely of your opinion with regard to Staynoe on Salvation by Jesus Christ; generally very prolix, and somewhat tiresome to the reader; yet his style is good, nervous, and beautiful. Prolixity, I find, is an epidemical fault among writers; the censure I pass on him rebounds on myself: save me from this misconduct, by lopping off my redundancies. I have not looked into Staynoe for a great while; when I revise him again, you shall have my sentiments concerning his doctrine; which, though excellent in the main, is not, I apprehend, perfectly consistent, nor evangelical throughout. I have seen Mr. ——'s verses on Dr. ——'s character; I am apprehensive *(inter nos)* that it will rather depreciate than exalt the Rev. Doctor's credit among readers of a gospel spirit. There are indeed the *sales Attici*, but where are the *sales evangelici*? What says our lively friend ——? I think he is the Caleb of our fraternity. Caleb signifies all heart. His name and nature correspond. Did he not warm you with his zeal? Oh that we may glow with love to Him, who bled for love of us! I have received a letter from our dear friend on the American continent. He mentions you in particular, and your late guest. Love, cordial love he transmits to you both. We believe him, when he makes a profession of kindness; and why are we so backward to believe the more repeated, more solemn, and infinitely more faithful assurances, which the Scripture gives us of our Redeemer's love? Let us blush and be confounded for our unbelief; and may the Lord of all power and grace help our unbelief!—Ever yours, &c.

P. S.—Certainly our friend judges right in not acting as a justice of peace, unless he would submit to the fatigue of acquainting himself with our national laws: A study which is, if I rightly judge, which, I am sure, would be to my taste of all others the most jejune and irksome. Not so the Scriptures! God has, in tender indulgence to our disposition, strewed them with flowers, dignified them with wonders; enriched them with all that may delight the man of genius, and make the man of God perfect. May we, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word; and grow, grow thereby in knowledge, grow in faith, grow in love, in holiness, in every amiable and happy accomplishment. Do

not you practise that excellent rule, of selecting for meditation each day a text of Scripture? As to publishing the first volume of Theron and Aspasio before the others are ready, I really know not how to act. May the God of unerring wisdom vouchsafe to direct, for his dear Son our glorious Intercessor's sake

LETTER CXXXI.

Weston, Aug. 12, 1754.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I received your favour from Islington, and acknowledge myself indebted to you for a preceding one from Scotland. I am, both to you and to other of my worthy correspondents, quite an insolvent; yet trust my many infirmities, in concurrence with your candour, will plead my excuse.

I called myself an insolvent; but I shall, ere long, make one public effort to pay from the press all my debts of an epistolary nature: the payment, I confess, will not be in the very same specie, but it will bear the same image and superscription, not Cæsar's but Christ's. This will recommend it to my correspondents, and not only bespeak their kind acceptance of it, but engage their cordial prayers in its behalf. Do, my dear sir, remember my poor enterprise, when you call upon him who is omnipotent; he can bid the wounded come against the fortress, and the lame take the prey. Unless he succour, unless he support, what can impotence itself expect, but to miscarry in the attempt, and be a laughing-stock to the enemy? But I read, and this encourages me, "It is not by might, nor by strength, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

I did not know, till yours informed me, that Mr. —— was gone to his long, and I trust to his happy home. O that we who survive may have our affections fixed there, where our God and Saviour resides, whither our friends and relations are removed!

I wish you and your spouse much joy in each other, but much more in Christ Jesus. As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so may the Lord your God rejoice over you both. Let me beg of you to present my affectionate salutations to good Mr. G——. Assure him, that my silence did not proceed from any indifference to his friendship, or disesteem for his work; but I was much indisposed. I had nothing to communicate, and to have written in such circumstances, would have been burdensome to me, and unserviceable to him. My respectful compliments attend Mrs. O——, your spouse, and yourself; and I entreat your united prayers for, dear sir, your sincere friend and brother in Christ, &c.

P. S.—The enclosed collection of scriptural promises, are a little present which I make to my people. They are intended to be pasted, one at the beginning, the other at the end, of religious books. Perhaps some of your friends may not disdain this spiritual nosegay, because, though little, it is culled from the garden of God.

LETTER CXXXII.

Wednesday Morning.

DEAR SIR,—I was lately favoured at Weston with a visit from the Reverend Mr. Walker of Truro, who is indeed a most excellent man, much of a gentleman, and seems well to deserve the character he bears: there is something in him very engaging, yet very venerable. During our conversation, I felt a kind of reverential awe on my mind, blended with more than fraternal affection. How old is he? By his looks he appears to be past forty. What a reproach is it to our men in power, nay, to the nation itself, that so valuable a person should at this time of life be no more than a country curate? But he, good man! disregards the things of this world. That time which too many of his brethren spend, to the disgrace of their function, in worldly compliances, and hunting after church preferments, he employs as a faithful labourer in the vineyard of Christ; and pays all due obedience to the apostle's important injunction, "Redeem time!" How would some of the primitive bishops have sought after a man of his exemplary piety, and have given him every mark of their real esteem! *Sed tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.*

I am much pleased with the account of the religious society at Truro, of which Mr. Walker is the founder and present director. It is an admirable plan! I would have endeavoured (had my health permitted my attendance) to have formed one of the same kind at Northampton. I heartily wish so useful an institution was more known, and well established in all the principal towns in this kingdom; as I am persuaded such a society must be productive of great good, and in some degree revive the drooping interest of Christianity, wherever it was prudently managed. We had in this neighbourhood a religious assembly, of which I myself was a member;* but no one could be admitted who did not understand Greek, as the chief design of that meeting was to improve each other in scriptural knowledge,

* The Rules and Orders of the Assembly here mentioned, are inserted p. 717.

and consequently could be of little use comparatively with Mr. Walker's plan.*

I have lately read Mr. Wharton's edition of Virgil, and much approve the printing the Latin on one side, and his poetical translation on the other: he is a clever man; but I think he might have enriched his notes with many more observations on the beauties and masterly strokes of the poet. I would not for my own part give a straw for the most accurate disputations upon a chronological or geographical nicety; but I would applaud and thank the critic who will assist me to see the art and address, to feel the force and fire, and to enter into the spirit and delicacy of such an author as Virgil. I am, dear sir, with great respect, your obliged and very humble servant, &c.

LETTER CXXXIII.

Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—I have read over, again and again, the corrected copy of your little tract which you intend for the next edition, and have examined it with my best attention: not able to make any amendment that is considerable, I have only suggested some slight alterations. Elegance you do not covet in such a composition; plain and neat is the proper array for such an address.

I am surprised to read the letter which the popular gentleman from Durham writes against your book. Never fear, my friend; our writings, as well as our lives, are in the hand of God Almighty: if he will spread, what shall obstruct them? if he will work by them, who shall disannul his design? O may we cry to him, cleave to him, and live by faith on him! for "not by might, nor by power," not by eloquence of composition, nor by interest of patrons, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Pray, take a little pains with my Theron and Aspasio; you can scarcely imagine what inquiries are made after it, and what a demand there is for it, even before publication. It makes me rejoice with trembling. All-wise, all-gracious Jesus, be jealous for thine honour! Let me not, O let me not cloud its brightness, or obstruct its progress, by any injudicious touches of my pen.—I now feel the loss of our valuable friend Dr. Doddridge, to whose judgment I ever paid the highest deference; but since he is gone, and we can have no more of his personal counsels, let us redouble our attention to his writings.

I expect you will tell me my manuscript is very prolix; but I designedly made it so, that my friends might judge what is proper to be omitted. It is easier, you know, to expunge than to compose: I wish they would with a leaden pencil enclose in a parenthesis what they would have dropt; I hope to retrench one-fourth of the copy. May the God of wisdom direct, and the God of mercy prosper, all our undertakings! I am yours very sincerely, &c.

* For the Rules and Orders of the Truro Society, see p. 719.

LETTER CXXXIV.

Saturday morning.

Thanks to my dear friend for the entertainment he has given me, by Hanway's account of Nadir Shah;* an illustrious villain indeed! he spread firebrands, arrows, and death. May we be conformed to his image, who went about doing good!

If you have Voltaire's Life of Louis XIV., be pleased to give me the perusal of it: I fancy, his reign in France was somewhat like the Augustine age in Rome. Periods of politeness both! but what are those to heaven? the world where dwelleth righteousness; consummate righteousness and everlasting happiness? Do you not long, more and more, for those courts of the living God? Do you not love him more and more, who, (after he had overcome the sharpness of death) opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers?

Warburton, I hear, has published two volumes of sermons, octavo; in which, it seems, he has decried experimental religion, disregarded the peculiarities of the gospel, and treated the operations of the Spirit as mere enthusiasm. If this be the effect of his great learning, then, good Lord, deliver us all, say I, from such an attainment. If you either have, or can borrow them, just let me peep on them. Do not buy them to gratify me; I can relish nothing but what is evangelical.

Your friend's Dissertations were put into my hands; very pure diction, but that is all —all to me at least. There was the bone, but the marrow was gone; Jesus Christ, my portion and yours, was forgot. How different his strain from St. Paul's resolution, "I am determined to know nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified," which happened to be the subject of my exhortation to my family last night. Lord, reveal thy adorable Son, the all-sufficient Saviour, in our hearts; and the more others neglect him, so much the more let us, my dear friend, be zealous to honour him.

I have looked into the manuscript you sent me: there seem to be many lively and

* See Hanway's Travels, vol. ii. page 255.

spirited sentiments in it, but surely it is defective in the main point. St. Paul, I am apt to think, upon a perusal of the treatise, would say, the author has good sense, may be no bad moralist, but being "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, he has not submitted to the righteousness of God," Rom. x. 3. Lord, give us an understanding, that we may know him that is true! Then we shall see Christ Jesus, the God-man, to be, in the grand affair of salvation, like the meridian sun; and all other things like the stars at noon-day.

Did you ever read Mr. Whalley's Remarks upon Shakspeare? If you have not, I will send you the pamphlet. They are very ingenious, and well deserve the notice of the public; particularly of yours, who are such an admirer of Shakspeare.

When you can spare Francis's translation of Demosthenes, (I suppose it is the same Francis who translated Horace,) favour me with a sight of it. A sight of this will content me; but God's word, that inestimable book, which shows me the way of salvation, I would cleave to, I would dwell upon. And would not you, my dear friend, do so too? Εν τουτοις ισθι.

My text on Wednesday evening will be a complete description of a Christian; viz. "We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. A fine subject for your meditation: Why should I not add for your conversation also? Ever yours.

LETTER CXXXV.

Dear Sir,—I here send you part of my manuscript copy of Theron and Aspasio: if you think it worth your while to bestow any corrections upon them, well; if not, this also is well. For my own part, so very languid are my animal spirits, I am more and more indifferent about them; I see so much weakness in my mind, and so many imperfections in my compositions, that I am afraid to venture upon the stage of observation again. An obliging letter from Mr. H——r, informs me of his willingness to peruse and correct any literary attempt of mine; and discovers, I think, still more the integrity, simplicity, and piety of his heart.

I prefer both South's and Delaune's sermons to the Bishop's, for soundness of doctrine. The first might be crabbed in his temper, and the second voluptuous in his life; yet both are more evangelical in their sentiments than he is. Those who can read such kind of moral essays as the Bishop's (very improperly called sermons) as guides to heaven, and as good comforters while on earth, will one day I hope form a better judgment, and be enabled, in a clearer manner, to discern the things which are excellent.

On Dr. Stonehouse's recommendation, I have lately read Dr. Watts' treatise on "the love of God, and its influence on all the passions;" which is indeed a most excellent book, happily calculated for usefulness. If you have never seen it, you have a pleasure yet to come, and I would by all means advise you to get it. The love of God is indeed the source and soul of religion; and what can produce it, what can cherish it, but a sense of God's love to us manifested in his dear Son? by whom we are fully assured, that he has forgiven us all trespasses, and will give us life eternal.

Present my affectionate compliments to your family, and believe me, as I really am, most cordially yours, &c.

LETTER CXXXVI.

Weston, Jan. 25, 1755.

Dear Sir,—I really forget whether I acknowledged your last favour. If I did not, let your own candour be my advocate; and my important business, under the most enervated constitution, be my plea. I have been, since I wrote, in the physician's hands, and debarred from the pulpit. Blessed be the Lord our healer, I am now restored to my usual state, and am enabled to speak a word on the Lord's day, and preach in my church on Wednesday evening, which is my lecture day, for the honour of my Master, and, I hope, for the edification of his people. O that this privilege may be coeval with my life; and my preaching voice, and my vital breath, be stopt together!—I wish you, dear sir, many new years, much of the new man, and an abundant entrance into the New Jerusalem. Your most obliged, and truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CXXXVII.

March 4.

My dear Friend,—Do not hurry the return of the Dialogues. Take your time, that you may examine them thoroughly: none knows how far they may spread, or how long they may live. Oh that the God of wisdom may enable you to judge aright, and correct their mistakes!

I am sorry to hear your account of our

friend at ——. I wish he could be persuaded to look upon his mystic writers as his chamber-counsel; converse with them in his study, and leave them there. I was visited yesterday by a gentleman who would be a darling with Mr. H——; quite fond of mystics, but does not go any great lengths; nor espouse, at least not avow or propagate, their extravagant peculiarities. Your old acquaintance Mr. —— came in, and sat with us, I believe, two hours. The gentlemen happened to refer to Isaiah vi. and desired I would read the beginning of the chapter: glad of this overture, I readily embraced it, and fixed the discourse to this noble, this alarming and comfortable Scripture. Oh! let us attend, with assiduity and delight, to the holy, precious word of God: the apostle calls it αδολον γαλα, pure, unmixed, unadulterated, as though every composition had some improper tincture, was some way or other adulterated. "My son," says the God of heaven, (and it is a most important advice, a most endearing exhortation,) "attend to my words, incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes, keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh."

As to Eph. iv. 16. does not συναρμολογουμενον refer to the orderly and exact arrangement? συμβιβαζομενον to the nice and strong connexions; but where is the beauty or propriety of πασης αφης της επιχορηγιας? Why, "that which every joint supplieth?" Is there any peculiar fund of nutriment lodged in the joints? Would not an anatomist have said, by that which every vessel, or every ramification of a vessel, supplieth? I sincerely pity poor ——'s case; I will give him two guineas; and hope the God whom he serves will raise him up other friends: "He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give him all things?" Tell him this from me, though he knows it already; the Lord may make it a word in season. Charge him to say nothing of me and my mite, but as much for me to his God and Saviour as he pleases. I hope you will, when opportunity serves, strengthen Mr. H—— in the faith of the gospel, and in the ways of the Lord. Let us provoke one another to love and to good works; and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Yesterday Mr. —— of Cambridge called upon me: our conversation was not so edifying as I could wish; it degenerated into dispute. Mr. ——, who is very much talked of, was the subject. I do not thoroughly know his scheme, but am inclined to suspect that his opponents will find it a difficult matter to maintain their ground. However, I shall not attempt to make myself fully master of the controversy. To know Christ and him crucified, *hoc nobis palmarium.* This is the desire and prayer of, ever yours, &c.

P. S.—The Latin prayer you sent me for my opinion, seems to be composed by a mystic. Not a word of Christ! Access through his blood is neglected; acceptance through his righteousness is forgotten! The grand error of the mystic divines, who, wholly intent upon what God is to do *in* us, most unhappily disregard what he has done *for* us, in the person of his beloved Son.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, March 19, 1755.

My dear Friend,—A good while ago I received your kind letter, and this week your valuable parcel. I confess myself obliged to your candour, as well as to your judgment, for excusing me, though I have not absolutely acquiesced in all your remarks; as well as for giving me many excellent corrections, which I have most thankfully adopted. I hope what I have written concerning faith, will occasion some calm and friendly debates; I want to have that subject sifted, cleared, and stated. I must own, I am strongly inclined to side with our reformers; I cannot but think they adhere to the simplicity of the gospel. Christ died for me, seems to be the faith preached and taught by the apostles. I have not had time to peruse Mr. ——, nor your manuscripts: you can hardly imagine how my time is engrossed, and my weak spirits almost overborne, partly by revising the work for a new edition, which is put to the press; partly by answering a variety of letters, sent to me on occasion of the publication; some of which censure, some approve of the performance.

I have read, with great pleasure, your short chronicle; have sent it to Mr. Moses Browne, and received it again: hope you can spare it till I peruse it a second time.

I have lately been presented with a magnificent and costly Hebrew Bible, in four volumes folio, published by Father Houbigant, with which he has intermixed the apocryphal Greek books, styled by him *Deutero-canonici.* Have you seen this work, or heard its character? The author has subjoined notes to each chapter, which are employed chiefly in vindicating his alterations of the text. He is a bold enterprising writer, takes great liberties with the sacred text, and makes very many alterations, often without the authority of any manuscript, purely from his own critical judgment, or critical conjecture. If at any time you have a mind to know his opinion upon any diffi-

cult text, I will either transcribe it in his own words, or give you the substance of it in English.

His interpretation of Gen. xxii. 14, puts me in mind of an expression in your short chronicle. "It is my opinion, Abraham had never so clear a sight of the day of Christ as at this time." I fancy you will not be displeased with a copy of the learned Jesuit's criticism. "Vocavit nomen loci ejus 'IEUE IRAT,' Dominus videbitur. Non videtur ne ab futuro 'CAH,' aberremus. Non videbit, non modo quia non additur quid fit Deus visurus, sed etiam quia in tota illa visione, hominis est videre, Domini videri; propter quam causam Deus locum istum mox nomine visionis insigniebat. Nimirum Deus Abrahamo id ostendit, quod Abraham vidit et gavisus est, seu Filium promissionis unigenitum pro humano genere victimam olim futuram. Atque hoc illud est, quod memoriæ sempiternæ Abraham consecrabat, cum ita subjungeret, Hodie in monte Dominus videbitur; illud hodie sic accipiens, ut accepit Paulus apostolus illid Davidis, Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis; quod hodie tamdiu durat, quamdiu sæcula illa durabunt, de quibus apostolus, donec hodie cognominatur. Errant, qui sic interpretantur, quasi Moses renarret usurpatum suo tempore proverbium. Nam si sic erit, non jam docebit Abraham, cur huic loco nomen fecerit, Dominus videbitur; quam tamen nominum notationem in sacris paginis non omittunt ii, quicumque nomina rebus imponunt. Quod contra plane docebit, Abraham, si de eo Moses sic narrat, vocavit nomen loci hujus, Deus videbitur; nam dixit, In monte Deus videbitur." This is a truly grand and delightful sense; would bid fair for preference, if it could be sufficiently established. But, besides other things which might be objected to this interpretation, it seems probable that the Lord did not appear to Abraham, only called to him "UKEDA." Christ says of Abraham, that he saw, not his person, but his day; ημερα signifies, I suppose, much the same "IDERUT RURU," the remarkables, τα επισημα, in any one's life. He saw by faith his incarnation, obedience, death, all satisfying atonement, &c. Is not this the meaning of our Lord?

Now I am upon the subject of difficult texts and exact interpretations, let me desire your opinion of Isa. xxx. 18. I have generally looked upon it as a declaration and a display of God's infinitely free grace, and profusely rich goodness. The great Vitringa considers it in quite a different light. "Moram trahet 'IHEBE,' Jehovah (are his words) in gratia vobis facienda." For which sense he adds the following reason; "quia delicti gravitas repentinam gratiam non ferebat, secundum rationes justitiæ divinæ." The next clause he thus explains; Proptera, "IRUM," *i. e.* exaltabitur judici et justitia, antequam gratiam in vos exerceat. —Houbigant, on this verse, does nothing more than offer a small alteration, for "IREKIM" he would read "IREZIM," *præstolabitur*, that this verb may correspond with the preceding "IEKEH."

I proposed to have closed the plan of Theron and Aspasio with an explicit and pretty copious treatise on evangelical holiness, or obedience; and to have shown my true believer in his dying moments. If your thoughts should happen to take such a turn, be so good, dear sir, as to suggest what you think the most advisable and advantageous way of managing this important point. This would most effectually stop the mouths of Arminians, and be the best security against the abuses of Antinomians. I could wish, if it were the Lord's will, that I might live to furnish out one more volume of this kind, and then, *manum de tabula*.

As the new edition is partly finished, and the press proceeding at a great rate, and as there will be some few emendations, you will give me leave to present you with a set of what, I hope, will be least imperfect. Till this edition is finished, let me be your debtor in point of promise; and in point of affection and gratitude, I will be your debtor so long as I am, &c.

LETTER CXXXIX.

May 21, 1755.

DEAR SIR,—My letters to you must always begin with thanks, and will generally close with inquiries.

I am quite a proselyte to your guarded and sober method of using the Hebrew manuscript: though I talked some time ago with an adept in the sacred language, and most devout student of God's word, who would not so much as hear of alterations, from any authority, or on any account whatever; corrections in an inspired book, were to him little better than sacrilege. The present copy of the Bible, he apprehended, was in no degree, not even a single jot or tittle, wrong. I subscribe your reasons for rejecting Father Houbigant's, and in not admitting Mr. Kennicott's exposition of the Hebrew adagy, "ITHUE IRAE."

I shall treasure up your remark on the relative "ASHER," and wish you had the designing or the superintending of the cuts, which the printer of Mr. Stackhouse's History of the Bible says, cost eight hundred pounds. I am delighted with your interpretation of Isaiah xxx. 18. What a charming representation it gives us of the

Divine long-suffering, tender mercy, and profuse goodness! O that I might live under the clear manifestation of these lovely perfections!

In Psalm xxxvi. 1. Houbigant would read "LEBU," instead of "LEBI," and thus translates the clause, "Loquitur impius juxta; improbitatem duae est in medio cordis ejus."

Instead of "ZIUU," Psalm cxxxiii. 3, he would introduce "SHIAU," and justifies his alteration from Deut. iv. 48. Did you ever observe this passage, and compare it with the text under consideration?

Psalm lxviii. 16. for "ERSHENI" he would substitute "EREDSHU," "mons pinguis;" which alteration he thus explains, and thus vindicates: "Est mons Dei, mons Sion, in quem asportatur arca fœderis; qui mons, collatione facta cum cæteris montibus, quorum laus est pinguedo sive ubertas, laudatur ob ejus pinguedinum; ex quo, videlicet, tempore eum montem habitat ille, qui pinguem fecit domum Obed-edom. Mons altitudinum, altero in membro, est attributum montus Sion, cæteris circum montibus altioris. Itaque mons Basan nihil hic ad rem; præsertim cum de monte Sion ea hoc in psalmo dicantur, propter quæ ille mons sit monti Sion longe anteponendus. Gen. xx. 16, Ego dedi fratri tuo argenti mille pondo, erit id tibi pro velaminibus oculorum, seu tui tibi aderunt, seu cæteri quicunque homines, ne forte te concupiscant. 'UGEBETHETH,' verbum pro verbo, nam concupiscilibus es ob tuam pulchritudinem; ex 'NECET,' Arabic. verbo, ducere uxorem vel ejus matrimonium ambire." Do not you think this method of deducing the sense of Hebrew words from the present Arabic is precarious? If we knew the precise signification which Arabic words bore in the days of Moses, and what words were commonly used in that early age, there would be surer ground to proceed upon. But I apprehend the Arabic language has undergone great alterations, and received great improvements, since that period; that Golius's Lexicon is no more the Arabic used in the time of Moses, than Johnson's Dictionary is the English spoke in the days of Chaucer.

My best thanks for your plan. I propose to follow the track of Mr. Marshall in his book entitled "The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification." You are acquainted, I presume, with this valuable piece of spiritual and experimental divinity; THIS, and Mr. Erskine's sermons, led me into those notions of faith which are delivered in Dialogue xvi. If you have that treatise, (Marshall's I mean), I should be much obliged for your opinion of it. You ask how Houbigant reads Gen. xi. 32. Thus, "Feruntque dies Thare annorum quadraginta quinque supra centum." This, he says, is according to the Samaritan copy; and adds: "Cui scriptioni adhærendum esse, notat Sam. Bochartus; aliter enim cum Hebræo cod. pugnantia dicturum Stephanum diaconum, Acts vii. 4. Quod sic probatur: dictim fuit, ver. 26. Thare fuisse annorum 70, cum gigneret Abrahamum: Infra dicetur, (cap. xii. ver. 4.) Abrahamum fuisse annorum 75, cum ex Haran in Canaan profectus est. Ex quo efficitur ut Thare, tempore illius profectionis, annum ageret 145, atque adeo ut Thare, si quidem vixerit annos 205, fuerit totos annos 60 huic profectioni superstes. Quæ cum ita sint, non jam intelligitur, quare Stephanus dixeret Abrahamum fuisse, mortuo jam Thare, in Canaan profectum. Aut fallitur Stephanus, aut statuendum cum Sam, codice, non plus vixisse Thare, quam annos 145. Nam per eum numerum, libri Genesis cum Stephano discordia conciliatur.—Erroris fontem aperuit Bochartus, in litera 'K' 100, pro 'M' 40, exarata. Erroris fons eo manifestior, quod in codicibus Germanicis litera 'K' pede hoc modo decurtato, 'E' fere similis est literæ 'M.'"

His marginal reading of Exod. xii. 40. is thus:—According to the Samaritan text, "ISHRAEL BENI UMISHN METZRIM INARO CENOI GARO ISHBU ASHER UANUTHM." While he thus translates (for his Hebrew text is conformed to the common standard, and only in the translation his corrections are introduced), "Commoratio autem filiorum Israel, et patrum eorum qui in terra Canaan et in terra Ægypti habitarunt fuit," &c. In his note on this passage, he refers the reader to his prolegomena; where, after he has proved that, by admitting the Samaritan reading, difficulties, otherwise inextricable, are cleared up and removed, he takes to task Grotius, Le Clerc, and Buxtorf. You will perhaps be willing to see his manner, which on many occasions is like the *scelerata sinapis*, sharp as mustard. "Non incommode, inquiebat, Grotius, sic explicatur: Exilium illud Ægyptiacum durasse usque ad annum 430, ex quo Deus Abrahamo præsignificaverat. In qua Grotiana explicatione Grotium desidero. Num exilium erat Egyptiacum, tum cum Deus Abrahamo præsignificabat? Vel cui persuadebat Grotius, Mosen hæc verba, ex quo Deus Abrahamo præsignificaverat, cum dicere vellet, omisisse? Quæ verba cum suo marte Grotius; et sacra pagina invita, inferciat, num huic potius credemus, ut ea verba omiserit Moses, sine quibus intelligi non posset, imo secum ipse pugnaret, quam Samaritanis, quorum diligentia commonemur Judæos scribas fuisse negligentes? Sed audiendus Joannes Clericus. Malim, inquit, ἀκυρολογιαν in Masoretico codice agnoscere, quam mendam. Vigilas, Clerice,

cum hæc loqueris? Negas Hebr. in volumine esse mendam, hoc est, errorem a scribis Judæis profectum; eo potius inclinas, ut sit ακυρολογια, hoc est, Mosis ipsius in temporibus notandis indiligentia? Egregiam profecto indiligentiam, ut Moses scripserit annos 430, cum scribere debuisset annos 215, eo præsertim loco, in quo tempora tam diligenter notat Moses, ut non modo annos computet, sed ipsum etiam ponat anni mensem, mensisque ipsum diem. Quid Buxtorfium dicemus, non modo, ut cæteri interpretes hic tergiversantem, sed etiam plane negantem, fuisse hic quidquam a Judæis scribis omissum? Heus tu, Buxtorfi! Illamne fuisse Mosis scriptionem putas, qua Moses Mosi contradicat, et aperte mentiri videatur? Videatur sane, inquit; sed nihil quidquam amplius Mosen scripsisse mihi quidem constat. Quonam igitur pacto, Buxtorfi, Mosen cum Mose conciliabis? Non conciliabo, inquit, si non potero, sed veto in hodierno cod. Heb. quidquam addi et suppleri. Quid ita? Quia, inquit, codices Heb. omnes hic consentiunt, et illud additamentum ignorat. Quod si autem scribæ alicujus lapsu, vel etiam plurium excidisset, non potuisset id fieri in omnibus exemplaribus. Sed Buxtorfium nunc linquimus, Buxtorfianasque nugas, quoniam eas sumus non multo post confutaturi." I intended to have laid before you a specimen of his very bold, and, I fear, rash attempts upon the sacred texts; but these I must defer till I have the pleasure of subscribing myself on another paper, your most obliged and truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CXL.

Dear Sir,—Herewith I send you the new edition of Theron and Aspasio. It desires your acceptance and your prayers, that it may be for the praise of the glory of God's grace in Christ, and for the edification of his people in faith and holiness.

You will find Dialogue xvi. somewhat altered, and rendered, I hope, less incorrect than in the former editions. It contains the genuine sentiments of my heart. But if they recede a hair's breadth from the unerring standard, if they differ in one jot or tittle from God's holy word, in that jot or tittle I most earnestly wish the world may not receive them, and that I myself may have grace to retract them. What you meet with that appears contrary to the λογος υγιης, ακαταγνωστος, freely point out. This will please, this will profit; and therefore this will oblige, dear Sir, your affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—You will permit me to keep your manuscripts a little longer; one of them, the Scriptural Chronicle, a person is transcribing. May the blessed Jesus transcribe his word and his image on our heart.

*LETTER CXLI.

My poor Fellow-Sinners,—I received a letter from you, and should have visited you; but my health is so much decayed, and my spirits are so exceedingly tender, that I could not well bear the sight of your confinement, your chains, and your miserable circumstances, as I can hardly bear the thoughts of your approaching execution, and your extreme danger of everlasting destruction. But, because I cannot come in person, I have sent you the following lines, which I hope you will consider, and which I beseech the God of all grace to accompany with his blessing.

You have been already condemned at an earthly tribunal; you are also condemned by the law of God, for thus it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10. If every violation of the divine law exposes you to a curse, what a multitude of curses are ready to fall upon your unhappy souls! And remember this is not the curse of a mortal man, but of the great, eternal, infinite God. If it was dismal to hear an earthly judge command you to be hanged by the neck till you are dead, how much more terrible to hear the Almighty Judge denounce that unalterable sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Matt. xxv. 41. Had you committed but one sin, this would have been your deserved doom: "The wages of sin," of every sin, "is death," Rom. vi. 23. How much more of those manifold sins and multiplied transgressions of which your consciences must accuse you. You are soon to suffer the punishment of the gallows, and you are liable to the vengeance of the most high God; for thus saith the holy word, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," Rom. i. 18. If against all and every instance of ungodliness, then how much more against your crimes, which have been of the most abominable and horrid kind! "The wrath of God!" Tremendous word! who knoweth the weight and terror of his

* This letter was wrote from Weston-Favell to two condemned malefactors in Northampton gaol, (namely, James Smart and Joseph Browne) about the middle of July 1755

wrath? At his rebuke the rocks melt like wax, the earth is shaken out of its place, and the pillars of heaven tremble. How then can you endure the furiousness of his wrath, and the severity of his vengeance? and that not for a day, a month, or a year, but through all the ages of eternity! Yet this is the doom of "them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." What can you do in this distressed condition? What, indeed! If you had a thousand years to live, you could not atone for one offence. How then can you make satisfaction for millions of provocations in the space of a few days? Alas! you are lost, utterly lost, in yourselves irrecoverably lost. May the God of all power make you sensible of your undone state! sensible that you are upon the brink, the very brink of an amazing, an unfathomable downfall. Perhaps you may say, Is there no hope then? is the door of heaven shut, and without any possibility of being opened to us? Must we sink into unquenchable burnings; and is there not so much as a twig for us to catch at? Yes, my poor fellow-sinners, there is not only a twig, but a tree, even the tree of life, a sure support, which if the Lord enables you to lay hold on, you may yet, even yet, be saved. Oh! beg of his wonderful goodness to accompany what you are going to read with his Holy Spirit.

Christ, the all-glorious Son of God, pitied the deplorable case of such sinners. He not only pitied, but resolved to succour and relieve them. For this purpose he came into the world, and was made man. Nay, more, he came into the place, and stood in the stead of sinners. Because we had broke the commandments of the law, he fulfilled them in all their perfection. Because we deserved the punishment of the law, he sustained it in its utmost extremity. He became poor, and had not where to lay his head, though heaven and earth were all his own. He submitted to scorn and reproach, though all the angels of God are bidden to worship him. Nay, he was condemned to death, the most shameful and tormenting death, far more shameful, and unspeakably more tormenting, than the death which you must shortly undergo. He suffered unknown pangs in his body, and inconceivable anguish in his soul, from the indignation of God. In a word, he suffered all that shame, all that torment, all that vengeance, which the unnumbered sins of the whole world deserved. Here then is your door of hope. Sins are borne by Christ; and though there be much iniquity, there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. Wrath is borne by Christ, so that sinners, who deserve eternal vengeance, are reconciled to God, and saved from wrath through him, Rom. v. 9, 10. A righteousness is wrought by Christ, a perfect and everlasting righteousness, such as brings incomparably greater honour to God's law, than all our transgressions bring dishonour. By all this, he has merited and obtained a full deliverance, and a complete redemption. Are you not ready to cry out, O blessed Saviour! O precious redemption! What a happiness, if we might be interested in this Saviour, and partake of this redemption! Millions of worlds for such a blessing! You need not give millions of worlds, no, nor any individual thing. These blessings are given freely, without money, and without price, without any deserving qualifications in us. All that are justified, are justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But we are sinners, vile sinners; we have not only nothing good, but much and grievous guilt. The Lord convince you of this more and more! Yet remember for whom Christ died; "he died for the ungodly." What says St. Paul? "In due time Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. v. 6." He died for the unjust. What says St. Peter? "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust," 1 Pet. iii. 18. What says our Lord himself? "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Are you not ungodly men? Are you not unjust persons? Are you not lost creatures? For such, even for such, the divine Jesus died. Wonderful love! adorable compassion! The Lord enable you to lay hold on this hope set before you! Perhaps you may say, We are not only sinners, but the chief of sinners. O that you were convinced of this! To be the chief of sinners makes you unpardonable before men; but this is no difficulty with Christ, and should be no hinderance of your coming to Christ. Christ's merit and righteousness are infinite. They are as able to satisfy for a debt of ten thousand talents, as for a debt of a single farthing. Hear what the Scriptures saith upon this subject: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief," 1 Tim. i. 15. He came, not to save sinners only, but the very chief of sinners. And he is "able to save them to the very uttermost." But our sins are heinous, they have been often repeated, and long continued in. What says the apostle? "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Another apostle declares, "By him," by the divinely excellent Redeemer, "all that believe are justified from all things;" from all accusations, be

they ever so numerous; from all iniquities, be they ever so enormous. Nay, so wonderfully efficacious is the power of his death, that, through his great atonement, sins which are as crimson, are made white, white as snow, Isa. i. 18. But will Christ vouchsafe his great salvation to us? Hear his own words, "Him that cometh to me" for pardon and salvation, "I will in no wise cast out." Be his guilt ever so great, this shall be no bar. I will not on any consideration reject or deny his suit. Only let him come as a poor undone creature, and he shall find me willing and mighty to save. Nay, he invites you to come. These are his gracious words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden," heavy laden with sin and misery, "and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. I will deliver you from going down into the pit; I will deliver you from the vengeance of eternal fire. All your sin shall be upon me, and all my righteousness shall be upon you. Go to a great man on earth, beg of him to use his interest in your behalf; he would scorn to take notice of you. But your dear, tender, compassionate, most condescending Saviour, invites you to come to him, and assures you he will not abhor nor cast you out. Go to your earthly judge, entreat him on your bended knees to pardon you: He perhaps cannot, must not: the laws forbid him. But it is not so with Jesus Christ: he has made a full satisfaction for sin; he has made an infinite atonement for sin; and were your sins ten thousand thousand times greater than they are, before the power of his death they would all vanish away; by the washing of his blood they would all be as though they had never been.

This then should be the one desire of your souls, your incessant prayer to God, that you may come to Christ, that you may believe in Christ, that you may be found in Christ: then you will not perish, though you deserve it, but have everlasting life through his name; then you will have just the same foundation for your hope, as I must myself have when I shall depart this life. When I shall be summoned to the great tribunal, what will be my plea, what my dependence? Nothing but Christ! Christ, would I say, has been wounded for my sins, therefore they will not be punished in me. Christ has fulfilled all righteousness in my stead, therefore I trust to be justified when I am judged. I am a poor unworthy sinner; but worthy is the Lamb that was slain, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for whose sake I shall receive both pardoning mercy, and everlasting glory. This is my only hope, and this is as free for you as it is for your friend and fellow-sinner, &c.

P. S.—What I have written, I shall beg of God to bless; and will attend you wi my prayers, though I cannot visit you in person.

LETTER CXLII.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 10, 1755.

My dear Friend,—You may justly wonder that I have not acknowledged the favour of your last, long before this. Do me the justice to believe, that this is not owing to the least disesteem of your correspondence, or any insensibility of your kindness. I hope my heart is, though sadly depraved, yet sincerely grateful; and I am sure, I esteem your letters as treasures. Though I destroy almost all I receive, every one of yours is preserved. Let me, therefore, earnestly beg that you will not follow my example, but suffer your letters to be much more speedy in their arrival than mine. You would more easily excuse me if you knew me. The grasshopper is a burden to me. Every blast blows me down, or my continual indisposition and inconceivable languors pierce through me. I now hang a swelled face over my paper; occasioned only by taking the air yesterday in my chair, and finding a sharper atmosphere than for many weeks I had been accustomed to. Pray for me, dear sir, that, established in Christ, and strong in his faith, I may be looking for, and hasten to the coming of the day of God; when this poor, enervated, crazy body, will (to the everlasting glory of free grace) be made like unto Christ's glorious body.

I live with my mother and sister. Our method is, every morning at nine, when we breakfast, to read a verse or two from the Bible, and make it the subject of our conversation. The other day, we were reading in Psalm lxxxiv. 4. Immediately a doubt arose in my mind, how the fact, which is here affirmed, could possibly happen. Could the sparrows and swallows build their nests, lay their eggs, and hatch their young, on God's altar, which was every morning and evening statedly, and I suppose many other times in the day occasionally, surrounded by crowds of worshippers, on which the sacred fire was constantly burning, and which was in a manner covered with flame and smoke, whenever the sacrifices were offered. Now to have birds lay aside all their fear of man, their greater dread of fire, and make such an altar their house, is strange, is scarce credible, and must, if true, be miraculous. Consulting Houbigant, I find he was sensible of the difficulty, and solves it, not from any manuscript, but from his own invention, thus: "Nos vero, ne oratio trunca maneat, sup-

plemus ante hæc duo verba, Ego vero quando tandem, tacito verbo, adero ad, quod solet reticeri."

I have met with other bold strokes in this commentator, which I want to submit to your examination. But these let me postpone, in order to desire your opinion concerning the plan of my new work; which, with a weak hand and a desponding heart, I have sketched out, determined to try, (though with very little hope of being enabled to execute), resting satisfied in this persuasion, that the issue of things is in the hand of the Lord, and he will frustrate or accomplish, as he knows to be most expedient.

The Plan of the Supplement to Theron and Aspasio.

Pleasure and happiness of Christ's religion; (for I am of the same mind with Mr. Marshall in his Treatise on Sanctification, namely, that we must partake of the comforts of the gospel, before we can practise the duties of the law.) Theron oppressed with fears, on account of his numerous sins. Discouraged with doubts, on account of his imperfect obedience. The cordials of the gospel re-administered, with some additional spirit and strength. Objections to assurance of faith, stated, discussed, answered. Vital holiness; its nature, necessity, excellency. Its grand efficient, the blessed Spirit. Its principal instrument, true faith; mixed with which, the Scriptures, the Lord's supper, prayer, the divine promises, are powerful and effectual means; disunited from which, they are a dead letter and insignificant ordinances. The evangelical principles of holiness, such as, "I beseech you by the mercies of God —Ye are bought with a price—Ye are the temples of the living God," &c.; all these privileges, though not hereditary, yet indefeasible; or the final perseverance of the believer. Our friends part; renew their correspondence; Theron desires to glorify the God of his salvation, asks advice concerning the best method of family worship, educating children, instructing servants, edifying acquaintance. On each of these particulars Aspasio satisfies his inquiry, enlarges on the subject of education, especially of daughters; as that seems to be most neglected, or the proper way of conducting it least understood. Letter on the covenant of grace, comprising the substance, and being a kind of recapitulation of the three foregoing volumes. Aspasio seized with a sudden and fatal illness; his sentiments and behaviour in his last moments.

If, dear sir, you see any thing in this plan that is improper, correct it; any thing that is defective, supply it; and if any thoughts occur on any of the topics, be so kind as to suggest them. Pray have you ever seen a book, lately presented to me, and entitled, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, with notes by Mr. Boston? If you have seen it, you will not deny me the satisfaction of knowing your sentiments concerning it. Yesterday a learned minister (a stranger) called upon me, and, among other subjects, we talked of that remarkable passage in Isaiah, "She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." What do you think is the exact meaning of the prophet? "Gekelim" is a peculiar word. Houbigant translates the clause, "Postquam pro peccatis suis multis dedit Domino duplices pœnas;" and supposes the two captivities, Assyrian and Roman, to be the double punishment. My pious visitant referred it to the satisfaction made by Jesus Christ. I objected, that God, not the church, received this. To which he replied, That the church receives the benefit of the satisfaction; and the expression might be synecdochical, the thing purchased for the thing purchasing. This interpretation, I fancy, would have been clearer and less exceptionable, if he had used the word *punishment*, instead of *satisfaction*. Then, as Christ and the church are one, his sufferings might be called hers, and his righteousness is reckoned hers. Vitringa gives a future signification to the verb "Lakethe:" She shall receive, not double punishment, but double blessings, agreeably to that doctrine taught by St. Paul, "Where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound." I shall be glad of your opinion on this point; glad of your assistance in my purposed work; and, above all, glad of your fervent prayers for, dear sir, your obliged and faithful friend.

LETTER CXLIII.

Friday evening.

My dear Friend,—As to the matter of defending me, I think *non est tanti*. I am ten thousand times more for your conversing like a Christian on every occasion. Take all proper opportunities of glorifying your divine Master, and be spreading abroad the savour of his blessed name. It would bring dignity to your character, I am persuaded, and would command reverence even from gainsayers, if you was sometimes to make a frank declaration on this head, and act accordingly. Do not scruple to bid your patients seek to God for a blessing; when they are recovered, remind them of their obligations to the Almighty Physician: they are restored to health, not for the poor purposes of eating and drinking a little more, but to acquaint themselves with

Christ Jesus, to prepare for eternity, and make their salvation sure. This would be truly graceful, might do much good; and should any one find fault with this practice, he must not pretend to the piety of a Christian; he has not the religion of a heathen. Such a one should remember the conduct, and consider the sentiments of your brother *Iapis*.

Non hæc humanis opibus, non arte magistra
Proveniunt; neque te Ænea, mea dextera servat;
Major agit Deus, atque opera ad majora remittit.
VIRG. ÆN. lib. xii.

No mortal work is THIS; no cure of mine;
Nor art's effect, but done by hands divine;
'Tis God Æneas to the battle sends;
'Tis God preserves his life for greater ends.

Thanks for your advice about what I recommended to your consideration, and about my own health: God has been better to me than my apprehensive heart expected. O that, so long as I have breath, it may be employed to his honour, who forgiveth all our sins, and healeth all our infirmities, and when he heals them not, will make them a blessing.

Do, my dear friend, persist, in a prudent way, to bear your testimony for a Master, who has bought you with his very life, and intends to make you partaker of his everlasting kingdom. If this does you or yours any real harm, reproach me with it when we shall both stand in the presence of the whole world, and before the tribunal of our Judge.—Ever yours, while, &c.

P. S.—You tell me, that "your business has lain so wide, and you have been so much hurried this sickly time, that you have scarcely had a quarter of an hour to yourself for these last three weeks." O, my dear friend! how much soever you may be hurried by the distance and the multiplicity of your avocations, do not forget to pray for that wisdom which is profitable (or useful) to direct us (Eccl. x. 10.) even in the smallest mattters, much more in all great and weighty affairs. You who move in so conspicuous a sphere, so large a field of action, must have very particular occasion, very pressing necessity for divine direction; and therefore that important ejaculation, DIRECT ME, O LORD, should ever be uppermost in your thoughts. "Take ye heed, watch and pray; this is the kind admonition of the blessed Jesus, who well knows the human frame, and sees how very liable we are to be drawn aside by a variety of temptations with which we are daily surrounded.

LETTER CXLIV.

DEAR SIR,—As the interval between the hour of our dissolution, and the day of resurrection, will, in all probability, be very considerable, much longer than the time of our continuance on earth; it is a very reasonable and important inquiry to examine into the circumstances of this state. The Scripture, our infallible director, which is (so copious upon all the grand articles of religion, and) silent upon nothing that relates to the true happiness of mankind, has not left us without information in this particular: Whereas all other writers grope in the dark; not one of them has been able to draw back the curtain, or give us (any) the least insight into the invisible world; it is to them, and in all their systems, an absolute *terra incognita*. A few of the scriptural discoveries may be seen in the answer to the following queries.

1*st*, When the souls, the souls of the righteous, depart from the body, by whom are they received? By holy angels. The angels were ministering spirits to them in the days of their flesh, and will be their guard and their convoy when they relinquish the earthly tabernacle. When Lazarus died, he was carried by angels. What a comfortable privilege is this! not to be left solitary and desolate, like a shipwrecked mariner on some unknown coast; but to be under the guidance and protection of those benevolent beings!

2*dly*, In what place are they lodged? This is described, not from our ideas of locality, or any properties of space, but from the society and enjoyments. It is not very material whether they are above or below, in the heaven of heavens (which, I think, is most probable) or in some separate mansion. A disembodied spirit, if under the wrath of God, must everywhere be extremely miserable; if surrounded with his favour, will everywhere be exceedingly happy. To such a spirit, that has no longer any connexion with sensible things, God's smile must be heaven, God's frown must be hell. Wherever this region lies, we are sure it lies under the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; Christ is there, and where he is present, happiness cannot be absent. "Thou shalt be with me," is his promise to the penitent thief. Abraham is there, the friend of God, and the father of the faithful. Lazarus, we are told, was carried into Abraham's bosom; and where he resides, where all the children of God and heirs of glory dwell, there must be pleasures; such pleasures, that the place is called paradise; "Thou shalt be with me in paradise." The delightful garden of Eden, which the Lord himself planted, and which innocent man inhabited, was incomparably the finest, noblest spot in this sublunary world; and this is used to give us some faint representation of those blessed abodes, where the souls and spirits of the

righteous remain till the shout of the archangel and the trump of God summon them.

3dly, How soon are they lodged in this desirable situation? Without delay. I find no mention of any intermediate purgation, or of any period for inactivity and forgetfulness: "To-day shalt thou be with me," is our Lord's expression; and it is observable, that the Jewish day was very near closing, when our Saviour gave up the ghost; nearer still when that converted malefactor expired. "I have a desire to be dissolved," says St. Paul, "and to be with Christ;" he speaks of his release from clay, and his introduction into the Redeemer's presence, as instantaneous. No sooner does the former commence, but the latter takes place. What an encouragement is this to fight the good fight of faith, and finish our course with alacrity and diligence, since we are not to wait in wishful but disappointed expectation! No, the very moment our warfare is accomplished, our reward begins! Which reminds me of another inquiry.

4thly, What is the condition of holy souls, in this separate state?

1. They rest from their labours; from all the disorders that afflicted their bodies, from all the temptations that disquieted their souls. They are no longer ridiculed and persecuted by ungodly men. They have no more conflict with the powers of darkness and their own corruptions; sin and sorrow cease eternally. They are freed, entirely freed, from every evil.

2. They enter into peace. They have then peace with God, peace in their own thoughts, peace with fellow-saints, which passeth all understanding. Peace implies a positive happiness. Peace, in the Scriptural language, denotes all manner of blessing, and such is its import in the preceding passage. In this large extent will it be made good to the righteous. When they relinquish the earthly tabernacle, the scales of ignorance fall from their understandings; their will is wonderfully conformed to Christ's; every weight drops off from their affections; and their holiness is exceedingly confirmed. They are honoured with nearer approaches to God, they are favoured with clearer manifestations of his glory, they feel richer emanations of his love, and are more and more transformed into his image; every doubt vanishes, and they rejoice in the prospect, the assured and refreshing prospect of receiving all the fulness of their everlasting felicity. I said fulness; for though the felicity of the soul upon its dismission from mortality is great, is high, is to us inconceivable; yet it will not be complete till the body is reunited to it, reanimated by it. Then that will not only be rescued from corruption, but made like unto Christ's glorious body, will be dignified with divine approbation, and that before the largest assembly of men and angels; they will receive a crown of righteousness; they will sit on thrones, and judge the apostate angels; they will then possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

What is said of the righteous may lead us to some proper conceptions with regard to the wicked and their state; the one is the reverse of the other: as they were quite dissimilar in their life, in their death they are equally different. If the righteous are committed to the care of benevolent angels, the wicked, it is very probable, are abandoned to the insults and rage of malevolent spirits. If the righteous are admitted into mansions of bliss, the wicked are consigned over to the places of horror and torment, where is all the misery which is expressed by weeping and wailing; all that self-condemnation and anguish, which is expressed by gnashing of teeth. If the righteous enjoy the calm of uninterrupted tranquillity, and the light of perpetual sunshine, the wicked are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day; wearied by their own ungovernable passions, stung by eager but unsatisfied desires, haunted by a stern upbraiding conscience. In a word, while the righteous are looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and their Saviour Jesus Christ; they are trembling under the dismal apprehensions of that dreadful day, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed in flaming fire.

I add only a remark on that text of St. John, to which we are so much obliged in this inquiry, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," &c. The Lord must certainly signify the Lord Jesus Christ. To die in him, must, I think, imply dying in his faith, so as to be one with him; interested in his mercy, renewed by his Spirit, and conformed in some prevailing degree to his image. May this be the state of our souls, while we live here, and when we depart hence. Then that will be fulfilled, to our unspeakable and eternal comfort, which is spoken by another apostle, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I am, dear sir, yours sincerely.

LETTER CXLV.

Weston, Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—I thought of you in a particular manner on Thursday, being the sad anniversary on which your late excellent lady resigned this life; and at the same time I thought on those tender lines,

Jamque dies, ni fallor, adest; quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum, sic Dii voluistis, habebo.*
Virg. Æn. lib. v.

I cannot but take notice of the wisdom and piety of my favourite poet; he teaches his hero to resolve all afflictive and dark dispensations into the gracious will of God, and to derive his consolation from this belief. *Sic Dii voluistis*, is a sort of imitation of the good old priest Eli, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." It is not much unlike the exemplary acknowledgment of the patriarch Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!"

I am thankful for your present of *Vanierii prædium Rusticum.* It is a very beautiful piece: *uni Virgilio secundus;* the most elegant and correct Latin composition that I have met with among the moderns.

I have no fault to find, and no alteration to offer, with regard to the little tract that you submit to my correction. But what shall I say to my dear friend himself? Oh! what opportunities of doing good, substantial and immortal good, do you lose, do you squander away! Opportunities, that are flying from you upon the swiftest wings of time; and when once gone, are never to be recovered. I do not so much as think of your neglecting business; but do let the world see, that business may be managed, great business managed, and yet Christ and eternal ages not forgot. Let men see, that the comforts of Christianity, the privileges of the gospel, are so truly delightful, as to be the most effectual sovereign refreshment under the fatigues of a burdensome employ. Thus doing, you would be a credit and high recommendation to religion; and blessed would you be, if your Master, when he cometh, should find you so doing. You will excuse my freedom; and in return, I will not cease to pray, that the "love of Christ may constrain you," 2 Cor. v. 14. I am, &c.

LETTER CXLVI.

Tuesday morning.

My dear Friend,—Well might Dr. Doddridge say, "that in Saurin's sermons, the excellencies of Demosthenes and Cicero were united." Never did I meet with any thing equal to the passages which the Doctor was so obliging as to translate, purposely to give me some ideas of this celebrated writer. He seems to have understood the gospel well, and all the powers of oratory were combined in him. I dare say he preached from his heart, and the grace of God accompanied his words. If I have been so much affected, merely by this desultory translation, how much more should I be transported, was I (like you) sufficiently skilled in the French language to read the original itself! Saurin, it seems, was a Protestant; and I am told, that in Holland, where he exercised his ministry, the streets were so crowded for several hours before the service began, that it was very difficult to gain admission. Is it not astonishing, that the sermons of so popular a preacher, and so eminent a writer, should not as yet have been put into an English dress? But this I presume is owing to the difficulty of doing justice to an author of his extraordinary genius. I am well aware, that few are equal to such an undertaking; but if there was a spirited translation of these animating sermons, published in weekly numbers, they would be well received, and might, through the divine blessing, be the means of doing much good to the community.

I have been enabled, blessed for ever be God! to perform my office, and preach to a crowded congregation. "Jesus said the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" was the text. O that it may be the power of God to the salvation of the hearers! I hope, my disorder in my head, and pain in my teeth, are not increased, though I felt the cold air breathe upon my face; for the church was so thronged, that it was not practicable to shut the door. O for faith in the Almighty Guardian, the Almighty Physician!

This, I presume, will find you safely returned from London to your own habitation; but though come back to your resting-place, yet more and more sensible that we are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

I hope ere long to see you at Weston; for I can assure you, my dear sir, that amongst the many, many friends that dearly love you, no one can have a more affectionate regard for you than, yours unalterably, &c.

LETTER CXLVII.

Sept. 25, 1755.

Dear Sir,—I lately received a letter from my very valuable friend Mr. ——, an extract of which I here transcribe, as he has made some just remarks on Mr. Burnham's blamable behaviour, in refusing the help of a physician. I believe you can answer for me, that I shall never be guilty of that fault! as I think altogether with the wise son of Sirach, that "the Lord hath

* The English of which is, "Now the day, if I mistake not, is at hand, which (such has been the will of Heaven) I shall always account a day of sorrow, a day to be honoured."

created the physician, and that such are to be regarded for the uses we may have of them. The Lord likewise hath created medicines out of the earth, and he that is wise will not abhor them," Eccl'us. xxxviii.

"I have," says my correspondent, "been reading Burnham's Pious Memorials, as it was published with a recommendatory preface by you, in behalf of his distressed widow. The dying behaviour of Dr. Andrew Rivet, page 212, and Dr. Peter du Moulin, page 263, charms me exceedingly. Every word has its weight, and shines like a well-set diamond in a ring; or, as Solomon expresses it, like an apple of gold in a picture of silver. Mr. Burnham was undoubtedly an excellent man, but he does not seem to come up to these in divine knowledge. Methinks I do not so well approve of his refusing the help of a PHYSICIAN, page 431, and the slight with which he treated such a proposal. It does indeed shew, that he lived quite above the fear of death; but at the same time it shews great weakness of mind. Life and health are mercies in the esteem of Heaven; and the dying Christian ought to esteem every thing as God esteems it. Suppose such a one desires to die, yet still he ought to use every lawful means to live, to make the will of God his own, and to be willing to continue even out of heaven, as long as his heavenly Father pleases. The same weakness of mind appears in his desiring his friends not to pray for his life, and in his being sorry that they made so much ado, page 433. Had he requested them to pray for him importunately, yet in humble submission to the will of God, and to be sure to acquiesce in it, whether for life or death, methinks it had been better. An earnest desire of a speedy dissolution has led some pious martyrs, and some dying Christians too, into a mistake, which it is proper to take notice of, but more proper to avoid."

How do you approve of the following method, in conversing with the survivors after the loss of a dear child or friend? It is merely a sketch; yet a due regularity is preserved by the three divisions; and some of the heads in each division are to be enlarged upon or omitted, and others added occasionally. The use of such sketches may be seen in the Preface to Mr. Richard's "Hints for Religious Conversation with the Afflicted;" whose plan, though some of his hints are not sufficiently adapted to the case described, I highly approve; as it cannot but be serviceable to every Christian who is desirous of entering into spiritual discourse; and more particularly to young clergymen, who would do well to transcribe, study, and improve those hints; as they are too often at a loss how to exhort, admonish, or comfort, as various dispositions and circumstances require. Who you send me your opinion, make such alterations as occur to you.

The Consolation.

It is God's will; who still continues many comforts to us.

His will always wise, good, best.

We are his creatures. He has a right to us, as we have to our cattle or lands.

It is the Lord's doing. This was the support of Eli, Job, Hezekiah.

The Improvement.

"For us men sicken, and for us they die." (Dr. Young's Night Thoughts.)

To wean our hearts from the world.

To set our affections there where true joys are to be found.

To excite us with greater diligence to prepare for our own great change.

Our own Preparation.

The only preparation is to secure the favour of Christ, and an interest in his merits, by which we are pardoned and justified.

A participation of the Spirit of Christ, by which we are made fit for heaven.

I hope you remember, not without a pleasing mixture of gratitude and joy, your divine, yet bleeding Lord. I hope you feel a more comfortable trust, that your sins are done away through that all-atoning blood; and that you pray with a more steady faith for that most blessed Spirit, which was sealed to our enjoyment in the holy sacrament, of which we were so lately partakers.

I desire you would enter into some spiritual conversation with the bearer, whom I have recommended to you; you will then see the more than rocky hardness of the human heart, and the absolute need of prayer and almighty grace, in order to make it susceptible of saving impressions. I dare say you will draw several useful conclusions from this interview, though your attempts for his benefit I fear will prove ineffectual.

A gentleman yesterday told a story, well attested, which you will be pleased to hear, as it shows in a very strong light the use of those passages of Scripture which the unthinking are too apt to consider as useless. A certain libertine, of a most abandoned character, happened accidentally to stroll into a church, where he heard the fifth chapter of Genesis, importing that so long lived such and such persons, and yet the conclusion was, they died. Enos lived 905 years, and he died; Seth 912, and he died; Methuselah 969, and he died. The frequent repetition of the words HE DIED, (notwithstanding the great length of years

they had lived,) struck him so deeply with the thought of death and eternity, that it changed his whole frame. He attended the remaining part of the divine service with the utmost seriousness; went home, and prayed earnestly to God for forgiveness, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit; and became, from an infamous libertine, a most exemplary Christian. By this chapter we see, how soon youth, health, and all worldly delights must end. This, to a worldly-minded man, casts a damp upon all these desirable things; but to a soul acquainted with Christ, and an affection removed from hence already, no thought is so sweet as this. Enos died, Seth died, Methuselah died, and (blessed be God for the privilege of death) so shall I. It helps much to carry us cheerfully through wrestlings and difficulties, through better and worse. We see the land of promise near. We shall quickly pass Jordan, and be at home. There will be an end of the many vexations of this life, an end of sin, an end of temptations, nay, an end of prayer itself; to which will succeed new songs of endless praises. Oh, let us often reflect on what St. Peter advances, "The end of all things is, therefore, at hand; be ye sober, and watch unto prayer," 1 Pet. iv. 7.

I hope you will well weigh this, and introduce spiritual discourse whenever a fair opportunity presents. Set your face as a flint amongst the great. Establish your heart as a rock; and let nothing, nothing divert you from furthering the interest of Christ, wherever you yourself have any interest. It is like plunging into cold water perhaps at first, but afterwards comes a glow all over you. Remember what I now say, should you live thirty or forty years longer, yet when you come to die, take my word for it, you will wish you had conversed more on and for Christ.

I am satisfied from the sacred oracles, as clear as light, concerning the origin of evil. And if any one, without having recourse to revelation, can satisfactorily solve that question, *erit mihi magnus Apollo.* My dear friend, let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

Thanks for the use of Wharton's and Pitt's Virgil. All the Syrens sing in his lines, but the JOYFUL SOUND is nowhere heard. Was the ear of our soul tuned aright, there would be more music in this one sentence from the King of heaven, "I have called you friends," (John xv. 15.) than in all the Iliad and all the Æneid. I am ever and affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CXLVIII.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 20, 1755.

DEAR SIR,—You threaten to put my patience to the trial, by a very long letter of scriptural criticisms. I shall only reply, O that my patience may support all other trials with the same complacency and cheerfulness, as I am persuaded it will support itself under this! Your observations I very much value, and take a singular pleasure in reading. The Lord Jesus enable you to multiply them, and me to profit from them! and help us both to love his holy name, ever more and more!

I am entirely of your opinion with regard to the worth, the inestimable worth, of the present life; especially when there is a comfortable prospect of being useful in our generation. This state affords the only opportunity of doing good to immortal souls. The dead serve not their Lord in the work of the gospel. The living, the living only, are intrusted with the precious office of turning sinners from darkness to light; therefore the living should value this distinguished prerogative at a high rate. Perhaps you think that I was the writer of Mr. Burnham's life. From a question proposed to me very lately by a clergyman, I fancy that others think the same;* but I neither was the author, nor do I know the author's name.

I have sent you the third edition of Theron and Aspasio; you will observe, that I have made some alteration in Dialogue xvi. and that I still adhere to my first opinion with regard to faith. I assure myself you can bear with me, though I should continue, in this particular point, to vary somewhat from your way of thinking. I shall be truly glad and thankful, if you will examine me with the rigour of a critic, and muster up against my doctrine the strongest objections you can conceive; for I do earnestly wish, and frequently pray, that not any notion of mine, but the holy truth of God may prevail. You will also observe, what advantage I have made of your remark on Vitringa's interpretation of Isaiah xxx. 18.

I shall expect your animadversions on Mr. Marshall with eagerness; and though he is my counsellor, my comforter, and my favourite, I trust I shall not be blind to his faults, nor refuse to see his mistakes. May the wisdom of Heaven guide, direct, and teach, dear sir, your affectionate and obliged friend, &c.

* Mr. Hervey was solicited to write the preface to Burnham's Pious Memorials, which he complied with as an act of compassion to the widow, who thought his name might promote the sale of the book for her benefit. See this preface, p. 711.

LETTER CXLIX.

Weston-Favell, Oct. 23, 1755.

My dear Friend,—I have received, and am very much obliged for your remarks on Mr. Marshall's treatise of Sanctification. They are truly judicious; and several of them command my assent. You will wonder to see, how strongly I have recommended this book in the second volume of my Theron and Aspasio. It has been eminently blessed to my own soul: there is no religious treatise I read, which does me more good. Pray be so kind as to execute what you proposed. Shew me how Mr. Marshall's method may be improved; for I would gladly tread in his steps, on this account, as well as on others, that I may have an opportunity of acknowledging his mistakes, and cautioning my reader.

Downhame's Christian Warfare, against the devil, the world, and the flesh, I will immediately endeavour to procure. I should be glad if you would point out other excellent books. I am sometimes asked to give a friend or a student a catalogue of the most excellent authors, (particularly of religious authors). To do this, seems to be a valuable piece of service, especially as it is so unhappily neglected by the conductors of our youthful studies.

Your last paragraph is particularly kind and obliging; but however your benevolence may regard and represent it, I shall always esteem and acknowledge it as a singular favour to receive your critical observations; in which, as in the threads made of silk and gold, there is always a most agreeable mixture of learning and devotion.

Pray what do you apprehend to be the meaning of St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 26. ουκ ως αδηλως. Dr. Doddridge translates the passage thus: "Not as one who is to pass undistinguished." In the same chapter, verse 23, another difficulty occurs, ινα συγκοινωνος αυτου γενωμαι. 1 Cor. xii. 31. Ζηλουτε δε τα χαρισματα τα κρειττονα, Dr. Doddridge understands as a reprehension, not as an encouragement. He translates the words, "Ye contend earnestly about the best gifts;" and interprets the clause, "envying, and, it may be, detracting from the superior endowments of others." Is this right? See chap. xiv. 1. I am at some loss to make out the propriety of Το καθ' ημων χειρογραφον, Col. ii. 14. How is the hand-writing of ordinances said to be contrary to us? The ceremonial law, which I suppose is meant by δογμασιν, was not contrary to, but promotive of the comfort and peace of the Jewish worshippers. The moral law indeed spoke terror, and nothing but terror, to impotent man. But the law of sacrifices and washings brought the glad tidings of atonement and purification, which must be very consolatory. What is the precise signification of εξαλειψας, ηρκεν προσπλωσας? Do they refer to any usages customary and current in those times?

Let me now submit to your examination, a very singular criticism or two of Father Houbigant's. On Isa. ii. 22, he says, "Non dubitamus, quin fuerit olim scriptum, 'HUA NESHEB BENEMAH BU,' Nam altitudinem flatu dejicit. Homo, cujus spiritus est in naribus ejus, est ipse filius hominis, Messias, de quo in toto hoc capite vaticinatur Jesaias. Quem Messiam Judæi, nisi violare timent, monet eos non impune laturos. Quia Messias, homo factus, volvit naribus ventos et tempestates, quibus ipsorum et urbem et rempublicam sit eversurus." Again, chap. iii. 10, he says, "'AMODU ZADOK:' Plerique, post Vulgatum, dicite justo, qua interpretatione peccant dupliciter. Nam 1. legitur 'ZADOK,' justus vel justum, non 'LEZADOK,' justo. 2. Parum ad rem terribilibus minis, quæ antecesserunt et quæ sequuntur, interseritur iste sermo ad justum habitus. Nobis satis est 'ASEKU' pro 'ATEDU.' Nemque erat futurum, ut Judæi justum ligarent, Romanisque vinctum traderent." His version is, "Alligant justum, qui bonus est." You will begin to think that our author is extremely fond of the spiritual sense, and desirous to find Christ or Christian sentiments in every place. But he is seldom (however it has happened in the aforecited texts) liable to err on this side of the question. Hear what he remarks on Isa. xxxiii. 24. "'OIN BETHNES HAHUNESHEB TOM HELAH.' Agitur præda exercitus Assyriorum, post eorum fugam, dividenda inter eos, qui vicinis in locis habitant. Nihil ad eam prædam iniquitas: Nihil etiam ad antedicta, qui habitat in ea. Nam ea, de qua habitatione dicatur, nescitur. Nihil denique ad rem 'TI HEL,' ægar sum. Non promiserat Deus, nullos fore in regione ægrotos, aut in lecto jacentes tum, cum dividenda esset præda. Sed omnia plana et commoda erunt, si pro 'HELETH' legas 'BELITHI,' prohibitus sum; si pro 'BETH BEM,' in eis, si denique pro 'OIN' legas 'ODEN,' prædam suam, 'KESHA KOM HASHEB DOM KOLIAH SHEBEN IASEK LEKUBEL.' Non dicet vicinus, prohibitus sum; populus qui habitabit apud eos, tollet prædam suam. Quibus verbis prænunciatur, prædam de Assyriis fore tantam, ut omnes licentiam habituri sint prædandi, et abducendi domum prædas suas."

Hos. vi. 3. "'UBEDOH' et cognoscamus. Parum commode cognoscamus, ubi sequitur, et persequamur cognitionem. Propterea non dubitamus, quin Osee scripserit 'REKUODAH' et conveniamus, ut deinde apte veniat, et sequamur, sive curramus ad

cognoscendum Dominum." The next verse he thus translates: "Quid faciam tibi, Ephraim, quid faciam tibi Juda, ut adsit vobis misericordia, velut matutina nubes, et ut res quæ mane effunditur? Certe ego, quod volui, feci prophetis tuis; interfeci eos per verba oris mei, et ex judiciis de te meis lux orietur." He changes 'HOBETU' into 'HESOTU.'

I was not a little puzzled about Jer. xviii. 14. Houbigant, according to his custom, first alters, then interprets; thus he would read the passage: "'UDEMU KEDOS MOM UBMESHON AM LEBBANON SHUDSHELEG TOSEK TOZEB GUZELUM.' An deserit calx pætram, vel nix Libanum? An relinquant aquæ scaturientes defluxus currentium aquarum?"

When you have leisure and inclination for critical studies, I shall be greatly obliged for your opinion on these points; as I am for your very friendly and very solid defence of me in the London Magazine. May the King of saints prosper the works of your pen, and return the acts of your kindness into your own bosom! Let me once more beg of you to direct me to the most improving books you have met with. No longer ago than yesterday a young clergyman, whom I had never seen before, made me a visit, and attended a lecture which I gave my parish in Weston church on a Wednesday evening, at seven o'clock. An amiable gentleman truly! He seems mighty well inclined; wonders that his brethren do not make edifying subjects, such as justification, and sanctification, the favourite topics of their discourse. Now I do not know what more substantial service I could do such a person, than to recommend to his study some proper books. The tidings therefore of a judicious evangelical author, with a little sketch of his character and distinguishing excellency, might be a blessing to others, and a blessing to myself. A favour, a welcome favour, I am very sure, it would be to, dear sir, your much obliged, and truly affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CL.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 13, 1755.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your last valuable favour in due time. I should have made my acknowledgments sooner, but I staid to get the enclosed little pamphlet,* which I want much to have you peruse, and to have your opinion concerning it. There seems to me to be much good sense and solid argument, much more than, I apprehend, could have been produced on the occasion. I read your remarks with great attention, and I humbly trust that God will execute the office, and accomplish the blessing mentioned in the portion of Scripture which gave a relish to our breakfast this morning.

"DOTH ADAM HEMLAMAD."—Psalm xciv 10.

I read the passage in a small Hebrew Bible without points; and the first word in the verse seemed to me, not "TISEK," but "HE-ISED," which, in my opinion, yields the best sense: He that "made, upholds, establishes the nations," &c. I have consulted Houbigant, but he makes no alteration.

Indeed we have need of divine teaching. Amidst the variety of opinions which ever did, and perhaps ever will subsist in our imperfect state, he only who is the wonderful Counsellor possesses the unerring clue. A letter from Dunfermline in Scotland, received by the last post, and written by a stranger, informs me, that upon the doctrine of sanctification there is a standard book; and this standard book, he adds, is Marshall's Gospel Mystery. Mr. Moses Browne tells me, he is publishing a little piece of poetry, entitled Percy Lodge, the Duke of Somerset's seat; [wrote at the desire of the late duke and duchess, in the year 1749. Had they lived, poor Browne would have met with the encouragement he deserves. They loved him, and fully intended to have served him.] When it makes its appearance, I will desire you to accept of a copy. I am, &c.

LETTER CLI.

DEAR ——, This letter will come to your hands, as the blessings of the everlasting gospel are offered to our souls, without money and without price.

Be under no concern about the report you mention; it gives me not one moment's uneasiness. We have acted, I trust, as faithful stewards of our Master in heaven; and if he approves, how very insignificant is the censure of men! And what, ah, what is a little misrepresentation, or a few lashes from tattling tongues, compared with those cruel mockings which our divine and dying Redeemer bore!

You are, I find, as I too often am, in poor Peter's condition, when our Lord addressed him with that tender rebuke, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Wherefore indeed do we doubt? Is he not an all-sufficient Saviour? Is not his death a complete atonement, sufficient to take way the sins of a whole world? Is not his

* A little pamphlet on the Marks and Evidences of Faith, wrote by Mr. Cudworth of Norwich.

righteousness a perfect righteousness, able to justify even the most ungodly? Does not his Godhead impart an infinite dignity to both? rendering them more powerful to save than millions, unnumbered millions of sins are to destroy?

Is he not a willing Saviour? How willing was Joseph to give the good of the land of Egypt to his aged father! How willing was Jonathan to screen his beloved David from Saul's wrath! How willing is an indulgent parent to deal out bread to his hungry child! Equally willing, abundantly more willing is Christ to give himself to our souls, to reconcile us to his Almighty Father, to fit us for his kingdom, and take us to his glory. A parent does not choose to die for his child; Jonathan never spilt his blood for David, nor did Joseph lay down his life for that good old man Jacob. But this, all this, the Lord Jesus Christ freely undertook, freely underwent for us. What could he do more to assure us of his love? Let us contemplate the story of his bitter, bitter passion. Let us view him prostrate, in an agony of sorrow, on the cold ground; extended, with racking torture, on the accursed tree; laid, all pale and mangled with wounds, in the gloomy sepulchre: And sure we shall have a stronger proof of Christ's willingness to save us, than the testimony of ten thousand ministers preaching on earth, or of ten thousand angels speaking from heaven.

Is he not a faithful Saviour? Having loved his own, he loveth them even unto the end. As his eyes never slumber nor sleep, so his care for his people is never intermitted; he has written their names on the palms of his hands, and their eternal interests are ever before him; he will never, never, never leave nor forsake them; no, not in any circumstance, nor on any account. They are his peculiar treasure, and the ransom of his own dear life; they are the recompense for all his sufferings, and are to be the jewels in his mediatorial crown; therefore they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. Neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate them from his love, from his bosom, from his heart. "Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord? who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; surely then thou mayest dwell in safety." Deut. xxxiii. 27, &c. Are we unworthy sinners? We readily own it, and oh that we may deeply feel it! But did not Christ choose to converse with publicans and sinners? Did he not come to seek and to save that which was lost? The same spirit which actuated him on earth he retains now he is exalted into heaven; let not therefore our deplorable vileness be our hinderance, but our incitement to apply to the ever-gracious Friend of sinners. Indeed, if we were not sinners, we should not be proper objects for the Saviour. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;" for such he made his soul an offering, and for such he brought in everlasting righteousness; he makes intercession, not for the righteous, but for transgressors; and those that are afar off, in rebellion and apostasy, are brought nigh; nigh to God, and home to heaven, by the blood of Christ.

May these considerations sink into our hearts, and be made the seed of a lively, growing, and joyful faith! And "may the Lord direct" us both (as we both groan in this tabernacle, and are burdened) "into the love of God, and the patient waiting for of Jesus!" when this languishing, this corruptible body will lie down in peace, and rest in hope; and the soul, delivered from every conflict, cleansed from every stain, will be ever, for ever with the Lord. Amen and amen, says yours, &c.

LETTER CLII.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 15, 1755.

My dear Friend,—I return you my best thanks for sending me a copy of so smart and sensible a letter, which came to me very a-propos; and which I think is so likely to do good in this disputatious age, that I wish it was printed in some of the magazines and public papers. I am much obliged to you for your kind caution against my being drawn into a controversy, particularly by the very warm and overbearing Mr. ——, who is now grown impatient of the least contradiction, and far from being a desirable companion or correspondent.

Controversy is as much my aversion as it can be yours; for where that begins, religion too often ends; and I shall not enter the lists, I promise you, with any one, unless I am absolutely necessitated to it. But if I am compelled to appear in print on such an occasion, I shall endeavour to pay due regard to Solomon's excellent advice, viz. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger," Prov. xv. 1. Instead of exasperating my adversary by cutting reprehensions, I will, if possible, constrain him, by a candid and respectful treatment, to moderate his temper; and, by a coercive propriety of arguments, persuade him to relinquish such tenets as I think erroneous.

God grant that I may never behave with an indecent resentment, how great soever

may be the provocation of my gainsayers; but that, in all my writings and conversations, I may avoid the hasty spirit, lest I injure my own peace of mind, and disgrace my profession as a Christian and a minister.

It is a rule with me always to speak well of the good qualities even of bad men, especially when others are censuring them with an unmerciful severity; and I could wish that every controversialist would learn so much candour, as to put the best construction on his opponent's book, and to embrace what was in general good in it, however he might doubt or censure some *particular* opinions of the contending author.

To live peaceably with all men is my earnest desire and my daily prayer; and, in order to do this, I am more and more convinced of the necessity of candour, humility, and a conscientious regard to the example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am, my dear friend, affectionately and inviolably yours.

A Copy of the Letter above-mentioned, never before Printed.

Dear Sir,—I have a strong and settled aversion to all matter of dispute, in things that relate to a message of perfect peace and love. The kingdom of God is no more opinion, than it is meat and drink; and argumentation can have little to do where a new heart, and a right spirit, is the business or work to be performed.

If we prevail in our disputes, (though I believe there is not a single instance in which either of the antagonists ever condescended publicly to own himself in the wrong,) our adversaries then become baffled worldlings; if they prevail, then they become worldlings triumphant. When we deal much in disputes, we soil our souls, and endanger the temper of meekness and love, which we are so frequently enjoined to cultivate, and which are the very badge of Christianity.

As for amicable disputes in religion, it is as errant cant as an amicable suit at law. A dispute about the sacrament as naturally removes the mind out of its state of perfect charity, as a quarrel about a whore. The subject alters nothing; it is the temper of mind wherewith we handle these matters that defiles the man; and it is morally impossible to meddle to any purpose, without having the mind disordered.

St. Paul was plainly of the same opinion, when he wrote thus to Timothy; "If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, and surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." 1 Tim. vi. 3—5.

This is the constant case of all the disputers in the gospel itself. The more they argued, the further they were always from the point; insomuch that even those who are said to believe on Christ, at the beginning of the chapter of dispute, before the end of it take up stones to cast at him.

In short, till a man be a Christian in some measure, he has neither ability, nor any right in nature to talk about it. It is more absurd than a controversy between a fish and a fowl, about the best and most commodious element to breathe in.

The peace and purity of our own minds, is of more value than of every other endowment. For my own part, I had rather be able to bear patiently the nickname of fool, or madman, than to become famous for all the wisdom and prudence which the world knows how to commend and esteem.

In this poverty of spirit, I would heartily entreat all my friends earnestly to seek after that love and peace, which is only to be found in the face or similitude of our dear Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. The want of this most amiable and Christian disposition in some eminent professors, for I never admired a rough and boisterous zeal, has often startled and shagrined him who is, dear sir, yours very sincerely,

R. W.

P. S.—We may talk what we will about religion, it is nothing less than a divine temper. What is short of this is *prating* about religion, and that is all. I meet with many doctrinal Christians, who are very dabs at chapter and verse, and yet very bond-slaves to earth and self. Spiritual Christians (which are the only true ones) are almost as scarce as phœnixes.

LETTER CLIII.

Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—Let me exhort you to live as on the borders of eternity, and often to reflect where the late fall from your horse might have hurried you. Eternity is at hand. "He that cometh will come, and will not tarry." O that your soul may prosper! for without that, what are all the riches, pleasures, and honours of this earth? But it cannot prosper, unless

the world be under foot, and your affections fixed on Jesus. What besides him, my dear friend, deserves a thought? And how tenderly has he dealt with us, notwithstanding all our ingratitude and provocations? I can say no more than I have said to you; but I pity you, and I pray for you, that you may conquer this fear of man. I wish you would every day, for the next month, read some part of Professor Franck's Nicodemus, or, The Fear of Man. Dr. —— told me he had a great regard for you, and wished you would set your face as a flint; exert your lively talents to promote the gospel, and confess the Lord Jesus boldly before men on every proper occasion: and when they talk obscenely, or take the Lord's name in vain, you ought genteelly to reprove them, or leave the company. This would be acting like a Christian! But while you are thus silent, meally-mouthed, stand so much upon your politeness, and have such a fear of being censured by worldly-minded people, you may take my word for it, you will do very little good, and be a stranger to the comfort and peace which others, who stick closer to Christ, daily experience; that comfortable peace of God, which (as Archbishop Secker finely observes, page 132 of his Nine Sermons) is that sense of being in friendship with him, that feeling of comfort and joy flowing from him, which passeth all understanding; exceeds the conception of those who have not experienced it, and will exceed hereafter the present conceptions of those who have. Adieu, my dear friend. Think well on what the Archbishop has so pathetically described, and then meditate on this alarming text, and reconcile it with your own pusillanimous conduct, which you miscall prudence: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with his holy angels," Mark viii. 38. Once more adieu! Remember that this is the declaration of the Lord who bought us with his blood, and suffered the unknown agonies of crucifixion to save you, and yours very sincerely.

P. S.—When people come to visit me, they expect to hear of Christ; and few come to Weston but those to whom such discourse is agreeable, nor do I desire the company of any others. Talking of Christ is my touchstone, to see whether a person is worth my acquaintance. If you was once to take this method, you will tell me, perhaps, that such and such a one will abuse you, and all the principal gentlemen will ridicule and forsake you. And what then? You are much better without them. In their stead you will have the esteem and friendship of those who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity; and Christ himself will be in the midst, who has laid up for you, and all such as love his appearing, a crown of righteousness. Has this consideration no weight with my dear friend? Do not let me apply to you what saint Paul says of Demas to Timothy, chap. iv. 10. "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." Read the cxixth Psalm, and see whether you and your worldly-wise company have the spirit of the Psalmist. He, though a king, delighted to talk of God. He not only talked of him, observe, but delighted to do it; and it was pain and grief to him to forbear. Psalm xxxix. 3.

LETTER CLIV.

Saturday morning.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your question, "Why so many learned and very clever men in all worldly affairs should treat religion with so much indifference, and remain unaffected by every argument that can be urged to rouse them from such a state of delusion?" I send you my opinion in a few words, viz. "Because they do not pray for the assistance* of the Holy Spirit." And I send you an answer more at large, extracted from a book of the celebrated Dr. Bates, which I was lately reading, entitled, "THE SOVEREIGN AND FINAL HAPPINESS OF MAN, with the effectual means to obtain it."†

"The efficacious influence," says the Doctor, "of the Holy Spirit, is requisite to change the WILL, that with a free and full consent, OUR WILL may desire and prosecute the spiritual, eternal good. Without this, the conviction of the mind is not powerful enough to convert the soul from the love of the world to choose heaven. There may be an enlightened conscience without a renewed heart. Though the JUDGMENT assents that God is the supreme good; yet till the heart be circumcised, and the sensuality of the affections taken away, divine love (which directs our life to God as our blessed end) can never possess it.

"If men had a sensible and strong assurance of the eternal state hereafter; if all those who lived godly in a visible manner ascended with Elias to heaven; and if all who continued in their sins visibly descended into hell (as Corah and his company were swallowed up alive by the earth before

* See Christ's own words, Luke xi. 13, which the generality of mankind disregard; no wonder, then, the world should lie so much in darkness, and be thus dead to vital religion.

† See Dr. Bate's Works, folio, p. 466.

the Israelites); if men could hear the joyful exultations of the saints above, and their high praises of God; then hear the desperate cries and deep complaints of the damned; nay, if one, according to the desire of the rich man, was sent from the doleful regions below, and with his fiery tongue should preach a sermon on those torments, not describing them at a distance, but by a sensible demonstration in himself; yet THIS ALONE would not be sufficient to draw off men's hearts from the deceitful and transitory happiness of this world, and to fasten them on the perfect and eternal happiness in the next. Indeed, they could not then indulge their vices so securely; but yet they would be strangers to the life of God, such an inveterate alienation of heart is in men from real holiness: for till the quickening Spirit of God (by a directing persuasive light, that represents the truth and goodness of spiritual things) transforms the soul, and makes it spiritual in its valuations and affections, it is inwardly averse from grace and glory.

"How earnestly therefore ought we all TO PRAY, that this Holy Spirit may direct our hearts to the love of God, and to the patient waiting for of Christ Jesus, when he shall come to be glorified in his faithful servants, and admired in all them that believe!"

In another place, Dr. Bates expresses himself in these very momentous terms: "Worldly men, when death is near, are not so much affected with the loss of the crown of glory, and the kingdom of heaven, as with their leaving the present world, and its vanities. This makes death intolerably bitter. In short, till the love of God inflames and purifies the heart, the fruition of his glory is not esteemed nor desired."

Your question will be still further answered, by considering thoroughly two tracts, wrote by Professor Franck; one of which is entitled, A short Introduction to the practice of the Christian Religion; and the other is entitled, Nicodemus, or, A treatise against the Fear of Man; wherein the causes and sad effects thereof are briefly described, with some remedies against it, dedicated to the honourable society for reformation of manners.

And now having mentioned Professor Franck, and his treatise against the fear of man, I cannot conclude without observing, that I think him one of the most eminent Christians, and most extraordinary men I ever heard of, as his Pietas Hallensis, which I read with admiration and deep humility, sufficiently demonstrates; and had I been a member of the society for reformation of manners, when the dedication of his Nicodemus had been presented to them, I should have made a motion to have had an hundred pounds expended in a proper distribution of that most important book, as there can be no material reformation till the fear of man is removed; and as nothing can be better calculated to extirpate such fear, and promote all the other laudable ends of the society. I am, dear sir, yours, &c.

P. S.—The title of the book I recommended to your son, please to tell him, was Henry's Pleasantness of a Religious Life. The author designed it particularly for young people; and in my conversation with them, I generally mention it. Indeed, I am the more solicitous of having it put into their hands, as they are too apt to look upon religion in a gloomy view, considering it as destructive of every enjoyment.

LETTER CLV.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 22.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The three volumes of Theron and Aspasio desire you first to accept them, then freely to animadvert upon them; and above all, to implore the blessing of God for them. I think, when people's sentiments differ so excessively as Mr. ——'s and mine, it is best to be at a distance. O may we all be kept close to our divine Head; and, in a little time, that which is imperfect will be done away. We shall see him as he is, and know as we are known. I hope you prosper in your health, and are blessed in your ministerial labours. The book you inquire after, which Mr. —— saw in my study window at Weston, and described to you as a well thumbed Lilliputian of two or three inches high, was written by one Mr. Bogatzky, a German; in which language it passed nineteen editions, from which it is now translated, and entitled, "The Golden Treasury for the Children of God, whose treasure and hearts are in heaven;" containing select texts of the Bible, with practical observations in prose and verse, for every day in the year. It is pretty well thumbed, for there is rarely a day passes that I do not make use of it; and particularly when I am so languid as to be incapable of attending to my usual studies. The author very properly calls it "A Golden Treasury for the Children of God," who esteem the word of God more than gold, and much fine gold, and from which they may be daily supplied with proper advice and relief in all manner of spiritual necessities, as thousands have happily experienced already. The verses are elegant, and edifying on most of the subjects; and it was his earnest desire and prayer, that the Lord, in his infinite goodness, would please to bless his endeavours to the good of many souls, and to the glory of his holy name. Mr. Bo-

gatzky observes judiciously, that it is not to be expected that a performance of this nature will suit the taste of those who unhappily mistake mere outward morality for true Christianity, and go no farther than natural reason and strength will carry them: but such as either have, or desire to have, a real experience of the kingdom of God in their souls, will find much in it to the awakening, comforting, and encouraging their hearts in the right way.

That we may know, and ever continue in that right way, is, my dear friend, the frequent and ardent prayer of your affectionate brother in Christ.

LETTER CLVI.

Wednesday morning.

DEAR SIR,—The grievance you complain of, is, like many other grievances, irremediable; for, according to the old proverb, What is every one's business, is no one's. It is the same in numberless instances. How many turnpikes are erected, where the money taken will scarce defray the expense of the gates; and where the roads neither are, nor ever will be mended, and consequently they are nuisances instead of benefits? yet our nobility and members of parliament pass frequently through such turnpikes, complain of the grievance, but take no pains to redress it. And even in an affair of the highest consequence, how negligent is the community? I mean, in the long expected reformation of our Liturgy; in which, excellent as it is upon the whole, there are some passages so justly exceptionable, that every bishop in the kingdom will tell you he wishes to have them expunged; and yet, I know not for what political or timid reasons, it continues just as it did. Had our first reformers been thus indolent, we still had been papists. Our laws are daily complained of, and might most certainly be abridged to the great benefit of the nation; this is allowed by every individual; but the parliament, you see, will not exert themselves in bringing this important affair to pass.

I have often wondered, that in this age of humanity, (for such with all its faults it certainly is), while infirmaries are erecting in different parts of the kingdom, public bridges building, and large collections making for charitable uses, there should be no societies established for redressing grievances. To found such kind of societies, would be truly laudable and highly beneficial. May God of his infinite goodness and unerring wisdom, put it into the hearts of the active, the benevolent, and the powerful, to set in good earnest about the institution of societies for the redressing our grievances, some for public and others for private grievances. Were such once established, what a world of good might be done! Then the fatherless, the widow, and the injured, would have substantial friends always at hand, who would rescue them from their oppressors, by taking them under their own protection, and defending their cause out of the subscription fund. From these funds likewise, the expense of procuring useful acts of parliament, or of getting ineffectual ones amended or repealed, might be defrayed.

I know you will be pleased to hear that Mr. —— has lately wrote very seriously to Mr. —— about his religious concerns, and pressed him strongly "to DETERMINE (as his expression was), and set about religion in good earnest." "Pray, dear sir," said he in one part of his letter, "take care, and do not hurry away life. Give that affair a serious thought; I am sure it is worth it. I wish you well, (sorry am I to say I think) better than perhaps you wish yourself. I should be glad to be mistaken. Would to God I could persuade you resolutely to fall in love with religion, and espouse its cause with all your interest, and with all your might. Was that once and thoroughly to be the case, what an instrument might not YOU be, in the hand of God, to rouse men from their lethargy; to animate them in the pursuit of their own eternal welfare; and to encourage their zeal for that of others? Oh! sir, a man with your capacity, your fortune, your opportunities, what could there be too hard for him, except himself? By your irresistible arguments and spirited behaviour, you knock down others on every occasion, and carry almost every point you undertake; why do not you knock down yourself? *Aude sapere, incipe.*

> "What conscience dictates to be done,
> Or warns you not to do,
> This, as your hell, with horror shun,
> That, as your heaven, pursue."
> POPE'S *Universal Prayer.*

In another part of his letter he thus interrogated Mr. ——. "Will not every wise man frequently ask himself some such questions as these? Am I, or am I not in the right road? How long shall I halt between two opinions? Is not to-day certain, and to-morrow uncertain? Am I ashamed of being religious? Have I courage to stand it out against God and not against the world? Do I take proper care of my children's religious principles? If I destroy myself, shall I destroy my offspring too, and eternally?"

Towards the conclusion he added, "You have recommended several books to me, let me recommend Rymer's Representation of Revealed Religion to you, though, if I was

to advise Mr. ——, it should not be TO READ, but TO DETERMINE; resolutely and unalterably TO DETERMINE to be a religious man. You want no instructions, and the time of life with you is gone a great way. Some people, I can tell you, suspect you for a Deist; if you are so, I then ask, Do you act devoutly on your own principles? Do you pray to God daily? This every Deist will allow to be necessary; and, till you have habituated your mind to prayer, I shall have little expectations of doing you that important service, which you must be sensible by my writing this letter I am very desirous of doing, as far as in me lies. The rest must be left to a superior agency, I mean the operation of God's Holy Spirit on your heart."

No answer has yet been returned by Mr. —— to this letter. I believe he is puzzled how to act. He cannot well pass it by in silence; and to give any thing under his hand on so interesting a subject as religion, will be to a man of his turn very ineligible.

You see by the papers, that our great wit is dead. Is it not a little remarkable, that so long before his death he should be deprived of his senses? deprived of them at the very time he was about writing a most pernicious book, which, I am told, he intended to have published with this ludicrous title, viz. "The Memoirs of the Rev. Mr. Jephtha Quixote, Saint-Errant; the true and undoubted son of the renowned Don Quixote, Knight-Errant; who inherits all his father's virtues." The design of which was to burlesque things sacred, and to set in a ridiculous light some of the most exemplary Christians, under the notion of saint-errantry. This would have been a most malicious piece of wit; and being the production of so celebrated a genius, would have spread like wildfire, pregnant with infinite mischief; for, as Horace has justly remarked,

> "For ridicule shall frequently prevail,
> And cut the knot when graver reasons fail."
> FRANCIS' *Hor.*

When you reflect on this and other attempts to discourage good men, and to render religion contemptible in the eyes of worldlings, are you not apt to say with the Psalmist, "The Lord that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn?" Psal. ii. 4. He, though unseen, directs the whole by his wise providence; turneth men's hearts as seemeth good unto him; and in his hands are the appointments of life and death. To his guidance and to his protection I commend you, my dear sir, and yours very sincerely.

LETTER CLVII.

Weston, 1756.

DEAR SIR,—I confess I am covetous, and, like covetous people, unreasonable; I was in hope of receiving another favour from your pen, before I troubled you with a fresh solicitation. But an affair has lately happened, or rather a project has started in my mind, which I will lay before you. On Sunday last a neighbouring clergyman sent me for my perusal, a sermon preached by Dr. T——, before the House of Commons, on the late* public fast. When I perused it, and saw not a single mention of Christ, nor a single hint of an evangelical nature, I was surprised and grieved; and so much the more, as it was preached by one of the most celebrated divines in the kingdom, and before the whole kingdom convened in their representatives. I thought it was a pity, that such a notorious slight, put upon our most glorious Redeemer, should pass without animadversions. I could not forbear wishing that the Lord would enable me, even me, (the least and weakest in my heavenly Father's house,) to bear my testimony for Jesus who was crucified. I therefore conceived some thoughts of publishing a sermon preached at Weston, upon a subject somewhat similar to his; for though mine is designedly plain, and destitute of the polite Doctor's embellishments, yet it has more of Christ and his gospel. I also apprehend, if to this were prefixed or subjoined some remarks upon the Doctor's performance, it might not be unseasonable nor unprofitable. Now, my dear friend, if you approve the design, would you draw up some remarks upon the Doctor's discourse, while I am endeavouring to retrieve my sermon from a few hints, which I happened on that occasion to put down in short-hand? I will own to you, my heart almost trembles at the prospect of appearing in print against so eminent a man. And if you do not think it proper to be my helper and abettor, I must drop the design. May the Lord Jesus, whose honour is concerned, whose blood and righteousness, whose spirit and grace have been disregarded, and treated as ciphers; may he direct your determination, fructify your invention, give you all knowledge and all utterance! What think you of this method of proceeding? Making remarks upon the evangelical passages; pointing out the places where an opportunity offered of enlarging upon gospel topics; exemplifying this gospel manner, and showing that it would be no prejudice, but give infinite weight and force to the argument. But I leave all to the bless-

* The public fast in February 1756.

ed God, and my dear friend. Your last, I think, is a most masterly piece of controversy, for which I am your debtor. May you now be enabled to outdo yourself. The subject and the occasion are of the last importance: if you are inclined to exert yourself, pray let it be in the courtly manner. Your last pen was dipt in vinegar, let this be dipt in oil.

My sermon was on that text, Ezek. xviii. 27. I shall wait, with incessant prayer to him whose name is WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, till I receive your answer; and am most affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CLVIII.

[Mr. Hervey's friend, on considering the proposal in the preceding letter, wrote the following, and addressed it to Dr. T——, the preacher of the fast sermon in 1756, on Jer. xviii. 7, 8. It is here printed, as the observations therein contained may possibly be in some measure productive of the good which Mr. Hervey intended by such like remarks.*]

REVEREND SIR,—Some time ago was put into my hands a sermon of yours, on Jer. xviii. 7, 8, preached before the honourable House of Commons on the day of the late public fast; wherein I thought I saw some very material omissions and mistakes, which I feared might hinder the success of your ingenious performance; and therefore, as I would neither have you to labour in vain, nor the best use of such alarming calls of Divine Providence neglected, I could not but give you the trouble of a letter upon this occasion.

Nothing can be more proper, at such seasons, than serious discourses upon repentance and reformation. Times of affliction are most likely to be times of reflection; and when it pleases the Most High thus to open the heart, it is then the time for his servants to sow the good seed of his word. To prepare men for this, God's judgments fly swift as the light. To prepare men for this, he hews by his prophets, and slays by the word of his mouth: and happy, eternally happy, are those who are influenced thereby to return from their evil ways, and to make their ways and their doings good: for thus runs the divine promise, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy; if that nation against whom I have pronounced this, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them," Jer. xviii. 7, 8.

Such is God's gracious declaration, which no gospel minister can read, but it must remind him of two things: First, that this promise is made in Christ Jesus, and therefore can belong to none but those who forsake their sins, and return unto God by him: Then, this return from evil must be accomplished through the grace and Spirit of Christ. And,

First, The mention of this, and every other promise in the book of God, must remind the gospel minister that it is made in Christ Jesus. St. Paul hath assured us, that "all the promises of God in him are yea" (made), "and in him amen" (confirmed); and if all the promises of God are made and confirmed in him, then this, as one, must be made in him. The Redeemer himself has informed us, that "he is the way, and the truth, and the life," and that "no man can come unto the Father but by him." But to turn from evil, and to come unto the Father, are terms of the same import. Besides, we know that it is only through Jesus Christ that we have peace with God, and that it is only through Jesus Christ that God has reconciled the world to himself. Can two then walk together except they are agreed? Can God sheath the sword of his justice before he is reconciled to us? If not, how can he repent of the evil that he thought to do unto us? And if he repents not of the evil which he thought to do unto us, where is our interest in the promise? But what need of any more words, when it is most evident that it is the Son of God who here speaks by the prophet? The same person promises mercy, who had threatened to destroy with the severest judgments: Now we know that "the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father." It is very plain then, that all who return from evil, must return by Christ; they must return with his price in their hands, and his robe upon their backs; and then, and not till then, they are safe, safe for time and eternity.

Again, when the gospel minister reads this gracious promise, he will remember that such a returning from evil must be accomplished through the grace and Spirit of Christ. How can we, who are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought of ourselves, think of returning to God and holiness? Can the captive, who is in love with his chains, long for liberty? Can the sinner, who is fond of his sins, desire to relinquish them? No; it is as possible for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as for us, who are accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well. Nay, far more possible; for to accomplish this, they need only to change their hue; but before we can attain to holiness, we must change our nature; we must "make ourselves a new heart and a new spirit," Ezek.

* See Preface to the Letters, p. 729.

xviii. 31.; we must quit the grave, and arise from the dead, and who is sufficient for these things? Therefore the Master says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him." And again, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have ordained you to bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: For without me ye can do nothing." And his apostles assert, that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God;" that every grace is the fruit of his Spirit, of whose fulness we have received, and grace for grace; and that "we are created *anew* unto good works, which God had before ordained, that we should walk in them."

Now, sir, are these the true sayings of God? are these the very words of our Lord and his apostles? Then, undoubtedly, to refuse them is to refuse him who speaks from heaven: and if so, how comes it to pass, that you have unhappily forgot to take notice of these things upon this solemn occasion? God promises security to all who forsake their sins, and return unto him in Jesus Christ; and yet Jesus Christ is never mentioned in your sermon. Without divine grace, and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing; and yet there we hear nothing of divine grace, or the Holy Spirit. Joab, ready to take Rabbah, the royal city of the Ammonites, so ordered the campaign that his master David might have the honour of the victory; but here is a Christian minister, who attacks a citadel of human corruption, and never so much as once thinks of Christ, through whom he must conquer. Here is a Christian minister, who, leaving the lively oracles, undertakes spiritual wickednesses with the carnal weapons of a Tully and Demosthenes. Mistake me not, I speak not against oratory as such; but if a Roman or a Greek philosopher, who had never heard of Christ, can say as much against the vices of the age, as you can, who have from your infancy been educated in the Christian religion; what say you more than others? Is not this too much to slight that bleeding, dying Lamb of God, who alone can take away the sin of the world?

But the slight put upon our Master's words is not all: your not taking notice of these things has unhappily led you into mistakes that are utterly inconsistent with his undertaking. You call upon us, "by every act of humiliation and repentance, to deserve the protection of Heaven;" and throughout your whole discourse you labour hard to fix our hopes upon this basis, and our after obedience. But can the sincerest repentance, or the deepest humiliation, deserve the favour of God, and the remittance of punishment? If so, then fallen Adam might have broken in pieces the chains of eternal death, in which he was holden; and then, what need of shedding the blood of the promised seed? what need of such a sacrifice to appease God, if he was already appeased, or could be appeased by the relentings of man? Briefly, if the death of Christ was necessary to purchase eternal redemption for us, then our repentance and humiliation can never deserve the divine favour.

Nor can our after obedience procure such protection. Perfect obedience is a debt continually due from every creature as such; and the payment of a debt due now, can never be a compensation for the non-payment of arrears: nor can the most exact payment of what is due from one's self be esteemed the least part of payment of what is due from another; and therefore, where the debt is obedience, as all creatures are bound to obey at all times, none but a God can pay off the score of any one delinquent. This is a tremendous consideration, even supposing true repentance, and a thorough reformation, were wholly in our own power; but when, as sinners, we are entirely "without strength," Rom. v. 6, 8; when (as I have already observed) these gifts are perfectly dependent upon grace, and the good Spirit of God; surely to talk of deserving the favour of Heaven by them, must be extremely absurd. Nor is it only extremely absurd, but extremely dangerous; as it places the merit of works higher than ever the Papists placed it, and is utterly inconsistent with the humble genius of the Protestant religion.

But your neglect of taking proper notice of these things, not only leads you to disregard the express sayings of our Lord, and to nullify his work, but to heal the wounds of the daughter of God's people slightly. You complain of our "profaneness and immorality; of our profligacy and unjust opposition to lawful authority; of our disregard to decency and good manners, as well as to the laws of our country; of that unlawful pursuit of pleasure, that luxury and extravagance, which insensibly preys upon the constitution, debases the sense, and corrupts the morals of our people." And these are evils that you ought to complain of; they are the sure signs of a declining consumptive state, and can never be enough lamented. But then, you never touch upon that root of bitterness, which bears this gall and wormwood; you say nothing of our *unbelief*, which keeps us at a distance from God, from whom we must receive every good and perfect gift; you say nothing of *faith*, without which it is impossible to please him, to turn from evil, or return to him. Nor do you take the least notice of

our *enmity to the blessed Jesus*, and his holy gospel; of that *proneness to rebellion* and naughtiness of heart, from whence proceeds every evil thought, and word, and work. These things you ought to have remembered, and not to have forgotten the other.

Had you remarked upon these evils, in the moral view you have taken of our national vices, it would naturally have led you to point out suitable remedies. You must then have persuaded us to labour after an union with Christ, the fountain of grace, by faith; and this radical union with him would have produced a moral union, and have transformed us into his likeness: where faith had been implanted, love would have flowed; and where love had flowed, there must have been ready and cheerful obedience; for the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned. But without these gracious habits internally wrought, what will all the outward reformation in the world do for us? Have you not read of the Pharisees? Did not these people keep clean the outside of the cup and the platter? Far from being guilty of any scandalous immorality, they prayed in the streets, made broad their phylacteries, fasted twice a-week, and gave tithes of all that they possessed: yet were their inward parts so filthy, that they finally became obnoxious to a judgment ten thousand times worse than what has befallen the unhappy inhabitants of Lisbon. Let us not deceive ourselves; neither outward reformation nor outward morality are sufficient; neither outward professions nor outward duties will make a man a Christian. The king's daughter is all glorious *within*, as well as *without*; and if we belong to the Redeemer, we must be sanctified by him both in soul, and body, and spirit.

If you would reform the world, PREACH THE GOSPEL. The gospel contains the only motives that can possibly prevail upon any to embrace it. People may talk of the amiableness of the divine Being, and the charms of virtue, thereby to allure us to return to the one, and to embrace the other; but without a true faith in the promises of pardon and acceptance, true repentance can never be attained; and a free and gracious pardon and acceptance is nowhere promised, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. The goodness of God freely offering pardon and peace, must lead us back to him, or we approach him no more. Earthquakes, famine, pestilence, or any other evils, have their use only as they discover to us our present condition, and greatly enhance the offered kindness: but we love God, because he first loved us; we love Jesus Christ, because he obeyed and died for us; and his great love, thus manifested, does not urge, but constrain us to love him again; "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and he died for all that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." These are "the cords of a man, and the bands of love," wherewith we are drawn to our heavenly Father. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" and if God so loved us, surely we ought to love him again, and to testify our love by a suitable obedience. When no creature (as I have hinted) could furnish a righteousness that might be imputed to us, who can but stand amazed, that the Father should send his only begotten Son to obey in our stead? When no creature could bear the wrath of an offended God, and by dying overcome death, who can but stand amazed, that the Son of God should be sent to suffer and to die, that we might live through him? Who can but stand amazed, that the Son of God should take our nature upon himself, that he might thus obey and die for us? How can we behold him thus dying for us, and not die to that sin for which he died? When love so unprecedented speaks so loud, who can but hear, and wonder, and return to the Lord?

What I have said, I think, plainly shews that your discourse might have been far more evangelical; and as plainly shews what superior motives to repentance and reformation would have occurred, if it had been so. So that, humbly recommending my remarks to your serious consideration, I might here have concluded my letter: but as you allow that the late earthquakes "have hitherto been the merciful warnings of a kind and good providence, to dispose us to bear the rod; and to consider, with that awe which becomes us, the hand which hath appointed it;" a few eclaircissements upon one of the lessons which you have advanced under that head become absolutely necessary, lest, by mistaking the case, we should lose the benefit of our neighbours' afflictions.

You recommend upon this occasion, "our guarding ourselves against any hard censures, which a reflection upon these extraordinary calamities encourages in minds too readily disposed to judge with severity;" and conclude, "that it is certain that we have no right to determine what are the particular intentions of Providence in this dispensation." But certainly we have a right to determine that such punishments are inflicted because of sin: else how do they (in your own words) "speak to us the language of the divine displeasure?" else how can they be considered as punishments to correct some, and to warn others? else how can they be considered as the louder calls

of anger; or of what use to bring us home to ourselves? This you must grant, or you pull down all that you have before builded, and make yourself a trespasser. I allow that we have no right to conclude these unhappy people to be greater sinners than ourselves, because of their greater sufferings. This would lead us pharisaically to cajole ourselves in our iniquities, rather than to take warning by others; yet we are allowed to look upon them as very great offenders. Our Saviour does not reprove his disciples, for thinking those Galileans, whose blood (Luke xiii. 2.) Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, to be very great sinners; but for thinking them to be greater sinners than themselves, which is indeed a temper of mind utterly inconsistent with true repentance.

We are allowed then to suppose the Portuguese to be great sinners, and that the Lisbon earthquake was a punishment inflicted for sin; and if we can discover any thing in their conduct that might tend to bring down this divine judgment upon them, it will be our wisdom to take warning by it, and carefully to avoid it, as a fatal snare; and surely we may see some things in them, which God has, in all ages, punished with the most severe chastisement. As—

First, Idolatry. It is impossible but that you, sir, must have heard of the stupid profaneness and idolatry of these people; of their mock processions, and barbarous mimicry of their Redeemer's sufferings, such as was a scandal to human nature, and such as never tarnished the most profane rites of Heathenism. Such fopperies, this horrible punishment should caution us carefully to avoid; and to avoid every means that would lead us into them. It should make us carefully abide by the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God to salvation to every one that believes; and wherein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith. It should make us careful to live up to it, lest, for neglecting so great salvation, God should give us up to strong delusions, to believe such lies, and to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

Seconday, Persecution. We all know, that at Lisbon the barbarous Inquisition reigned in all its horrors, and that thousands have there fallen a sacrifice to it, whose blood has long cried aloud for vengeance; and we know that persecutors have been most severely punished in all ages; so that, taught by this dreadful judgment, we should carefully avoid this crime—a crime of so deep a dye, that in its highest stage, when it strikes at the truth as such, it becomes irremissible, and can never be forgiven either in this world or in that which is to come. I allow, that these people are connected to us by every tie but that of religion; but this of itself constitutes so vast a difference, that whenever we are disposed to speak most favourably of their failings, and attribute them to the prejudices of education, or the weakness of human judgment, we should still remember, that we are protestants and they were papists; and indeed, to us, as protestants and Christians, there is something in this divine judgment so very remarkable, that, if rightly considered, it may greatly confirm us in both.

As protestants, we all look for the destruction of antichrist and his kingdom; and here we behold a city, whose unequalled trade in gold, and silver, and precious stones, was a proper type of that spiritual merchandise so many hundred years vended by her mother Rome; like whom, she was built upon seven hills; like whom, as a most obedient daughter, she was a nest of idolaters and persecutors! And as she was so like her mother in every thing, we have all the reason in the world to think, that Rome, like Lisbon, shall one day be punished. Most remarkable it is, that on the day which she had abused to rob the eternal God of his honour, and to give it to the whole host of heaven; on the day which she had abused in shedding the blood of thousands; on that very day God came down to hold his *auto da fé*, and her own blood was required. Thus, when her mother Rome shall say, "I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; in that very day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

As Christians, we all look and wait for the coming of our Lord unto judgment, and therefore should pay a special regard to every token of his approach. He himself has told us, that, before his coming, "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." When therefore we see any such things come to pass, we should lift up our heads, for our redemption draws nigh. Nor need we to fear, if Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, if we are rooted and grounded in love, though the heavens and the earth fly away, and their place be found no more; for the Lord of Hosts is with us, and Jesus Christ is our refuge. In whom I am, reverend sir, your sincere well-wisher, &c.

LETTER CLIX.

Dear and Reverend Sir,—You need

no apology for delaying your answer to my letter. You have a precedent to plead, which must, if not satisfy, yet strike me dumb; but I propose, if the Lord assist, to be more punctual for the future in acknowledging the favours I receive from my valuable and valued correspondents; among whom I shall always reckon Mr. ———.

I am much obliged for your very just and very important remarks. They give me such an idea of your knowledge in the things of Christ, and your acquaintance with experimental religion, that I must beg leave to lay before you the plan which I have sketched out for my Treatise on Gospel Holiness; with an earnest request, that you will rigorously examine it, and freely pass your judgment upon it; suggesting, wherever it is improper, the means of rectifying it; wherever it is defective, a method for completing it.

THE PLAN.

Pleasure and happiness of Christ's religion. We must partake of the comforts of the gospel, before we can be fitted to practise the duties of the law. Theron oppressed with fears on account of his numerous sins, discouraged with doubts on account of his imperfect obedience, the cordials of the gospel are readministered with some additional spirit and strength. Holiness, gospel holiness, its nature, necessity, excellency. The endowments necessary to fit us for the practice of holiness; a persuasion of our reconciliation to God, the hope of everlasting happiness, and an assured expectation of grace sufficient for us. The grand efficient of holiness, the blessed Spirit; the principal instrument, faith. This renews the dispute concerning the assurance of faith. Objections to it stated, discussed, answered. Holiness more particularly delineated in its several branches, and deduced from, or founded upon evangelical principles; such as, "I beseech you by the mercies of God: Ye are bought with a price: Ye are the temples of the living God: God hath forgiven you," &c. All these privileges, though not hereditary, yet indefeasible; or the final perseverance of believers. This eminently conducive to holiness. The Scriptures, prayer, Lord's supper, when mixed with faith, are effectual means of holiness. Our friends part, and renew their epistolary correspondence. Theron, desirous to glorify the God of his salvation, asks advice concerning the best method of family worship, educating children, instructing servants, and edifying his acquaintance. On each of these particulars Aspasio satisfies his inquiry; enlarges on the subject of education, especially the education of daughters, as that seems to be most neglected, or the proper manner of conducting it least understood. *Letter on the covenant of grace;* comprising the substance, and being a kind of recapitulation of the preceding volumes. *Letter on the way of living by faith in the Son of God, or the way of reducing all the gospel doctrines to suitable practice.* Aspasio seized with a sudden and fatal illness. His sentiments and behaviour in his last moments.

This, dear sir, is my rough draught. Apply the compasses and plummet; examine it with your rule and line. Improve my plan; assist me, with your advice and prayers, to execute the work; and may the great Master-builder enable me to bring forth the top-stone, for the honour of his holy name, and for the edification of his chosen people. I am, dear sir, with unfeigned affection, your brother in Christ.

N. B.—As Mr. Hervey did not live to finish his plan, and as he was himself apprehensive that he should not, he desired, in his preface to Marshall on Sanctification, that Marshall might be considered as a supplement to Theron and Aspasio, and as a kind of substitute for what he intended to write on the same subject, according to the plan here proposed. His words are, "I do by these presents depute Mr. Marshall to supply my lack of service." See Recommendatory Letter, p. 619.

LETTER CLX.

February 12.

My dear Friend,—I will take a hundred of Jenks's Every Man's Ready Companion; for my mind is not altered since I promised this, nor my charity purse drained. It is a useful book to give away.

I am glad Jenks's Meditations sell, and I hope the Lord will make them a blessing to the reader: it is pity they cannot be comprised in less than two volumes octavo.

Does Mr. —— want amusement? Let him take your friend Dr. Young's advice:

Retire and read his Bible to be gay.

Does Mrs. —— want it? You should teach her to delight in God, and to rejoice in Christ Jesus. A certain gentlewoman in Miles'-lane, whom you once reproved, has been taught to find her consolation, not in the entertainments of the stage, but in the assured hopes of heaven.

Have you given so and so to the poor? Ask your heart, whether you gave out of love to your dying Saviour? Was this the motive? It would then be universally influential; and you would think you could never do enough for his honour.

If an earthquake should happen, ask Mr. ——, (that advocate for the theatre), if he would like to be found in the play-house, and go from the boxes, or pit, to the great tribunal? Indeed, indeed, the stage is indefensible.

Thanks for delivering my message. I wish you a safe return, and the continual guidance of Heaven. Yours most cordially, &c.

My messenger waits, pardon haste.

LETTER CLXI.

Madam,—I am pleased not a little to hear a lady of your fine sense and blooming years declare, That an inquiry relating to everlasting salvation "has taken up much of her thoughts." Let me entreat you to go on, and imitate that excellent woman, whose panegyric is uttered by wisdom and truth itself; "Mary hath chosen that better part, which shall not be taken from her."

You inquire, "Whether the elect of God have not an inward assurance that they shall be saved?" Your casuist takes leave to answer the question, by asking another: Why should not you and I, madam, have this assurance? Is it not a blessing intended for Christians in general? "We know," says the apostle, "that we are passed from death unto life." He says not, I and some eminent saints, but, "we;" including those believers to whom he wrote, those among whom he preached, and all those who hereafter should believe through his word.

Is not this a most desirable knowledge? On the other hand, can any thing be more afflicting than a state of suspense with regard to this all-important affair? To be in suspense whether my final lot will fall in the regions of endless misery, or the mansions of eternal glory? Insupportable! Can it be the will of our most indulgent Creator, that we should spend our days in this sad uncertainty, and distressing anxiety? Impossible!

But have we a warrant for this assurance? We have the best of warrants, the gift of God. If your papa gives you a pair of diamond ear-rings, or, (which, rightly improved, will be much more ornamental) a neatly printed Bible; do not you look upon this as a sufficient warrant to call these presents your own? Do not you rest fully assured, that, by virtue of your parent's gift, they are your unquestionable property? Perhaps you will say, Where has God Almighty done any thing like this? where has he given salvation or life eternal to me? Be pleased to consult 1 John v. 11, and you will find an answer, which, I hope, will prove perfectly satisfactory, and highly delightful.

Is this spoken to me? To you, madam; to the young ladies of your acquaintance, and to every one that reads it. Life eternal is given, just as the manna was given in the wilderness. The manna, that each hungry Israelite might gather and eat it: Life eternal, that every poor sinner may receive and enjoy it.—But I have no merit, nothing to deserve it. Then you have just as much as the all-gracious God requires. Without money and without price, is his bountiful declaration. Freely, and abstracted from all deserts, are his gracious terms. You have no merit, madam, and I have less than none. But has our divinely excellent Redeemer nothing meritorious? For his sake, this magnificent and glorious gift is conferred. Not we ourselves, but Jesus Christ the righteous has obtained eternal redemption for us.

May I then assuredly believe, that God gives eternal life to me? May you glorify God's truth? may you glorify his grace? may you glorify the death and obedience of his beloved Son? If so, then you may, you ought, it is your privilege and your duty to believe, that God Almighty freely gives to you eternal life.

When you receive this gift, look upon it as your portion; live in the most comfortable expectation of it; relying on nothing valuable in yourself, but depending entirely upon the faithful promise of him who cannot lie. Then you will feel your heart inclined to love your most adorable Benefactor, then you will study to please him in all your conversation, then you will be truly holy. All which is, with great sincerity, wished by, amiable Miss ——, your most obedient servant, &c.

LETTER CLXII.

Dear Sir,—I keep Mr. E——'s sermon for no other reason, than to prevent its going into other hands. I am ashamed, and sorry to see, that so celebrated a college as —— should send out such a teacher of divinity. However, I must acknowledge one excellence in this gentleman. He acts prudently at least, in not overloading his pages with quotations from Scripture. Those stubborn pragmatical things might, perhaps, have risen up, stared him in the face, and confronted his notions. Mr. ——, he rightly judges, will serve his turn much better than St. Paul. Who is Philalethes Cestriensis? I see nothing valuable in his work, but what comes from the paper-mill and the printing-press; the paper and type are indeed very beautiful. What a wild proposition is that, page 124, namely, "That by faith in Jesus

Christ, we understand the persuasion of the mind, that Jesus Christ was sent from God to redeem and to instruct mankind?" At this rate, the very devils are endued with the Spirit of our God: They believe with this persuasion of the mind, that the Christian revelation is true. Amidst so many palpable errors, who shall lead us into truth? He that is our gracious Master, and our wonderful Counsellor. Dear sir, let us look unto him, that he may, according to his promise, "guide us continually." Next to the holy word of God, let us study Marshall on Sanctification. For my part, I am never weary of reading that incomparable and most comfortable book.

Are you, dear sir, always thinking how good may be done? I say with David, "The Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of his servant!" 1 Chron. xxix. 18.

As the public service of our church is become such a formal lifeless thing, and as it is too generally executed by persons so dead to godliness in all their conversation, I question whether it will be *operæ pretium* to publish the exhortations to ministers, and to a devout attendance on the church service, which you propose. I should much rather see from your pen two or three lively and animating forms of morning and evening prayer, with clear and short directions how to pray aright, and a proper method of daily self-examination. This, printed in a halfpenny pamphlet, we might give away to any body, indeed to every body. And if one in twenty, or even one in fifty proved successful, our pains and expense would be abundantly recompensed. We should also hereby have some handle to lay hold on hypocritical, self-deceiving souls. We might say, Neighbour, have you got those prayers by heart? do you constantly use them, and examine yourself daily by those questions? Indeed, indeed, the exhortations you propose would only exasperate the clergy. It is dangerous to meddle with them or their proceedings. You are, I hope, in the way of duty, and that is the way of peace and safety. You may do much good, by dropping a word for Christ on proper occasions. You do not know how YOUR words are by the generality regarded; and it is impossible for tongue to tell how kindly our condescending Master will take the least attempts which proceed from the love of his name.

I intend soon to return Dr. Watts on the Love of God. I wish it was reprinted. Pray did you ever read Dr. Delaune's Sermons? he was president of St. John's College, Oxford, and famed, I am told, for being a most accomplished gentleman. He really has more of the truth of the gospel in his twelve sermons, that in all the polite sermons I ever read in my life. For my part, I set no store by our modern discourses; nay, I can hardly bear to read such insipid unevangelical harangues. Much rather would I read an oration in Tully, or a dissertation of Seneca's.

When you can spare the Rev. Dr. Browne's Estimate, and likewise his two sermons preached at the cathedral church of Carlisle in 1746, just favour me with a sight of them. I presume they will not tell me of Jesus which was crucified, therefore I shall soon be satisfied with their company; for though I may find some amusement from his fine style, and striking sentiments, yet I can find no consolation in any name, nor in any thing, but only in the grand propitiation and everlasting righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thanks for Dr. Akenside's Ode to the country gentlemen of England. He wrote this with a very good intention, and he is certainly a man of genius; but to me this ode reads somewhat flat; I fear it will not rouse and animate like the poems of Tyrtæus.*

This probably will find you returned in safety from your journey. When the journey of life is over, I hope we shall sit down together in everlasting rest; and see his glory, who endured the cross, and despised the shame. Till then, and then much more, shall I be most affectionately yours, &c.

LETTER CLXIII.

THANKS to my dear friend for the perusal of Dr. Glynn's poem, entitled, The Day of Judgment. It is not void of elegance and spirit; but methinks it wants that energy and pathos, which, on so interesting and solemn an occasion, should awe, transport, and agitate our souls. But the great deficiency is, the neglect of Jesus Christ. He is, indeed, slightly mentioned, just at the close; but he should have made the distinguished figure throughout the whole piece. St. Paul calls the day of judgment, the day of Christ. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; then shall we behold the glorious appearing of the great God, even of our Saviour Jesus Christ. But not a glimpse of this is seen in Dr. Glynn's poem.

Do you ask what I think of the polite ——'s sermon? It is a mere moral essay, not a sermon; it wants the light of Christ. To speak the truth, I think it an errant Cyclops.

* Tyræus was a poet of Athens, who, by his poem pronounced at the head of the army, inspired the Spartans with so much courage and contempt of death, that they obtained a glorious victory.

Monstrum horrendum, cui lumen ademptum.
Virgil, Æn. B. iii.
A hideous, eyeless monster.

From such preachers, and such sermons, good Lord deliver us! Is any remedy for sins comparable to the blood, the righteousness, the intercession of a divine Redeemer? Pity, ten thousand pities, so great a man (for so the author really is) should not know, or should totally overlook the grand peculiarity of the gospel. It grieves me to think such unchristian doctrine should be thus propagated. If a fair opportunity offers, I would gladly bear my testimony against such enormous perversion of the gospel of Christ.

I cannot think the manuscript sermon which you have now sent me is of such distinguished excellence as to deserve a publication. It does not seem calculated either to alarm, to comfort, or impress. There is nothing of the orator, no searching application, no striking address. The preface is not so judicious as I could wish; it anticipates what is said under the following heads, and renders some part of them tautological. The text is not exhausted. Of several emphatical words no notice is taken. *I* say unto you, ye shall *in no case*; of the kingdom of heaven, nothing particular is said. Indeed, there is a hint or two in the conclusion referring to this subject; but too rambling, indistinct, and not with such a similarity to the text as might be observed. The preacher supposes all his hearers to be of the same character, and ranks them all in one class. A practice which discerning people will not admire, and which is hardly consistent with the apostolical rule, rightly dividing the word of truth; or with our Lord's direction, to give each his portion suited to their respective states. I love Mr. R—— as a worthy good man, but I decline the office of revising his sermon, because I am sensible I could not make it such as I should choose to see printed. However, if it is printed, I heartily wish the blessing of the Lord may attend it; that true religion may be promoted, and immortal souls edified.

When the Pope is installed he is reminded of this most weighty truth, *Sancte Pater, dies æternitatis cogita.* Let me say, *Vir dilectissime, dies æternitatis cogita.* We were all pleased with your last conversation. It was like your book, and like yourself. Remember, my dear friend, when you are in company, that you have written a pious book, and do not invalidate all your exhortations to others by forgetting them in your own conversation. It is this, ah! it is this that destroys what we build, confirms people in lukewarmness, and does unspeakably more mischief than can be enumerated in this letter. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," says St. Paul, "but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers."

The paper you inquire after is lost in the *immane barathrum* of my loose papers. If ever it emerges, it shall be restored. May my friend's soul be not as the present state of the pastures and meads, but as a watered garden whose waters fail not!

I have perused Mr. Witherspoon's Essay on Imputed righteousness: may we every day experience that sanctifying efficacy on which his discourse turns. "Sanctify them," saith our Lord, "by thy truth." I thank you for your admonition. I will bear it in my memory, and may our divine Master enable me to observe it!

Oh for a candid spirit! It gives gracefulness to our cause; it diminishes not the weight of our argument; and surely it does honour to the Christian character.

Thanks for Mr. Mason's* Odes. Polished performances; but not equal, in my judgment, to his Isis, or his Monody on Pope. I think I could point out a defect or two in these poems, but nothing defective could I discern in those. It is a pity but gratitude to the supreme Benefactor actuated our hearts and guided our pens. The rich benefits of memory displayed by the elegant Mr. Mason; and not one acknowledgment to the blessed Author of all! The poet shines, but where is the Christian? I am ever yours, &c.

LETTER CLXIV.

Tuesday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I should think my friendship very weak, and quite unfledged, if I could be offended with the freedom for which you apologize. Those who were anciently united in the bonds of Christian friendship had this generous sentiment for their motto, "*Amicorum omnia communia, præter uxores.*"†

I rejoice with you in the hopeful young gentleman's recovery; a pledge, I trust, of his eminent proficiency and extensive usefulness in the gospel cause.

I acquiesce entirely in Dr. C——'s reasons; perhaps if there was much of the pure evangelical peculiarity in the recommendatory verses, it might be a forbidding circumstance to some readers.

Mr. —— is very obliging; his cautions are very friendly. I will not speak so plainly to Mr. W. as to him. I wish, if it

* Odes on Memory, Independency, Melancholy, and the Fate of Tyranny.

† Friends have every thing in common, except their wives.

be God's gracious will, that your little treatise may be like Dr. Doddridge's works, acceptable to every reader. You see by the expressions I have taken the liberty to underline, that Mr. —— sees the great truths of Christianity inverted, just as we see objects in a concave speculum. The good works, according to his scheme, are the recommending cause, and the blessed Redeemer only like the master of the ceremonies, merely to introduce them with a *good grace.* No, we have not so learned Christ; he is our righteousness, as well as our sanctification. We are accepted in the beloved: "In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory." This is the epidemical mistake; but I hope God will send out his light and his truth, and rectify our misapprehensions. I dare say that amiable and accomplished gentleman, that exemplary and shining Christian, that very zealous and successful preacher, Mr. T——n, will be highly pleased to receive the present of your little treatise; his good heart will exult to see your open acknowledgment of the Saviour whom he so dearly loves. I hope to see you, or hear from you, before you take your journey; and am, with increasing esteem and affection, most cordially yours, &c.

LETTER CLXV.

My dear Friend,—Your very kind present is come to our hands, and has made its appearance. You give me, as Theron says, εκατομβοι εννεαβοιων.

All I can say is, May the Lord supply your every need (both bodily and spiritual), according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus!

I am sorry my brother wrote so warm a letter to Mr. A——y about his attempt to purchase the closes at Weston, which lie so commodious for us. The world's maxim is, Catch as catch can: But our Saviour's direction is, "Be anxious for nothing." Never fear but we shall make a shift without these closes to pass through the wilderness, and arrive at the heavenly Canaan. Were not your thoughts upon that eternal home when you attended Mr. L——'s corpse to the tomb? One of the texts to which I directed my people on Sunday was 2 Cor. v. 1, and which, I hope, the omnipresent God is now impressing on their consciences, and mixing with faith.

The elegant Paterculus I here return; and the evangelical Marshall I recommend to your repeated perusal. I wish you studied him more; for then you would like him better than you seem to do at present: you own there are many excellent directions in him; and those parts which you now think obscure would not appear so on a more intimate acquaintance with the author.

I am glad to hear such a character of Mr. ——. I hope you will be an instrument in our Lord's hand of improving his valuable dispositions, of ripening the man of honour into the servant of Christ. I think Dr. Akenside* has, if not spoiled his ode, much injured the dignity and beauty of his sentiments, by writing in Spenser's measure, and sometimes in his drawling style. "While he doth riot's orgies haply share." For an ode, where we expect all the harmony of numbers, and the highest polish of language, this manner surely is improper. I keep it a little longer, perhaps it may please better on the second reading.

I wish you and your lady much joy at Christmas, or rather all joy in Christ. He is come, he is come to judge the earth; to do that for enslaved and ruined mankind which the heroic judges of old did for Israel, to deliver them from bondage, and establish them in peace. Is not this the sense of Psalm xcvi. 11—13? Ah! what pity that, while so many heroes are celebrated, "Jesus, the desire of nations," and "the brightness of his Father's glory," should be totally disregarded. Thou high and holy One, since authors of genius withhold the tribute of praise, glorify thy name by a worm, by impotence, by, &c.

LETTER CLXVI.

Weston, June 7, 1756.

Reverend and dear Sir,—Do you not take it amiss that I have answered your last kind letter no sooner? I have such a multiplicity of epistolary engagements, and such a poor pittance of strength, that I cannot be so punctual in my acknowledgments as my friends may expect, and as I myself wish.

You desired to see Mr. Boyse's letter to me. I here enclose it; and it should have been sent to you earlier, but I could not find it amidst the confused heap of my papers till yesterday. I am very sorry to hear he is so ill, as there is little probability of expecting any thing further from his masterly pen. I really think his little poem entitled Deity, (in which he is not unmindful of the great Redeemer), is as useful and fine a piece of poetry† as most in the English language. I so much admire it, that I have insensibly as it were got it by heart. God grant that it may be influential on every reader.

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* See Letter CLXII.
† See Letter XXXIX.

I was reading the other day a curious book, written by Mr. Fleming, and entitled, The fulfilling of the Scriptures complete; in which I met with a valuable quotation from Luther's letter to Melancthon, who was then in much anguish on the apparent hazards of those times. "If this," says Luther, "be the cause of God, and not of man, then all the burden should be cast on him. Why dost thou afflict and torment thyself, seeing God hath given his Son for us? Why do we tremble or fear? Will he forsake us in smaller things, who has given us so great a gift? Is Satan stronger than God? Should we fear the world, which Christ has overcome? If the cause we contend for be not the truth, let us change; but if the cause be holy and just, why do we not credit the promise and faithfulness of God? It is certain Satan can reach no farther than this present life; but Christ reigneth for ever, under whose protection the truth now is; he will not fail to be with us unto the end. If he be not with us, I beseech you tell me where he shall be found? If we be not of his church, do you think that the bishop of Rome and our adversaries are of it? We are indeed sinners, but Christ is true, whose cause we have in hand; which he has hitherto maintained without our counsel, and so he will do unto the end." Mr. Fleming then justly observes, that Luther rested on Christ, when all visible props broke under him.

What animating considerations are these under all the discouragements we may meet with in our ministerial labours? How does the work of the Lord prosper in your hand? May you be in this respect as a fruitful bough by the wall; may your people sit under your shadow with great delight, and your fruit be sweet unto them. I am yours, &c.

The following is a genuine copy of Mr. Boyse's *Letter to* Mr. Hervey.*

Reverend and dear Sir,—For your tender admonitions and excellent advice, I am truly indebted to you; as they discover a generous and compassionate concern for my better part. I bless God, I have reason to hope that great work is not to do; for of all the marks of infatuation I know amongst men, there can be none equal to that of trusting to a death-bed repentance.

I do not pretend to vindicate my own conduct; nor can I ever forget the very Christian sense of my condition and misfortunes, which (notwithstanding all my misbehaviour) you have so pathetically expressed. The follies of my youth have furnished a plentiful harvest of reflection for my latter years. As I have been now for a long time in a manner buried from the world, so it has been my endeavour to spend that time in lamenting my past errors, and in pursuing a course of life void of offence towards God and man.

I have learned to trust in God as my only portion; to bless him for his fatherly corrections, which have been much gentler than my demerit, and by which I have been taught to know him and myself; his infinite mercy and goodness; my own ingratitude and unworthiness: so that I may truly say with the returning prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son."

My health is in a very precarious state; and the greatest hopes of recovery I have (which are very small) arise from warm weather and the country air. I thank God I am absolutely resigned to his holy and blessed will. I have seen enough of the vanity and folly of earthly things, and how insufficient they are to satisfy the desires of an immortal soul. I am sensible of my own wretchedness and nothingness, and that my only hope of salvation is through that blessed Redeemer, who died to save lost sinners. This is my rock of hope against an approaching eternity.

May you long, sir, taste those true and unfading pleasures, which attend the practice of religion and virtue; and may you, by your shining example, be a means of turning many to righteousness. This is the sincere and ever-grateful wish of your most obliged and faithful servant, S. Boyse.

* Mr. Boyse died soon after he wrote this letter to Mr. Hervey. His poem, entitled Deity, has passed through several editions.

LETTER CLXVII.

Dear Sir,—The following is an extract of a letter, wrote by a young creature labouring under an incurable distemper, and languishing in the near approaches of death.

"I am at this time more happy than tongue can express. Never did I feel so much of the love of Christ shed abroad in my heart, as now. He has given me full assurance that he has, out of love to my soul, cast all my sins behind his back, Isaiah xxxviii. 17. And oh! why need I fear death, when the sting is taken away? No; though I am a sinner, yet I have an advocate with the Father: and though, while I continue in this vile body, I fear I shall too often grieve him, yet is his love still the same; which makes me abhor myself, that ever I should sin against so kind, so compassionate a Saviour."

See by this how the poor receive, how the poor believe, and how the poor adorn the

gospel of God our Saviour. This has indeed no great authority to dignify it, no flowers of eloquence to recommend it; nothing but the transparent sincerity and the native sublimity of its piety. It breathes, however, the very spirit which I long to attain; and though it comes from a person in low life and of no education, yet I believe very few, even amongst the names of highest distinction for wit, genius, and learning, will be able, in the same circumstances, to exercise the same magnanimity of mind.—I am yours, &c.

LETTER CLXVIII.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 13, 1756.

DEAR SIR,—Yesterday I received the favour of your letter; was surprised to find you so near me, and grieved to hear of the occasion. Oh! that both of us may be enabled to cast all our care upon the Almighty! for surely he who gave, not an archangel, not a world, but himself, his most blessed self, for our sins, surely he careth for us.

Yes, dear sir, I think from my very heart, that the grand controversy which the King of heaven has with our nation, is for our prevailing contempt of his most adorable Son Jesus Christ; a gift, compared with which every thing in earth or sky, is lighter than dust upon the scale; a gift, by which an omnipotent and eternal God not only demonstrates, but commands his love. Matchless then and unspeakable must it be! See how the prophet Isaiah exults and triumphs in this glorious gift. With an ardour of gratitude, and with a transport of delight, he cries, "To us a Child is born; to us a Son is given;" in whose person is a dignity, and in whose righteousness an efficacy, infinitely surpassing the power of thought. And should not such a gift be the darling topic of our conversation; be the avowed glory and the general joy of our nation? Yet, strange to tell! afflictive to observe! this divinely excellent gift is forgot, is rejected, or treated with the most cold indifference. Where are the people who mention it, or can bear to hear it mentioned in their company? Instead of being in raptures at the sound, are they not disgusted and chagrined? And does not God behold all this? Did he ever receive so horrid an affront, or is it possible for his creatures to act a more contumelious and disdainful part? But whither am I running? Pardon me, dear sir, pardon my full heart, my wounded heart, which has concurred to aggravate this crying iniquity. Oh! that its invariable language, for the future, may be, "God forbid that I should glory," or rejoice, or confide, "save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord:" in him I have pardon of my sins; in him I have peace with God; in him I have eternal life. Therefore, "Him first, him last, him midst, and without end,"* will I remember, acknowledge, celebrate.

Now you are come so far, could you not make a little farther excursion? Could you not favour us with your company at Weston? where you would find a plain house and a faithful heart open to receive you. I have no news from the literary world; and my orders to my bookseller are few. But having occasion to write, not long ago, to Amsterdam, I sent for all my favourite author's works: Witsius I mean; the polite and pious Witsius. My bookseller is reprinting in two volumes, at my desire, Jenks's Meditations; which I propose to recommend by a prefatory address to the public. Let me soon hear from you, if I cannot see you. And may your letter be in every sense an evangelist.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER CLXIX.

Weston-Favell, March 3, 1756.

DEAR SIR,—In a preceding letter, I begged your solution of some scriptural difficulties. As you always used even to prevent my expectations, in a free and speedy communication of your valuable sentiments; and as I have not enjoyed that pleasure for a long season, I am under some apprehensions that either you are visited with sickness, or my despatches have met with a miscarriage. I hope, after the receipt of this, you will find some way to relieve me from my perplexity.

Reading yesterday, Exod. xiv. methought there was some appearance of tautology in verse 7, Heb. If in either of the clauses we might render the word "RCC," by horsemen, this seeming impropriety would be avoided. It would also more exactly agree with "DCB VTDSHM," the 28th verse. Is not our method of translating verse 20, somewhat forced, and hardly reconcilable with the genius of the original language?

Hab. iii. 5, "LTGV LD." This sentence also embarrassed me a little. How does it, as translated in the English Bible, agree with the history? Is there any account, or any hint, that the pestilence went before the Lord, when he descended on Mount Sinai? There went indeed a wonderful word "DBD," το διαστιλλομενον φωνη ρημαϛων. Does this passage refer to the plagues inflicted on the Israelites for their murmuring and rebellion? I think not, because the sacred hymn appears calculated for the encouragement of the people, whereas this circumstance would rather depress their spirits. Does it point

* Milton.

at the plagues and the vengeance executed on the Egyptians? This, I believe, is most probable, and perhaps affords us the true meaning of the passage. Pray, favour me, if you have health and leisure, with your opinion, which, I assure you, is highly valued, and always thankfully received by, dear sir, your obliged and affectionate friend, &c.

What precedes was written before the receipt of your last.

I thank, you, dear sir, for your letter, and thank you doubly because it is long. I received it on coming from my Wednesday's evening lecture: have read one sheet, and entered upon the second, but am now called down to family prayer. I shall add no more, only let me desire you to favour me with the criticisms you mention. I beseech the blessed God to establish your health, and prolong your life, that you may enrich me and others with many of your letters, and much of your knowledge.

LETTER CLXX.

Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—I congratulate you on the acceptance of your little tract, and the uncommon demand for it. *Inest sua gratia parvis,* is a maxim of more wisdom and weight than we easily apprehend. May the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ accompany it, always and in all places! I must desire you to excuse my waiting upon you. The season is so rigorous, I am afraid to stir abroad. I question whether I shall have courage to venture to Collingtree tomorrow. You know I am one of the snail kind, both in travelling, reading, and writing. My thanks to Mr. Fenwick; I have just peeped upon his work:* I fear it will be thought by the world too finely spun. You once asked my opinion concerning Dr. Grey's last words of David, divided according to the metre. I had not then read it with due attention. I lately perused it very carefully, and am charmed with the importance of his correction and the beauty of the passage, as it stands amended by that judicious critic; though, I must own, I do not admire the alteration suggested by Bishop Sherlock, in his letter to Dr. Grey. "A sun shall rise as the morning," seems to have very little spirit, and less propriety. Is it not bordering upon *idem per idem?* What is the morning, but the rising of the sun? ask your accurate friend's opinion. If the other passages of Scripture, mentioned by Dr. Grey in the front of this little piece as what he soon intends to publish, are as valuably restored, and as elegantly interpreted as this, the suppression of them will be a great loss. I will, on your encouragement, go on with my book in my piddling way. Happy if my own heart may be impressed with the evangelical truths, even though they should reach, as handled by this pen, no farther. I had like to have forgot Mr.——'s letter; and if I had forgot it, you might justly wonder at my stupidity. What a man is he! sure the age does not produce a more genuine copy of his divine Master. What a letter has he wrote! what dignity of sentiment! what true greatness of soul! what openness of heart! what boldness of speech, and justness of reproof, sweetened with what love! tempered with what humility! How I love the excellent man! Was not your soul ashamed while you read it? and did not your heart burn within you, as the disciples' did when talking with Christ in their way to Emmaus?

I am really afraid to read Spenser's Fairy Queen. He is in fancy superior, perhaps, to every poet, yet so luscious in some of his representations, which I have casually dipped upon, that it is impossible, for ME at least, to advert to them without catching contagion. His pictures of this sort are drawn with a good design. He makes his heroes victors of the soft allurements. But, I believe, few minds are so case-hardened against sensual pleasure, as not to receive disadvantageous impressions. I am therefore determined never to look into it again, never to gather the honey of poetry from the briers of contamination. "Flee temptation," is the advice of an inspired apostle, and I will pay the due regard to it. I am, dear sir, with great respect, your most obliged, and very affectionate servant, &c.

LETTER CLXXI.

Weston-Favell, Dec. 6, 1756.

Sir,—I received your obliging and valuable present of the Scriptural Poems wrote by an American. It is an extraordinary performance, considering the disadvantageous circumstances under which the author laboured. A spirit of zeal and devotion animates the whole. There are, too, some elevated thoughts and fine lines in it, particularly in that part of his poems he entitles "Man's fall and exaltation, or the Christian triumph."

I hope the sale of it will answer your expectation; and recompense the cost you have bestowed in printing it so elegantly, and on so fine a paper. But be that as it may, you have my best wishes that it may become the darling of the public; and you

* Thoughts on the Hebrew Titles of the Psalms, endeavouring to discover their meaning, and point out their use.

have at the same time the sincere thanks of, sir, your obliged humble servant.

LETTER CLXXII.

DEAR SIR,—Tell our ingenious friend at ——, if I did not give a direct answer to his question, it was because he had stated it improperly. His manner was like making a raw apothecary's apprentice the proper judge of a doctor's bill. If such a chap should take upon him to say, Doctor, your language is unintelligible, your recipes are injudicious, what answer would you make? Some such answer must be made, even to Dr. C—— and Mr. O——, if they or Dr. C—— maintain, or would insinuate, that the mystery of sanctification, as delineated by Marshall, is unintelligible and injudicious, merely because *they* do not immediately discern its propriety. I own the third and fourth direction of Mr. Marshall seem obscure; but this does not arise from any improper manner of treating the subjects, but from the mysterious nature of the subjects themselves.

This, says Dr. C——, is my firm faith, "that, if we do well, we shall be accepted through the merits of Christ." I might ask the Doctor whether he does well? Dare he avow this, even before me his fellow-worm, and fellow-sinner? How then will he maintain the pretension before that infinitely pure God, in whose sight the very heavens are unclean? But I choose to ask him, (what may seem less offensive,) "has he never read of the righteousness of faith?" Rom. x. 6. Of being "made righteous by one man's obedience?" Rom. v. 19. Of "righteousness imputed without works?" Rom. iv. 6. Now I should be glad to learn, what the Holy Spirit means by these expressions? And if our worthy friend pleases to show, how his faith can be made conformable to any one of these texts, I will undertake to demonstrate the conformity of my faith to them all. Ah! why should we hug a despicable rag, and reject a suit of beautiful apparel? The Lord Jesus enable us all to discern the things that are excellent!

Let me this Christmas wish you and Mrs. —— all joy and peace in Christ Jesus. These are the true compliments of the season, and therefore sent by your true friend, &c.

LETTER CLXXIII.

Weston, Saturday morning.

MUCH I loved, and much I esteemed my dear friend before; but now, methinks, I love and esteem him more on account of his kind acceptance of my free admonitions. Do, my dear friend, let us remember how important the hours of our present life, and the moments of social intercourse are. Dr. W—— of Worcester, who has a fine taste for painting, can, though engaged in great business, paint, and talk now and then upon paintings; Dr. C—— of St. Albans, who has a fine genius for poetry, though amidst a variety of employs, can write, and give his sentiments on poetry; and why should not Dr. S——, though in an equally large sphere of action, edify his acquaintance by his tongue and pen with some religious hints? This, I think, is his distinguishing talent; and, when he pleases, I am sure no man knows how to introduce Scripture better, or to converse in a more striking manner. Oh! that a stricture of it may run through, brighten, and dignify his temper, his business, his whole conversation.

You are perfectly right in esteeming those authors whose piety beams through all their pages. And for this very reason I esteem, admire, and embrace Jenks' Works, Marshall on Sanctification, and Witherspoon on the Imputed Righteousness of Christ; because nothing has so efficacious and benign an influence on true piety as their doctrines; nothing so sweetly calms the conscience, so thoroughly refines the affections, or, to say all in a word, so effectually sheds abroad the love of God in the heart.

I wish you and Mrs. S—— abundance of comfort in Miss Sophia. It was said of one, Nabal is his name, and folly is with him, 1 Sam. xxv. 25. So I say of your infant daughter, Sophia is her name, and may wisdom be with her! even the ἡ ἄνωθεν σοφία, "the wisdom from above," which St. James so charmingly describes in chap. iii. 17, and not with her only, but with her parents, and with their truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CLXXIV.

Weston-Favell, July 26, 1756.

Now, my dear friend, I have procured your favourite author, Downham's Christian Warfare against the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. He is indeed a pleasing, perspicuous writer: the language, as you observed, remarkably pure and correct; he is very experimental, and enters into the distresses of tempted souls; many things are sweet, comfortable, charming. Sometimes, I think, he draws a little veil over the grace of God, not suffering it to blaze out in its full lustre and glory. Do not

you think he is somewhat inaccurate in stating the nature of justification? Lib. ii. chap. 50. "Justification," he says, "consisteth in two parts: the first, remission of our sins for the full satisfaction of Christ by his death and sufferings; the other, the imputation of his habitual and active righteousness." Should it not rather be, Justification consists of two parts: the first, remission of our sins; the second, being perfectly righteous in God's sight: and both these spring from the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the poor sinner.

I find from your manuscript it is your opinion, that the antediluvian sacrifices were slain by the sword of the cherubim planted and waved at the entrance of Eden. This is a very remarkable and very awful circumstance; and, if true, very worthy of particular notice. But what reasons have you, dear sir, for the support of this sentiment? Be so kind as to mention them at your leisure.

Mr. P——, about a week after his return to Northamptonshire, gave me your letter. I fear he will become a prey to the allurements of the world. I believe he is not very zealous for the gospel of Christ. I am pretty sure he does not love the servants of our Lord; therefore I expect that, from this quarter, my character will soon be put under an eclipse; nor shall I be much disappointed if, by this incident, my new friend is put away from my sight. Thanks for your hint concerning my conduct; it is very seasonable, and shall be observed.

I have sometimes thought that the best, strongest proof of a future state of happiness occurring in the Old Testament, is deducible from the history of Enoch. "Enoch walked with God," was high in his favour, and had much communion with him: it is recorded as a singular reward of his holy and exemplary life, that "he was not, for God took him." Now, if the ancient people of God had no notion of a future state of happiness, what strange apprehensions must they form concerning this instance of the divine procedure? At this rate, Jehovah must appear to punish in the most exemplary and dreadful manner his first and greatest favourite. Whereas, suppose them rooted in the belief of a much happier condition succeeding the present life, and the case is plain, and God is justified in his doings. Please to give me your opinion as to this argument.

I hope you are thinking of your new version of Psalm civ. which will be very agreeable, and, I hope, not a little edifying, to, dear sir, your much obliged and affectionate friend, &c.

P. S.—I here send you Mr. Moses Browne's almost literal translation of Luther's most comfortable hymn, which is in very considerable esteem in the German church. *Zimmermannus de cognitionis Christi eminentia*, is a comment on it, and is now translating by Mr. Browne at my desire.

LUTHER'S HYMN.

IN EIGHT PRACTICAL RULES.

I.

'Tis not too arduous an essay,
To tread resolved the gospel-way;
The sensual instinct to control,
And warm with purer fire the soul.
Nature may raise her fleshly strife,
Reluctant to the heavenly life;
Loath in a Saviour's death to share,
Her daily cross compell'd to bear:
But grace omnipotent, at length,
Shall arm the saint with saving strength;
Through the sharp war with aids attend,
And his long conflict sweetly end.

See *Zimmermannus*, page 5.

II.

Act but the infant's gentle part;
Give up to love thy willing heart:
No fondest parent's melting breast
Yearns, like thy God's, to make thee blest:
Taught its dear mother soon to know,
The tenderest babe his love can show;
Bid thy base servile fear retire,
This task no labour will require.

Zimmermannus, page 11.

III.

The SOVEREIGN FATHER, good and kind,
Wants but to have his child resigned;
Wants but thy yielded heart (no more!)
With his large gifts of grace to store.
He to thy soul no anguish brings,
From thine own stubborn will it springs:
That foe but crucify, (thy bane!)
Nought shalt thou know of frowns or pain.

Zimmermannus, page 17.

IV.

Shake from thy soul, o'erwhelmed, deprest,
The encumbering load that galls her rest:
That wastes her strength in bondage vain:—
With courage break the enslaving chain.
Let prayer exert its conquering power;
Cry in thy tempted trembling hour,
"My God, my Father! save thy son!"——
'Tis heard,—and all thy fears are done.

Zimmermannus, page 32.

V.

Yet if (more earnest plaints to raise)
Thy God a while his aid delays,
Though you don't *now* his kind hand feel,
Thy grief let lenient patience heal.
Or if corruption's strength prevail,
And oft thy pilgrim footsteps fail;
Pray for his grace with louder cries,
So shalt thou cleansed and stronger rise.

Zimmermannus, page 43.

These next lines within brackets, do not belong to Luther's hymn, but are used by Zimmermannus, page 52, as an illustration of the preceding stanza.

[The faster hold my faith on Jesus takes,
His brighter glories on my spirit breaks.
If then to heaven I lift my votive hands,
Love's strongest flame my raptured soul expands.
Thee, Lord, she loves, and would with zeal forego
A thousand worlds, love dear as thine to know]

Then Luther's hymn proceeds thus:

VI.

If haply still thy mental shade,
Dark as the midnight gloom be made,
On the sure faithful arm divine
Firm let thy fastening trust recline.
The gentlest sire, the best of friends,
To thee nor loss nor harm intends:
Though tost on a tempestuous main,
No wreck thy vessel shall sustain.

Should there remain of rescuing grace
No glimpse, no footstep left to trace;
Hear thy Lord's voice:—'Tis JESUS' will,
"Believe, thou poor dark pilgrim, still."
Zimmermannus, page 55.

VII.

Then thy sad night of terrors past,
(Though the dread season long may last,)
Sweet light shall, from the tranquil skies,
Like a fair dawn, before thee rise;
Then shall thy faith's bright grounds appear,
Thine eyes shall view salvation clear.
Be hence encouraged more, when tried,
On the best FATHER to confide:
Ah! from thy mind extirpate quite
The sickly films that cloud her sight.
See! of how rich a lot, how blest,
The true believer stands possest!
Zimmermannus, page 68.

These lines within the brackets, do not belong to Luther's hymn, but are used by Zimmermannus as an illustration of the preceding stanza. See page 74.

[Loose from hard bonds, my God! a mind
In chains too fast, too strait confined:
I'm heal'd! set free! from sin made pure!
Thy blood, my Christ, has wrought the cure.
I feel a power my will control!
Quench thy long drought, my thirsty soul!
The living fountain now I've found,
Diffusing balmy streams around.]

Then Luther's hymn concludes with this eighth practical rule.

VIII.

Come, backward soul! to God resign;
Peace, his best blessing, shall be thine:
Boldly recumbent on his care,
Cast thy felt burdens ONLY THERE.
Zimmermannus, page 89.

LETTER CLXXV.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—This morning I wrote to my bookseller, and therein told him, that I think he need not be much concerned at the scurrilous treatment which the reviewers have bestowed on my edition of Jenks's* Meditations. It will injure their own character, and lessen their own credit; not depreciate the works of that excellent man. I do assure you, it gives me not the least concern. I do not covet reputation. I desire every day to be more and more dead to the honour that cometh of men. Yet it is my sincere opinion, that such very foul and very abusive language, would awaken in the generous reader a spirit of resentment. As a proof, I enclose a letter from Mr. P——, a very ingenious young clergyman, whom I some time ago mentioned to you under this character. The letter, I think, will do him as much honour as it does me; it is fit to appear in print; but I would on no account take any such freedom with a private epistle. I would not have our friend in London give himself any manner of trouble to prevent any future instances of this kind of benevolence from the reviewers. I depend not on their favour, but on him whom heaven, and earth, and hell obey; who constrained even Balaam to say, "How shall I curse whom the Lord hath not cursed?" We are all obliged to my dear friend for interesting himself in our behalf; but we desire him not to take the trouble of writing on Tuesday, because it will be too late. The little closes are to be put up for sale on Monday, and A——, will, I suppose, outbid my brother; yet, if disappointed in this, blessed be God for a treasure in heaven that faileth not! an inheritance that is not perishable, but lasting as eternity; not tarnished, but free from every circumstance of alloy; not fading, but always in the fullest, freshest bloom of perfection, glory, and joy.

Poor Mr. H——r, I am informed, has almost lost his sight, is extremely ill; his life, it is thought, will follow his sight. Lord, that he and we may see by faith the Lord's Christ! Blessed be God, in Christ all fulness dwells, all fulness of merit and righteousness, of grace and salvation; and this is for the unworthy, for sinners, "for whoever will;" therefore, for my dear friend, and for his ever affectionate, &c.

* See Mr. Hervey's preface to this book, p. 721.

LETTER CLXXVI.

Weston-Favell, Monday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am much obliged to you for your generous donation of thirty shillings to purchase five hundred of an Earnest Invitation to the Friends of the Established Church, &c.* I have put the money into the hands of one who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and who will take care that the pamphlet is properly dispersed according to our desires. It is an excellent design. I daily beg of God to bless it; for what he vouchsafes to bless, will be blessed indeed.

Enclosed I send you a form of prayer, founded on the plan laid down in the Earnest Invitation, &c. It was transmitted to me last night, by a very pious clergyman, who, I believe, was himself the author of it. You may get one of your sons to transcribe it, if you have not leisure enough to do it yourself; and permit such serious persons to take copies as you think will make a proper use of it.

I wish you that promise for your counsellor, which we read this morning, at break-

* An Earnest Invitation to the Friends of the Established Church, to join with several of their brethren, clergy and laity, in setting apart one hour in the Sunday of every week for prayer and supplication, especially during the present troublesome times.

fast, in Isaiah, (chapter lviii. 11.) "The Lord shall guide thee continually." I am, my dear friend, ever yours, while, &c.

[A solemn act of confession and intercession, suited to the plan of those London clergy, and other friends to the Established Church, as specified in the Earnest Invitation, &c., requesting all the well-disposed Christians (laity as well as clergy) throughout this nation, to join with them in a solemn act of humiliation for one hour every Sunday evening, viz. from eight of the clock till nine, on account of their own sins and the sins of this nation, especially during these calamitous times, viz. in 1757.]

1. O Blessed Lord, let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be at this time acceptable in thy sight as the incense, and let this now lifting up of my hands be a sweet-smelling sacrifice! Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto thee.

O most great and glorious God! just and terrible in thy judgments to all obstinate and rebellious sinners, but of infinite mercy to such as, with true sorrow and hearty repentance, turn unto thee; look down, I beseech thee, with mercy and compassion upon me, now presenting myself before thee, owning that I am not worthy so much as to lift up my eyes to the throne of thy glorious Majesty. O Lord, my sins are so many and so great, that it is owing to thy mercy alone that I have not been long since consumed, but yet have another opportunity of humbling myself before thee, and begging mercy for my own soul, who have so grievously sinned against thee. I confess, O Lord, what thou knowest already, but I confess it to manifest thy justice, and to glorify thy mercy, which has spared me so long. I confess and acknowledge, O Lord, that I brought a depraved and sinful nature into the world with me, from whence all my actual sins have flowed and proceeded, as impure streams from a polluted fountain. O blessed God, I beseech thee, for thy dear Son, Jesus Christ's sake, to humble me, and that greatly, for this my original corruption! Lord, let me see it in the strongest light; and never give me rest and peace till from my soul I cry out for, and rely upon, the unsinning obedience of my dear Redeemer, Jesus Christ; and the assistance of the Spirit for deliverance from it; and grant that this precious balm may be my cure, and restore me again to the image of my God!

O Lord, I have sinned against thee by wilful and actual sins; I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and have done those things which I ought not to have done;—particularly by such and such a sin.

[As it is taken for granted, that every one who uses this prayer has first of all strictly examined himself, and wrote down all the notorious sins, both of commission and omission, which he could recollect that he had been guilty of during the whole course of his life, it would here be proper for him to read over that catalogue of his offences very deliberately, that he may be deeply humbled, and truly penitent.]

O blessed God, I can give but a wretched account of myself. I cannot remember, I fear, the ten thousandth part of my offences. Lord save, or I perish; my crimes are intolerable and shameful, and my omissions as well as my commissions are innumerable. Oh, what shall I say unto thee, or what shall I do? Oh, thou preserver of men! I am so vile, that I cannot express it; so sinful, that I am hateful to myself, and much more abominable must I needs be in thy sight!

Oh, I have sinned, I have sinned! my sins are grown shameful, and aggravated to amazement! Lord! I can say no more; I am ashamed, I am confounded in thy presence!

But yet, O God, thou art the healer of our breaches, and the lifter up of our head; and I must not, I dare not despair. Thou hast opened a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, and therefore I am sure thou delightest not in the death of a sinner; and though my sins are great and numberless, as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, yet they are infinitely less than thy mercies, which thou hast revealed to all penitent and returning sinners in Jesus Christ!

For his sake, therefore, be pleased to look down into the dust, and lift up a poor helpless sinner from the dunghill! for Christ's sake, let me not perish in my folly, nor be consumed in thy heavy displeasure! for Christ's sake, give me time and space to repent, and give me also power to do it by the assistance of thy blessed Spirit!

Support me with an holy hope; confirm me with an operative and lively faith; and kindle a bright and burning charity in my soul; give me patience in suffering, and severity in judging, and in condemning my sins! that judging myself, I may not be condemned of thee; that mourning for my sins, I may rejoice in thy pardon; that destroying my sins, I may live in righteousness; that denying my own will, I may always endeavour to perform thine; and that, by the assistance of thy blessed Spirit, I may overcome all carnal and spiritual wickedness. May I walk in thy light; may I delight in thy service; may I perfect my obedience; be wholly delivered, as well from the power of sin, as punishment of it; and so be for ever preserved from thy wrath, and at last pass on from a certain expectation to an actual enjoyment of the glories of thy kingdom, through Jesus Christ my blessed Lord and Saviour! Amen.

2. And now, Lord, as I have been con-

fessing my own sins, and humbling myself before thee as a private and particular person, I think myself bound, in humility and duty, after the example of thy servant Daniel, to look upon myself in a still farther sinful light, viz. as an inhabitant of a profligate and rebellious nation; and so, like Daniel also, to confess the sins of my people! May I feel the concern of the Psalmist when he exclaimed, "Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law," Psalm cxix. 130. And oh! that my supplications, and the supplications of all those who at this appointed hour have agreed solemnly to seek thy face, and to confess their own sins, and the sins of the people of this land; O that they may meet with the same gracious acceptance with thee as Daniel did! O that the commandment may come forth at the beginning of our supplication, "to make an end of our sins, and to make reconciliation for our iniquities, that thou mayest once more be our God, and we thy people!"

Let thy merciful ears, O God, therefore be open unto our prayers, and spare all those who confess their sins unto thee! that they whose consciences by sin are accused, by thy merciful pardon may be absolved, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

"O Lord, the great and faithful God, keeping covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments!" (Deut. vii. 9.) we have sinned, O Lord, we have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, nor to thy Son Jesus Christ, nor to his apostles, who in thy holy word have spoken unto our fathers and the people of the land.

O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face as at this day, to our kings, to our princes, to our fathers, and to ourselves, because of the trespasses which we have trespassed against thee; yea, we have all as one man transgressed against thee, by departing from thee, and not obeying thy voice; therefore the curse is poured out upon us, and thou hast confirmed the word which thou hast spoken against us! Thou hast brought upon us many and sore evils, yet made we not our prayer before thee, that we might turn from our iniquity and understand thy truth.

But, O blessed Lord, to thee belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against thee. O Lord, we confess our wickedness and are sorry for our sins; we beseech thee, therefore, according to all thy righteousness and all thy gracious promises, and for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from us! Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see, and behold our miseries and our desolation! for we do not present our supplications before thee trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies, and of the truth which thou hast shewed of old time to us thy servants: But thou art the same, whose property is always to have mercy; have mercy upon us, therefore, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for thy dear Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake; forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name! And let the consideration of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and of thy manifold warnings to us, and long-sufferings towards us, increase in us true repentance, that iniquity may not be our destruction! and increase in us also more and more a lively faith and love, fruitful in all holy obedience, that thou mayest still continue thy favour, together with the light of thy gospel, to us and our posterity! and this we beg for thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.

3. And now I have here confessed to thee my own sins, and the sins of the people, I desire farther to offer up my prayers in behalf of all mankind, that both Jew and Gentile may believe in, and glorify thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent! Protect and prosper thy holy catholic church; preserve it pure in doctrine and worship; root out of it whatever is a scandal to thy most holy religion; unite its professors and enlarge its borders; especially bless that part of it in these nations to which I belong; and as, in thine infinite mercy, thou hast been pleased to vouchsafe us abundant illumination of thy gospel, be pleased to grant that by our sins we may not extinguish the light of it.

Inflame the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries with a lively and burning zeal for the conversion of souls. Impress it deeply upon them, that cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully; and be pleased, O Lord, to assist them with thy blessed Spirit, and to direct them to the use of such means as may be effectual to bring about, and accomplish that desirable and happy end.

Be pleased likewise to bless all those our dissenting brethren, of what denomination soever they be, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! Reconcile our hearts to them, and theirs to us! grant that there may be an end of those animosities, and bitter disputes, which have so long and so sadly disturbed the peace, and hindered the union of Protestants! and grant also, that there may be only this one holy contention between us, whether the ministers out of

the established church, or they that are in it, shall labour most for the glory of our common Master, and for the salvation of those souls committed to their care, and for whom he shed his blood.

Bless, likewise, our sovereign lord King George, and all his royal family! make them pure and holy in their lives! raise up an active and vigorous spirit in their hearts, for the punishment and rooting out of wickedness and vice, and for the encouragement and maintenance of true religion among us.

And be pleased, O Lord, to give the spirit of wisdom to all his counsellors, and to the magistrates of all ranks through the nation, that they may be enabled faithfully to discharge that great trust which is reposed in them, to thy honour, and to the benefit and advantage of his majesty and the nation!

Be pleased likewise to go forth with our fleets and armies! bless all their endeavours against our enemies, and give them success in the day of battle.

Have mercy upon all the afflicted members of thy church, whether in mind, body, or estate! Pity their condition, O Lord! pity it, and lay no more upon them than they are able to bear, but give them deliverance in thy good appointed time, if it be thy blessed will! Have compassion upon all that are in error, but sincerely seek the truth; on all that are engaged in sinful courses, and led captive by their lusts, that they may have grace and strength to break their bonds; and on all those who never pray for themselves! Open their eyes, O Lord, and melt their stony hearts; awaken them, though it be even with thunder, to a sensible feeling of their sad condition; and, for thy mercy's sake, suffer them no longer to sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; may they see before it be too late the danger and madness of thus living without God in the world.

4. Finally, O Lord, I desire to return thee my unfeigned praises and thanksgivings for the manifold expressions of thy goodness and loving-kindness to me and to all mankind! I bless thee for my creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, and for all the helps and advantages which thou hast vouchsafed me for the obtaining a better; but above all, for thy astonishing love to mankind in Jesus Christ, for all that he hath done and suffered for us, and continues still to do for us by his powerful intercession at thy right hand! humbly beseeching thee, that I thy servant, together with all those who have lived and died in the faith of his holy name, may follow the example of his heavenly life, that finally with them I may be made a partaker of the merits of his obedience and death, in a joyful resurrection to everlasting life!

All these confessions, prayers, supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings, I humbly put up to the throne of grace, in the name and words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who, in compassion to our infirmities, hath taught us thus to pray: "Our Father," &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

N. B.—The above prayer may be enlarged and improved as time and occasion shall offer; and it may not be improper to remind every Christian, that the first time he makes use of it, he ought to set apart at least half an hour for self-examination, and writing down the sins of which he finds himself guilty. The following Sundays he will reconsider what he has written, and thereby form a judgment what is his progress in, or deviation from, the path which leads to heaven. After having spent some Sunday evenings in this devout exercise, he should be upon his guard lest he be tempted to leave it off. O may he never be tired of such a good work! the more he prays, the more he will have strength to persevere. It is humbly hoped, that all who read this will immediately purchase the Earnest Invitation, &c. the price of which, as has been before observed, is no more than a penny; and then, after having weighed it with the attention which a matter of this importance deserves, they will, to use the author's own words, "judge whether it be not a seasonable and a safe measure which we would persuade you to take; and you will take it, if you are indeed a friend to our present happy establishment in church and state. Your love for them will put you upon the doing every thing that lies in your power to serve them; and here you have a fair opportunity, of which, if you make use, it cannot but do you service, and may be a blessing to them. Pray for them at the appointed hour, (namely from eight to nine every Sunday evening.) Determine, through God's assistance, that nothing shall hinder you from joining us. Break through all engagements, all hinderances, to meet at the throne of grace the Lord's people. [Consider that God knoweth his secret ones, and will reward them openly.] And moreover, for your encouragement, remember, that he who sitteth upon the throne is the GOD WHO HEARETH PRAYER, and who has invited you (Psal. l. 15.) to call upon him in the day of trouble; so will I hear thee, says he, and thou shalt praise me." What a comfortable promise is here to animate every one to make part of this praying congregation!

LETTER CLXXVII.

My dear Friend,—I truly sympathize with you in all your calamities; but to be afflicted more or less, is the common lot of God's people; and it is frequently their fate to be exercised with frowning providences in a remarkably grievous manner. Under such circumstances we should suggest soft hints of admonition, with the same friendly intention as actuated the prophet Jeremiah, when he addressed this exhortation to his countrymen, "Let us search and try our ways, and," if we are found delinquents, "turn again unto the Lord," Lam. iii. 4. We should likewise comfort each other by observing, that God, who heareth prayer, has bowels of everlasting compassion, and does not willingly afflict the sons of men; that this adorable God has given his all-glorious Son to be a bleeding sacrifice for our sins; and that if he withheld not his Son, *his only Son*, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? all things that pertain to life and godliness; to subsistence here, and salvation for ever. Prompted by the infinite benignity of his nature, and engaged by his inviolable promise, he never faileth those that seek him. O how ready is he to give his Holy Spirit! to give all happiness to those that with an humble sincerity will apply to him! infinitely more ready than we are to give our children a morsel of bread to save them from perishing with hunger. These are indeed comfortable considerations, and are the strongest reasons why we should continually be making our requests known unto him.

I fear Mr. Sm—h is a very bad man, and too justly deserves the name you give him. Labourers, I am told, are distressed by his neglecting to pay them; which I can assure you very much grieves me, nor is it in my power to redress them. I wish it was; they should soon see what it is to have to do with one "who nameth the name of Christ," 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Please to lend me Dr. Squire's Indifference for Religion Inexcusable. I mightily like the title of it. He bears so good a character, both as a scholar and a man, that I hope it will be an antidote against the fashionable and growing indifference to religion.

Did you ever see a shilling poem, entitled the Battle of the Sexes? It is wrote in the spirit of Spenser, and is indeed one of the prettiest things I ever met with. But it is very evident that the author has taken his plan from Fletcher's Purple Island.* The celebrated Pitt of New College, who translated Virgil and Vida, has wrote a complimentary copy of verses, which are prefixed: a specimen of which I have here selected to show you the nature of it.

What muse but yours so justly could display
The embattled passions marshall'd in array?
Bid the ranged appetites in order move,
Give *lust* a figure, and a shape to *love?*
To airy notions solid forms dispense!
And make our *thoughts* the images of *sense!*
Discover all this rational machine,
And show the movements, springs, and wheels within?

As I was looking yesterday at my preface to the new edition of Jenks's Meditations, I observed, in the catalogue of his works, that, either through my own or the printer's negligence, two little pieces are omitted: one of them is his Serious Thoughts on the Wonderful God; which is very useful in assisting us to form proper notions of the divine perfections; the other is his Glorious Victory of Chastity, exemplified in Joseph's hard conflict, and happy escape. It is a pity that this little piece is not more regarded by parents, as it is perhaps the best thing of its size ever wrote on the subject, and ought to be put into the hands of all young people; for as St. Augustine justly observes, "Inter omnia certamina Christianorum duriora sunt prælia castitatis; nam ibi continua pugna, et rara victoria."*

If another edition of Jenks's Meditations should be demanded, and if it should please God to take me to himself before that time, I here desire the favour of you to see that these two little tracts be inserted in the catalogue of Mr. Jenks's writings, given in the preface to that book by your ever affectionate, &c.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, April 28, 1757.

What has my dear friend been speaking for the honour of him, who saved his life from destruction? How are you? how is your lady, after your great fright,† and greater deliverance? Calm now, I trust,

* See Letter CCVI.

* The meaning of which is: "Amidst all the various and sharp encounters in the Christian warfare, the attacks on our chastity are perhaps the most formidable, as the combat is strenuous and lasting: a complete victory being rarely obtained."

† The gentleman was driving his wife in a one-horse chaise, when the horse suddenly took fright, and flung his hinder leg over one of the shafts, just by the side of a very deep ditch: being thus entangled, and a high-mettled horse, he kicked with all imaginable fury, and several times his hoofs came within a hair's breadth of their heads. They called in vain on their servant, who had loitered behind; and they must both have inevitably been dashed to pieces, had not the horse, by the violence of his kicking, broke the harness, bar, and shafts, and thus fortunately disentangled himself.

and no emotions in your mind but of gratitude to the great Preserver of men, who kept all your bones, so that not one of them is broken.

Now, I hope you will be steadily and uniformly serious. You see, God warns you, yet spares you. To others he has appointed such dangers as befell you yesterday, to be the messenger of death; to you he has designed them only as an admonition of love; hear then your PRESERVER'S voice. Trifle no longer with Christ and his salvation; be zealous, I mean discreetly zealous, for your Saviour, and for that gospel, which you understand better than most of our clergymen. How can you refuse to speak boldly for such a Master, and to devote yourself to his service in earnest, who forgives all your backslidings, watches over you with such tender compassion, and *waits*, yea, *waits* to be *gracious unto you!*

My dear friend, may the Lord Jesus turn us both to himself, who is our refuge, our salvation, and all our hope; who should be our boast, our triumph, and all our joy.

I long to see your amiable friend the Reverend Mr. Dyer's poem on the Fleece. I suppose he will make you a present of it. When you have done with it, please to send it me. I hear it is to be sold at five shillings, which I cannot afford to give for it.

In your last letter you asked me for two guineas out of my charity purse, for our very deserving and very distressed friend. Indeed it is quite exhausteb; nay I do not think I have a single guinea in the world, even for my own use; though I forbear every unnecessary expense, and want many of the little conveniences of life, that I may be enabled to succour the worthy servants of Christ. I have agreed to go halves with Rivington in the profits of my book: and I always make it a maxim, not to give till I have gotten. Be just before you are generous, is your own rule too. If the Lord pleases to prosper my work, I will very readily communicate to the comfort of such worthy objects as you may think proper to recommend to the charity of, my dear friend, yours very affectionately.

LETTER CLXXIX.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Moses Browne* has, I think, thirteen children. One is settled in the world; and a friend of his has taken another for his clerk, gratis. We propose to put out one of his daughters to some decent business, by which she may have the means of getting her livelihood. He has been at a great expense, poor man! by the sickness of his family. Your contribution on this occasion will be acceptable. Dr. —— has offered to augment the collection; and Mr. ——, I am sure, will readily add his charitable assistance, especially if you recommend the case.

We are in daily expectation of our friend H——. I wish you could make up the *triumvirate of the guests*. At all our social interviews, our news is fetched from the Bible; Christ is the monarch, and heaven the country, on which we discourse. O that I may be enabled to improve these precious opportunities! not be like Pharaoh's lean kine, destitute of growth, though crammed with plenty! My flock would have been peculiarly delighted to have heard your voice in the pulpit; they would have hung on your lips; and, I verily believe, the words would not have been in vain in the Lord. There is no expedient so effectual to warm our hearts, as an unremitted endeavour to awaken the love of a bleeding Saviour in the breast of others.

I am truly grieved at the account of yourself. You know who has said, "I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely;" and dare we, by giving way to unbelief, make the God of truth a liar? Hear the words of the Lord, spoken by Jeremiah, chap. iii. 12. "Return, thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; only acknowledge thine iniquities which thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God."

Recommend Jenks's Victory of Chastity to Mr. ——, and tell him, that though the lusts of the flesh are inveterate enemies, yet three methods may be prescribed for a victory over them. 1. A believing application of the Redeemer's death. The saints in glory, once men of like passions with ourselves, overcame through the blood of the Lamb. He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, might live unto righteousness." 2. An habitual reliance on the Spirit of God. "If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Christ by his Spirit acts on our depraved, polluted hearts, as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap. 3. An improvement of the divine promises. God "has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of a divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

These, tell Mr. —— to lay up in his

* The Rev. Mr. Moses Browne, (the author of Sunday Thoughts, and various other pieces,) is now vicar of Olney in Buckinghamshire, the revenue of which is about fifty pounds, being his only income, and he above fifty years old.

memory; on these let him meditate; and plead them before our heavenly Father in frequent, frequent prayer. And let him be of good comfort, the blessing of Gad will be his portion. "Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last." See Gen. xlix. 19.

Our dear friend presents his love; and wishes you may be very zealous for the Lord God of hosts. You have constantly an interest in my best prayers, but I am utterly unworthy to approach the immaculate purity and infinite holiness of the great God; yet blessed be his adorable name for Jesus Christ. Oh let us fly to Christ! "Turn ye to this strong-hold, ye prisoners of hope." Let us cast our every burden upon the Lord Redeemer; have access into the holiest through his precious blood; and trust in his ever-acceptable intercession; for he intercedes, delightful truth! he intercedes for *transgressors*. I am, dear sir, &c.

LETTER CLXXX.

Dear Sir,—Mr. Hayward and Mr. Pike's Cases of Conscience are printed in two volumes, the first of which I here send you. I return you Smollet's History of England, and West's Pindar, with thanks. How empty all these polite pieces appear, compared with the sacred page! May this delight our taste, for this alone can comfort our heart. What I proposed to write relating to the subject of Visiting on Sundays, (see p. 703) was executed the beginning of last week; yet, to say the truth, I am in some measure backward to propagate and enforce it; because, till people begin to taste something of the love of God, and find delight in Christ Jesus, such truths, I doubt, will only startle, and make them dread religion as burdensome.

Thanks for the venison. We cannot dress it to-day. All my family are to be at court this morning. The King of heaven has sent positive orders, and will not excuse either man-servant or maid-servant. Will you not give us your company in the afternoon? When Mr. —— performs the whole service at my church, I fancy you will not be disappointed nor unedified: he seems to have a ready utterance, a very good voice, and a fervent zeal for the honour of Christ: may the arrow of the gospel go forth from his lips as the lightning! I hope you will bring your wife with you; such lively preaching as I expect, may be a blessing to both of you. O that Christ may guide us with his counsel, and warm us with his love; make us useful in our generation, and meet for his heavenly kingdom!

Why does our friend talk of not accepting ——, because it is a paltry living? Surely he would not reckon that a paltry thing, which gave him an opportunity of preaching Christ, and winning souls. If he did, he would not be able to say, with a certain minister now in glory, "I seek not yours, but you." The blessed hope of that glory is enough, is enough: Lord, strengthen it, brighten it, increase it, ever more and more. O that ministers may work for their dying Lord, while they have health; remembering, that sickness may confine them to their chamber, and death will imprison them in the grave. God Almighty give us courage, that we may fight the good fight of faith; and prudence, that we may not dishonour our high calling. Ere long, eternity receives us, and then we rest from our labours; then we forget our transient toil, amidst innumerable ages of perfection, and glory, and joy. For all this, not unto us, O Lord Jesus, not unto us, but unto thy love, thy righteousness, thy intercession, be the praise!

What say you to my late well-meant admonition? You are not offended, I hope. We must be faithful to each other, or else how can we expect to meet with comfort at the great tribunal; to meet with transport amidst the angels of light?

I have not heard from Biddeford; as soon as I receive information, it shall be communicated to you. And may the Lord fulfil that promise to us both; "I will inform thee, and teach thee, in the way wherein thou shalt go."

Pray have you got Dr. Armstrong's poem on Health? It is highly extolled by Mr. Wharton, the translator of Virgil, as a most correct, and (which with him seems to comprehend all excellency) a classical performance. I should like to peep upon it by way of amusement; for as to the blessing it celebrates, I expect it not, till this vile body is made like unto Christ's glorious body. Blessed be God for this delightful hope: may it every day be brighter in you, and brighter in your most affectionate, &c.

LETTER CLXXXI.

My dear Friend,—Sincerest thanks for your benevolent offices; may they, through our great High Priest, and in the incense of his atonement, go up as a memorial before God; not as a demand, (we may observe), not as a bill drawn upon heaven, but only as a memorial.

I had a very restless night, tore almost to pieces by my cough. Strange! that these flimsy vessels can bear such violent strain-

ing! that none of them will burst, and let the battered soul slip away to her eternal rest in Christ!

Here are two sets of the Meditations, with which you may gratify some of your acquaintance. The Lord Jesus Christ grant that they may promote his glory. Do not you often wish, often pray, that the same blessed effect may be produced by your book? We authors should not be like the ostriches in the wilderness, cruel and forgetful of their young, Lam. iv. 3.

If you have Dr. Grey's translation of Hawkins Browne's Latin poem on the Immortality of the Soul, favour me with the sight of it: it is a grand subject; it is a glorious subject; and, when considered in connexion with Jesus Christ, it is a delightful subject. Oh! that it may incite us to aim, not at the things which are seen, for they are temporal; but at the things which are not seen, for they are eternal.

I have found the little treatise, entitled, Recovery from Sickness. It is one of the most pertinent and rational, the most animating and encouraging, that I have seen on the occasion. Few properer pieces, I think, can be put into a sick person's hand. May the Lord God, omnipotent and gracious, accompany it with his blessing!

I am always complaining; complaining of my poor body; but, I trust, more and more resigned to the unerring and gracious will of my Lord.

I beg, I entreat you, if you value the honour of the gospel, that you will dissuade those polite persons you mention, from coming to hear me to-morrow. My spirits sink more and more. I am visited with some returns of my hacking cough, perhaps I shall not be able to speak at all. Such disagreeable circumstances will only expose me, and create in them very unpleasing ideas of what I shall deliver. My imagination is gone. I am sensible my sermons are flat, and my voice spiritless. Why therefore should you bring persons of taste to see the nakedness of the land? The poor country people love me tenderly, and therefore bear with my infirmities; else I should no longer attempt to preach even before them. I am now unfit to appear in the pulpit.

I hope Dr. Swan's journey will be blessed to the restoration and establishment of his health. I wish I may never forget the text on which he heard the minister of Weston preach; I wish we may all enjoy the blessing comprised and promised in it: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." Do not you, my dear friend, think of such things? talk of such things to your lady, and instruct your children in such things? O! let us remember the Judge is at the door, and eternity is near. I heartily wish Mrs. —— a speedy recovery, and a sanctified improvement of her affliction. See, my dear friend, how all flesh is grass; but Jesus and his great salvation endureth for ever; here is indeed an everlasting possession. The text particularly fit for me and for you to meditate on, (viz. Heb. i. 2, 3.) I will preach on next Sunday. Can any be more grand in itself, or more consolatory to us sinners?

How go you on? do you see any opening in the affair we last talked about? are you come to any determination? Remember him who sees, this very moment, all the consequences of every step we take; and who hath said, in tender compassion to our ignorance, "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Pray, beware of precipitate resolutions; *festina lente.* Whatever we do, whithersoever we go, may we say with the Psalmist, "This God is our God for ever and ever; he shall be our guide even unto death." My weak state of body dispirits my mind, and enervates my hand. Oh that I may be strong in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity! and not I only, but my dear friend, whose I am cordially and inviolably, while, &c.

LETTER CLXXXII.

Dear Sir,—I should be glad to suggest any thing, either for your improvement or consolation. But what can I suggest while you entertain such hard thoughts of Christ, and will not be persuaded out of this strange notion, "That the curse of God has lighted on you, and will follow you to the grave?" Such a thought (and it must be taken up without any real foundation) not only renders you extremely miserable, but will blast all your future usefulness. Suppose you had rebelled against God, even in a more extraordinary degree than even your own imagination can paint; and suppose you was rejected by him at the present; yet what says the apostle St. James? chap. iv. 10. "Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up."

As to the quotations from Mr. ——'s letter to you, wherein he observes, with a kind of triumphant malignity, "That the devil had taken an advantage of you, in relation to some imprudent management in the affair at ——, &c. &c. &c. and dragged you (as he expresses it) through a horse-pond, dirtied and wet, to the great diversion of the spectators;" I ask, of what spectators? Of the worldly-minded only, and the envious, to whom your former flourishing state, as a first-rate Christian, was a constant and visible reproach; yet Christ

(though you are now thus depressed) is still your friend, and will break Satan's teeth; and though dirty, will cleanse you; though wet, will receive and warm you.

Now let me put a question to you: Would you reject your child, because, when dressed in its best clothes, he had met with a like misfortune? Or suppose he had rambled out in the snow, and scratched himself with briers, and come to you bleeding and cold, would you turn him out of doors, when he claimed your pity? We do not know Christ well enough. How kind! how good he is to us! What is my kindness and compassion for you (on which you seem to place so high a value) in comparison of Christ's? Have I been nailed to the cross for you? Oh pray earnestly to HIM; for

> —— To Him, to Him, 'tis given,
> Passion, and care, and anguish to destroy;
> Through Him, soft peace and plenitude of joy
> Perpetual o'er the world redeem'd shall flow.
> PRIOR'S *Solomon.*

He has satisfied God for all your sins; he is your advocate, and has procured for you the inestimable gift of the Holy Spirit to subdue your iniquities. Cultivate the love of God in your heart, and he will make your path of duty plain before you. I dare say, God will make you more abundantly useful than ever. Oh bring your mind off from this destructive notion, "That the curse of God follows you." This is a suggestion of Satan's to prevent your usefulness; but remember that text, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation," 2 Pet. ii. 9.; and he will certainly deliver you out of this, and restore you to his wonted favour.

Do not select such terrifying texts for your meditation, as in your letter you tell me you have done. It is as improper, as if you should eat the coldest melon, or use the most slight covering, when shivering with an ague. Choose, the morning after you receive this letter, (by way of antidote to the texts of your own selecting,) the following for your meditation: "His mercy is greater than the heavens," Psalm cviii. 4. "His mercy endureth for ever," Psalm cxviii. 1. Put together these two expressions, and see whether they do not amount to more than either your imprudences or your distress. You have, to be sure, done amiss, and dealt foolishly in the matter of ————. God forbid I should justify your conduct; but oh! let it not be said, let it not be once surmised, that it is beyond the reach of God's unmeasurable goodness to pardon, or of Christ's immensely rich merits to expiate. The Lord loves you with an everlasting love; and take, if you please, the latter part of the xxxth of Isaiah, ver. 18. for your contemplation: the words are, "For the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are they that wait for him."

None can tell, none can think, what mercy there is with the Lord; with inconceivable tenderness his bowels yearn towards the weakest, frailest believer in his dear Son. We have dishonoured his holiness, and violated his law; but let us not, to accumulate our follies, derogate from the boundless riches of his mercy in Jesus Christ, to all those who seek and entreat it. There is a wide difference between humiliation and despair. Draw near to Christ with an humble boldness.

May you see many, many years on earth; and when the earth shall be no more, may you be received into the New Jerusalem; where dwelleth righteousness, consummate righteousness, and everlasting happiness. This, my dear sir, is my earnest wish and my fervent prayer for you, and for myself; who am, with great compassion and true regard, your obliged humble servant and friend.

P. S.—My favourite author Liborius Zimmermannus, whispers to me on this occasion the following passage: "Said I not unto thee, If thou wouldst BELIEVE, thou shouldst SEE the glory of God, and experience his goodness, when least deserved, or rather notoriously forfeited?" Hence may we be convinced, that his loving kindness is unbounded, is unwearied, is infinite; as much surpassing all our follies and all our thoughts, as the world of waters exceeds the drop of a bucket. Oh for a spirit of steady faith, to live under the continual belief of this precious, precious truth.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

Saturday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to hear that Mr. —— should think my doctrine tends to the introduction of licentiousness. Far, very far from it! Mine is the genuine doctrine of the Scriptures; and the only doctrine to reclaim mankind, as it encourages sinners not to continue in their sins, but to turn unto their injured Lord, and receive salvation at his beneficent hand. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," are our blessed Master's own words; and all my writings, preaching, and conversation, are founded on that comfortable declaration to my lost, undone fellow-creatures; that tender invitation to those, in whom there is no health.

But Mr. —— is offended at this. He, like the Egyptian taskmasters of old, re-

quires men to make brick without straw. "Let us (says he, unmindful of our impotence) make ourselves better, and then go to Christ, who will receive us favourably for our works' sake." But in this view, our works, even if we could perform them without the grace of Christ, would be ineffectual; Luke xvii. 20. Are these capable of expiating the guilt of a polluted race, and of procuring salvation? If our works could do this, then these and not Christ would be our Saviour. If we had a right to demand a recompense for our works, even on a supposition they were perfect, then a Redeemer and his death would be useless. Surely, therefore, Mr. ——'s notions are contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel! May the divine Spirit open his eyes, and incline his heart, to discover that Christ offers himself to all who will come. The vilest of men have just the same right to Christ and his merits, as the best of men; a right founded not on their awakened desires, not on any thing in themselves, but purely, solely, entirely on the free grant of a Saviour. We are all sinners, though in a more or less degree; and we must all flee to Christ for spiritual blessings, not as deserving, but as guilty creatures;—a sad mortification this to the proud worldlings, or to the self-righteous moralist, whom it is the design of the gospel to humble.

Mr. —— (as I dare say you have often heard him) speaks of heaven made easy, "upon condition of obedience to the gospel commands."* This would not be very easy to *me*, whatever it might be to *him*. But if heaven and eternal life be "the gift of God through Jesus Christ," and given us on account of his obedience unto death, then it is easy indeed. What love is here! Well might the apostle Paul say, that "the love of Christ constraineth us." Christ makes us free; and those whom He makes free, are free indeed, John viii. 36. This is the way of salvation pointed out to us by the wisdom of the Almighty. May our eyes be enlightened to see this way, which many wise men overlook, at which many great men are offended!

I wish Mr. —— would study his Bible more, and the classics less. There is little good to be got by reading the Scripture carelessly; but he who humbly applies to God for direction, and exercises himself therein constantly and conscientiously, will find such an efficacy as is not to be found in any other book whatever; and therefore t is called, by way of pre-eminence, THE BIBLE (or THE BOOK); importing, that as this, and only this, is a divine work, no other books can be compared, or even so much as named, with it. It is the book of books; the Book of GOD. Mr. —— however neglects this book, I fear; and indeed, if I may speak my sentiments to you freely, I look upon him to be so puffed up with pride, and the conceit of his own abilities, that his passions run away with him, and he fires at every thing which thwarts any of the notions he has imbibed. Is not such a one disqualified for friendship? Can a man of his disposition attend coolly to arguments against his preconceived opinions, how modestly or forcibly soever such arguments may be urged? This surely is not the spirit of the gospel; nor are these the qualities of one who professes himself a disciple of that Master, whose exhortation is, "Learn of me, for I am lowly and meek." I have no hopes of doing Mr. —— any good; and as we think so very differently, the less we have to do with one another perhaps the better. He really is not now fit even for a companion, much less for a bosom friend. No man can be a proper associate (as a writer of no small penetration has judiciously remarked) in whom these or such like infirmities are predominant; namely,

1. If he be reserved, or be incapable of communicating his mind freely. 2. If he be haughty, and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his disposition, and fond of imposing his own sentiments on us. 3. If he be positive, and will dispute to the end, by resisting the clearest evidence, rather than be overcome. 4. If he be fretful and peevish, ready to take things in a wrong sense. 5. If he affect wit on all occasions, and is full of his conceits, puns, quibbles, jests, and repartees. These may agreeably entertain and animate an hour of mirth, but they have no place in the search after truth. 6. If he carry about him a sort of craft and cunning, and disguise, acting rather like a spy than a friend. Have a care of such a one as will make an ill use of freedom in conversation, and immediately charge you with shocking tenets, when you happen to differ from those sentiments which authority or custom has established. 7. In short, avoid the man who practises any thing that is unbecoming the character of a sincere, free, and open searcher after truth. And, above all things, pray and work against all evil qualities in your own breast.

I had a letter lately from our old acquaintance in the West, who complains grievously of his burdens, as he calls them. It seems he has ten children; and is hipped to death lest he and his family should be reduced to beggary. His income, to be sure, is scanty and precarious; but I con-

* Mr. Hervey had seen so bad an use made by the Socinians of conditions and requisites, in opposition to the doctrine of free grace, that he could by no means allow even faith, much less our obedience, to be called a condition.

jured him not to be diffident of Providence, reminded him of our blessed Master's charge (Matth. vi. 25.) against being too anxious about our subsistence in this life; and I sent him likewise the following passage from a poem of the Rev. Mr. Onely's; assuring him, at the same time, that if he would have a due concern for the things that are God's, then God would also be careful of him and his.

> But daughters, sons, alas! thy weakness scan;
> Know prescience never was design'd for man.
> Their wants you dread, some able hand supplies;
> Their wealth you build, some accident destroys.
> From thee some mites, and honest fame be given;
> The rest from virtue, and the care of Heaven.

He says, IF HE HAD NOT BEEN DEPRIVED OF FORESIGHT, he had never married; and, by way of explanation, sent me an odd quotation, which I have here transcribed: "I cannot but admire the wisdom of nature, in denying to men and women that *foresight* when they are young which they acquire at a greater age; for without that, I believe the world could not subsist above fourscore years, and a new creation of men would be wanted once every hundred years at least; since the inconveniencies of marriage are *experimentally* known to overbalance the conveniencies. This YOUNG FOLKS will not believe, and thus the world is peopled."

Your friend Colonel ——— has made a present of Steel's Christian Hero to all his officers. I wish, when he had been in such a disposition, that he had given to all the common men, Dr. Woodward's Soldier's Monitor. This book was wrote by the command of Queen Anne, as I have been told, and delivered to every soldier at the government's expense. The Sailor's Monitor, wrote by the same hand, was given to every sailor. And I think it very impolitic in the government to discontinue so well-judged a donation. If I was chaplain to a regiment, I would preach before the soldiers on this text: "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psalm xvi. 8.

Your reflections on seeing the skeleton at Oxford, and on your near view of Death (in the emblematical shape of a skeleton with an hour-glass and a dart) advancing towards you in your late sickness, have such a similarity with those of a worthy friend of mine, as I think will both surprise and please you. "Oh! my dear sir," says he, "to *talk* of death, and to enter in earnest upon dying, are two different things. To view the messenger, who comes from the JUDGE of all, as actually approaching with his open commission in one hand, and his uplifted dart to execute it in another, (an expecting grave, and an eternal judgment in his immediate train), is as different as to view a painted lion, who is only terrible on canvass, and actually to see him with his rolling eyes, and really to hear his tremendous roar."

Have you seen the Rev. Mr. Adam's Practical Lectures on the Church Catechism? He is an experienced Christian, and a spirited performance it is. The same gentleman wrote the preface to Mr. Walker's (Truro) heart-searching sermons. Dr. S—— made me a present of it; and wrote in the blank leaf before the title-page, "What betwixt the frenzy of anger, the ague of hopes and fears, the fever of love, the consumption of envy, our distempered minds are kept under a continual disease, against which these lectures are a certain specific." Mr. Adam is rector of Wintringham in Lincolnshire; and has made, I am told, an amazing reformation amongst the people in that neighbourhood, who, before his settlement amongst them, were remarkably dissolute and ignorant. He spares no pains in discharging his ministerial duty. His congregations are very large, I hear; and men, women, and children, come ten or a dozen miles to attend his preaching.

A gentleman lent me the other day Dr. Leland's View of the Principal Deistical Writers; amongst which is one MORGAN, who styles himself a MORAL PHILOSOPHER, a character which is of late grown very fashionable amongst our modern Deists; but THEY might, with equal propriety, call themselves MIRACULOUS HEALERS; for they could as soon heal a decayed body by their *moral philosophy*, as THEY could cure the sin-sick soul by it. Miserable teachers are all such, who *thus* pretend to reform either themselves or mankind. He only can cast devils out of the soul who can say to the leper, "Be thou clean," and to the storm, "Be thou still." He only can heal the decayed body who hath said to the paralytic, "Take up thy bed, and walk."

I am, dear sir, with great respect and much esteem, your most obliged and very humble servant, &c.

P.S.—I have a particular reason for desiring you would give me your well-weighed opinion of the amiable Dr. Watts' Orthodoxy and Charity United. It is wrote with an excellent design. The gentleman who persuaded me to purchase it is a person of great candour, learning, and piety. He is so fond of this book, that he has recommended it to all his distant acquaintance, and rarely goes into any company without introducing it in the conversation; he extols it in the strongest terms as a piece which no Christian ought to be without, since its grand end is to promote charitable sentiments and practices towards one another, amidst the numerous follies and errors of the time. Would to God our religious

differences were properly settled on a sure foundation, that the contending parties were reconciled in love, and that "all we who call ourselves Christians might hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." Amen, and amen.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 4, 1757.

DEAR SIR,—You wonder at my delay in answering your very friendly letter. This is the true cause: When I received your favour, I was very busy in dispatching to the press my three fast sermons lately published. By some accident your letter was mislaid, and could not be found. This day it came to light; and the moment I looked upon the date, it struck me with a painful regret, a regret almost equal to the pleasure I enjoyed in your edifying conversation.

Your lady has shewn the most welcome complaisance to me, and to the rose;* to me, in accepting what is less than a trifle; to the rose, in putting it to such a use. Could that poor vegetable be sensible, it would rejoice to be a remembrancer of its most amiable Creator. The prophet calls upon the whole creation, inanimate as it is, to exult and triumph in the grace of our incarnate God. "Sing, O heavens; be joyful, O earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forests, and every tree," whether cultivated or wild; "for the Lord," by his incarnation, blood, and righteousness, "has redeemed Israel, and glorified himself," most magnificently displayed all his divine perfections, IN the salvation of JACOB.

I heartily wish that Mrs. —— may become, every day, more and more acquainted with the ROSE OF SHARON; that his loveliness, riches, and glory, may be revealed in her heart by the Holy Ghost. Happy the souls in which this flower of heaven blossoms! which are charmed with its beauty, and refreshed with its odours. Their happiness will not fade as a leaf, but like the merit and mercy of their Lord, will be new every morning, new every moment, new through eternal ages.

I wish I could gratify your benevolent temper, by giving you a comfortable account of my health. But nothing administered for its succour and restoration succeeds. It seems to be the will of our great Physician, that my strength should be labour and sorrow. May his holy will be done! only may my faith in his blood be strong, and my love of his name be warm. Then I shall meet you, ere long, amidst the innumerable company of angels, and no more complain, "My head, my head;" no more say, "I am sick."

How shall I recompense my generous doctor, for prescribing without a fee? By wishing, that he may never want the aid which he so kindly tenders to his affectionate friend and brother in Christ, &c.

* When this gentleman was at Weston, Mr. Hervey (as he walked with him in the garden) plucked a rose, and desired him to present it to his wife, to put her in mind of the ROSE OF SHARON. She paid that regard to the giver and the gift, as to put it into a frame with a glass.

LETTER CLXXXV.

DEAR SIR,—Upon a repeated review of your sketches for instructing your family on Sunday evenings, I really do not know how to improve them. I think they are well digested; but when you exercise your talent in speaking from those sketches, do not forget to implore a blessing on what you are going about. Stir up the gift of God which is in you by a zealous use of them, and you yourself will improve them better than I can for you. I shall only suggest, that as soon as you have finished, set down, as fresh heads for another occasion, what new thoughts occurred to you while you was speaking. Oh let us work while the day lasts! My dear friend, the Judge is at the door, and eternity at hand. May we watch and pray always, that we may be found worthy to stand before the Son of man at his coming.

I enclose part of a letter, sent by a clever man and no mean scholar.

"This with infinite pleasure I can inform you, that I am now brought to a sense of my duty, to which I was an entire stranger till lately. Glory be to God, I have now some concern upon my mind, some serious thoughts of a future state! How amazing is it, that a person should arrive at my years, without knowing any thing of the religion he professes! strange as it is, this was my case; for, till within these six months, I was as much in the dark as to spiritual affairs, as one that had never heard the name of Christ. The Bible was to me the same as an unknown language, and all my pretensions to religion were nothing but a mere lifeless formality. Oh that the inexpressible marks of the love of my God and his goodness to me, may increase the love I owe to him more and more every day!"

Our friend Mr. H——, who you know is a great favourer of the mystic writers, has desired me to read Mr. Law's Spirit of Prayer, and Spirit of Love, which is an appendix to it. I shall ask him, whether he designed it to puzzle or edify me? I am

sure it has done the first to me; may it do the latter to him. Oh, what need have we to pray for that blessed Spirit which may lead us into all truth!

I begin to be weaned from human writings, even from the most applauded. The pure milk of the divine word my soul covets. Do not you relish its sweetness, and taste its power more and more? The apostle enjoins us "in every thing to give thanks, for this is the will of God," 1 Thess. v. 18; and if we are to thank him for every thing, how ought we to thank him, how can we sufficiently thank him, for such a treasury of blessings as the Holy Bible contains for us; and yet, is it credible? there are, there are those, who neglect these gracious tidings of a reconciliation with God, through the mediation of his own Son Jesus Christ.

But whatever be the conduct of others, let you and I, dear sir, esteem it as it deserves, and say with the Psalmist, "I will delight myself in thy statutes, I will not forget thy word. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous works." David, you see, prayed to God for illumination, and talked of divine things. That this may be accomplished in us, and that we may follow David's example, I dare say you will add an amen, to the amen of, dear sir, yours very sincerely.

P. S.—I am told, and grieved I am to hear it, that the once zealous Mr. —— is grown quite indolent, (no very laudable character for a clergyman,) and has entirely laid aside his translation and improvement of the elegant Dr. Stearne, *De visitatione infirmorum*. He showed me a specimen of it some months ago. The translation was spirited, and the notes well calculated to supply the author's deficiencies. Nothing perhaps is more wanted, or would be more useful (especially to the clergy,) than a judicious treatise on visiting the sick, in a neat pocket volume; but I am sensible there is nothing equally difficult to execute. I never yet saw one to my mind. The Clergyman's Companion, as it is called, is little more than a collection of prayers, with the order of visitation of the sick, out of the common prayer, the communion service, and the office of public and private baptism. If, methinks, such a man as Mr. Walker of Truro could find time to set about it, it would be done effectually, because he is a most experienced Christian, and has long been accustomed to the chambers of the sick, and would write from facts, and his own knowledge of the human mind. I would not give a rush for a jumble compiled from different authors: That is the labour of the head, and not the feeling of the heart, and can never produce the effects I wish to see.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

Weston-Favell, Jan. 8, 1757.

DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your last letter; indeed it delighted and edified me. Think no more of making me any present from your collection of books. It is in your power to give me a greater gratification, from the good treasure of your heart.

I am particularly delighted with your interpretation of "LCU ATH TZDC." Your sense is grand, and inexpressibly important, and without your sense, methinks the whole translation is like a magnificent portal, without a hinge to turn upon. I am edified and comforted with your analysis of the whole verse. A most encouraging, and truly evangelical representation of the covenant of grace! I am sorry you are diverted from enlarging upon so excellent a subject. Let this work not be laid aside, but only postponed.

I am much pleased with your remarks on Dr. ——'s sermon. I saw it some time ago, and thought with you, that he entirely mistook the meaning of his text; that his views of the gospel were very dim, and his account of that miracle of grace, salvation by Christ, very lame. I had also the happiness to be thoroughly of your opinion with regard to his injudicious outcries against reason. I declare, I look upon my religion to be reason in its highest refinement. My reason says, "Prove all things, admit nothing without a satisfactory proof; and when any thing is proved to be revealed by God, receive it as an oracle." I cannot but think likewise, that every part of our religion (though absolutely undiscoverable by reason) is, when discovered and understood, perfectly rational: as it comports with the attributes of the Godhead, suits the state of man, and is most admirably adapted to display the divine glory, and redress human misery. Whatever is formed with such a tendency, to this my reason most readily subscribes, and pronounces worthy of all acceptance.

I hope by the time of the arrival of the enclosed frank, you will have a freight ready for the vessel; and to me, I assure you, it will be more precious than the merchandise of silver, or the gain of fine gold.

You have taken an effectual method to make me (enervated as my arm is, and languid as my spirits are) more punctual for the future in my correspondence. If this hand hath strength to hold a pen, it shall not be tardy in executing this office, or rather in discharging this debt any more.

I am entirely of your opinion with regard to the aspect of the times; there

seems to be a black cloud hanging over the Protestant world. I fear we have abused our privileges. Now, perhaps, the Lord is going to take his fan in his hand, and thoroughly purge his floor. Prepare us, blessed Jesus! be our strength in an hour of trial! be our light in a day of darkness!

I have had some thoughts of publishing a couple of sermons, preached on the two preceding fast-days, relative to this important point; one upon Ezek. xviii. 27, the other upon Heb. xi. 28. Of these two discourses, contrary to my usual method, I happened to take notes. They pretend to nothing refined or extraordinary; they affect neither soaring sentiments nor lofty style; they are studiously plain; only I think they enlarge more upon Christ our sanctification, our redemption, our only refuge, than most of the discourses which I have seen written on that occasion. Will you give me your advice, and put up a prayer for the divine direction.

I long for the arrival of your precious cargo; to me it is peculiarly precious, as it makes evident, that life and immortality were known in ancient times, and revealed in the ancient Scriptures. It seems to me a strange, and worse than an useless attempt to controvert, and endeavour to overthrow this truth. May you, dear sir, have much of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, to discover the truth; much of the spirit of counsel and of might, to display, defend, and establish the truth, even the truth as it is in Jesus. Yours affectionately and gratefully, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

Saturday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I find by the papers, that your old friend Dr. ——, the physician, is dead. What a call to us to get our lamps trimmed, and our souls ready for their exit! what a forcible admonition to do good to immortal souls, while we have opportunity! May the God of glory be ever with you, and bless you with all spiritual blessings!

I greatly wish that those in the practice of physic would study St. Paul as well as Hippocrates, and attend occasionally to the religious wants of their patients, when they are consulted as to their bodily disorders. This would be acting the part of Christian physicians. This would be endeavouring to copy after the compassionate Physician of mankind, who, while he cured the body, cured the soul.

Being totally and continually silent at the patient's bedside, is, I think, in some measure, denying or being ashamed of the divine Redeemer, who bought us with his blood. Is it not, as it were, refusing to embark in his cause? How many sick might be improved and comforted by a physician, without any hinderance to his prescriptions, detriment to his character, or loss of his time? Oh that these masters of the healing art, would set the Lord always before them, and then he would direct their paths.

I was looking the other day into the life of Sir Philip Sidney, who wrote the Arcadia, in Queen Elizabeth's time; and I find it recorded of him, that "being shot in the thigh in encountering the Spaniards near Zutphen in Holland, and parched with thirst, a bottle of liquor was procured for him; and just as Sir Philip was about drinking it, a poor soldier in the same condition, bleeding and ghastly, was carried along by him, and cast up his dying eyes at the same bottle; which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his own mouth, and gave it to the poor man with these words, *Thy necessity, honest friend, is yet greater than mine.*" He told the surgeons when they cut him, "that they had indeed a man under their hands of a sensible and delicate nature, yet one to whom the great Redeemer had given power above himself, either to *do* or *suffer*; and therefore desired that they would not throw a blemish on their art, through over tenderness."

His last words were, "Love my memory, cherish my friends; their fidelity to me may assure you they are honest; but above all, govern your own will and affections by the will and word of your Creator and Saviour; in ME beholding the end of this world, and all its vanities." I will warrant you, the soldiers remembered these words of their general; and so would the sick, in like manner, long remember the words of their physician, if he would now and then introduce a few religious hints, and drop occasionally a striking sentence or two, with propriety and seriousness.

Worldly craftiness is a bad guide; I wish you may have religious discretion for yours, as Telemachus had the discreet Mentor, and that you would begin (instead of paying court to the great) to court souls for the everlasting Bridegroom. This is your true interest, and will avail you when every worldly consideration will be found ineffectual.

As soon as I had read Mr. ——'s letter, I burnt it, according to your desire. Who can now retrieve the syllables, sentences, and words? Thus are the sins, all the sins of them that believe in the divine Jesus, done away. What a privilege! what a blessing! should not our souls exult in it? should not our discourse dwell upon it?

Adieu! dear sir; and believe me, with great respect, and hearty wishes for your present and eternal welfare, yours, &c.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

Weston-Favell, April 16, 1757.

DEAR SIR,—Believe me, your letters are far from fatiguing me; they refresh me even under my greatest weakness. They tell me of Jesus which was crucified, the only cordial for my drooping soul.

What do you think is the meaning of, "But this shall be with burning and fuel of fire?" Isa. ix. 5. Is MACLTH a substantive? I should rather take it for an adjective, agreeing with SHA. Let the interpretation of this place fill the case of your letter.

I am raised indeed from my bed, but not released from my chamber, after a violent fever. The two preceding Sundays I have been enabled to officiate for myself; and my disorder has left upon me so grievous a cough, as makes my days, especially my nights, become labour and sorrow. Pray, favour me with the continuation of your thoughts. They cheer and comfort me in my languid state. The two sermons were transcribed before this sickness seized me. And, since I have your encouragement, they shall soon (if my life is prolonged) be put to the press. I propose to entitle them, The Time of Danger, and The Way of Safety.* The Lord God omnipotent accompany them with his blessing! Mean they are, as the stones from the shepherd's sling; but I remember it is written, "They shall subdue with sling stones." In this word do I trust, in this word do I comfort me. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our FATHER, give you, dear sir, everlasting consolation, for all the kindness you have showed to your truly affectionate friend. Yours, &c.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

Weston-Favel, May 19, 1757.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Accept my best thanks for your welcome and valuable letter. It found me just released from the chamber of sickness; the fever removed, the cough abated, but my strength like the bruised reed. And now my mind is a fellow-sufferer with my body; this being enervated, that is enfeebled.

However, as I am delighted with your criticisms, give me leave to propose another text to your consideration, which puzzled me much as I was reading yesterday; you will find it in Zech. xiv. 6, 7. The Hebrew of the sixth verse seems to be uncommonly difficult.

A sermon or two I am still inclined to publish. In this, and in all our ways, may the God of all wisdom direct us, and the God of all grace prosper us, through Jesus Christ!

I have not the honour of Lord D——'s acquaintance, but I hear that he is full of grace, and valiant for the truth; a lover of Christ, and an ornament to his gospel. Lady F—— is alive, and full of good works, and I hope grows up in him in all things who is the head. Dr. S—— (whom you inquire after) still resides at N——; is in high repute as a physician, and, I trust, does not forget or neglect the one thing needful; though the world, the smiling world, is a syren. Lord, stop our ears against its enchanting song, and let our eyes be blind to its inveigling charms. Mr. Moses Browne executes his ministry at Olney with much acceptance, I am informed, and with a good deal of success. About ten days ago Mr. P—— took a family-dinner with me. Our conversation turned partly upon points of literature, partly upon evangelical subjects. O that we may taste the sweetness, feel the energy of the latter, and count all things as dross in comparison of their transcendent excellency! Is not your interpretation of Zech. xiv. 6, 7. rather too forced? Is not the following somewhat more natural and easy, if not more just?

"It shall come to pass in that day, there shall not be light," full and strong, in opposition to the gloom of night; but now effulgence and clearness of vision, anon obscurity and dimness of vision: "Yet it shall be one" real, determinate "day;" whose duration, whose properties, and all whose circumstances, are known to the Lord. Thus much he hath graciously revealed by his prophet, that, during the first periods, the morning and the noon of this wonderful dispensation, it shall not be entire day nor entire night, but a mixture or interchange of both. Sometimes grace triumphant, sometimes sin rebelling in the hearts of believers. Sometimes calamity darkening, sometimes prosperity brightening the state of the church. However, at the eventide, when such an appearance is least expected, it shall be unmixed, prevailing, perfect light. Then "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days. Then the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and his people shall be all righteous."

Freely censure, solidly correct this interpretation, if you think it improper; and give me leave to expect, according to your own appointment, a monthly letter for the comfort and edification of, dear sir, your very affectionate friend and servant, &c.

* See these Sermons, p. 643.

LETTER CXC.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 6, 1757.

My dear Friend,—I have been too tardy in acknowledging the receipt of your letter, which was very valuable, and deserved thanks as speedy as they are sincere. The true cause of my delay is this: I have been preparing two or three sermons for the press, which to my enervated hand is really a work of toil. Yesterday I sent them to London, and I hope to see them in print within the space of a fortnight. I purpose to have some upon neat paper, for the use of the gentry, if God shall incline the hearts of any such persons to look into them; and others upon worse paper, for the benefit of the poor, and the conveniency of giving away. As soon as they appear, you will give me leave to send you a copy; and if you should like to give them among the poor, I will send you a considerable number. With them I intend to put into your hands a treatise lately published, under the title of Letters on Theron and Aspasio, in two small volumes. The author is a Scotsman, I presume, because they were printed at Edinburgh, and he gave orders for a set to be sent to me from Edinburgh. He conceals his name, and none that I am acquainted with are able to discover whose work it is.* There are some strictures on my performance; but by far the greatest part of the book is very wide from this mark. Some things are truly excellent, and some animadversions upon me are perfectly just; but others, (if I mistake not) are unfair and disingenuous. The manner of writing is by no means despicable, rather elegant and spirited than coarse or dull. But there is such an implacable bitterness of spirit, and such an unchristian virulence of censure, against many of the best men that ever lived, and best authors that ever wrote, as much surprises and greatly offends me. I think I never saw a notion of faith more lax, nor an idea of grace more exalted, than in this book. However, I will not forestall your judgment, but will desire your acceptance of the piece, and your remarks upon it.

If your account of the ancient believers, and their knowledge of Christ be right, then the opinion of the generality of divines is wrong: they suppose, that the devout Jews saw in their sacrifices, not barely a nobler sacrifice to be offered up by the Saviour, but the Saviour himself suffering, bleeding, and dying. How will you reconcile with your scheme St. Paul's declaration, "The gospel was preached unto them," explained by his definition of the gospel, "Christ died for our sins?" Heb. iv. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 3.—You say, "Does IKRUAH anywhere signify effulgence?" In Job xxxi. 27, you will find IKER bearing this signification. Yet, I must confess, I am not thoroughly satisfied with my own interpretation, it is too low and restricted; for the prophet is evidently fortelling a state of things and a stock of knowledge greatly superior to any thing enjoyed under the Jewish dispensation; and to this last, I think my exposition is most suitable. I hope you have a long letter ready, and will not punish my delay according to the rigour of the law of retaliation. I am, with unfeigned gratitude, and cordial affection, yours, &c.

Pray favour me with your Dissertation on Job, his time, his country, and religion. They are very curious subjects, and you will enrich them with evangelical truths.

* The author was Mr. Robert Sandeman, a congregational preacher at Edinburgh, a disciple of Mr. John Glass.

LETTER CXCI.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 3, 1757.

My dear Friend,—Many thanks for your last; I shall read it, and read it again; and the Lord give me a right understanding of that most precious and important chapter.

I hope you will accompany my sermons with your prayers to God for a blessing on them, the reader, and the writer; and I shall be truly thankful for the communication of any remarks, corrections, or improvements that may occur in your perusal of them. This, and any other of my writings, I should be glad to have rectified where they are wrong, enriched where they are impoverished; because, though such improvements may come too late to take place while I live, they may, when I am dead, be admitted, and enable me to speak more usefully.

What think you of the method taken by a modern critic, to interpret Psalm lxviii. 30? "Hoc in loco, fera arundinis, cœtus robustorum, et juvenci, sunt leones, tauri, pecudesque lascivientes, sive tyranni feroces insolentesque: quibus, continuata translatione, addit psaltes KESEP 'BERETZI METHEDOTEM' hoc est," [here a word is wanting in the original, and not knowing what author is referred to, we could not supply it from thence], "que de industria conculcantes et turbantes argenteos rivos, ardentes nimirum et vastantes vicinorum Judæorum bona." The author queries, whether "DETZ" from DETZ *currere*, may, consistently with the propriety of the Hebrew language, be interpreted a river? might he not also query, whether MEKOP is ever,

among the Hebrew writers, and by way of adjective, used to describe the colour of the waters? Homer, I remember, has

——Ποταμος καλλιρροος αργυροδινης.

But I am not certain that any such expression gained admittance into the school of the prophets. Your sentiments upon this criticism will entertain, instruct, and oblige, dear sir, your truly affectionate friend and servant.

LETTER CXCII.

Saturday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—How fares it with you? Overwhelmed I find with business! but still, I trust, remembering Christ and eternal ages.

I think you reason well, and very strongly, on what you propose. May the Wisdom, from which nothing is hid, direct you in all your undertakings; may the Power, to which nothing is impossible, prosper your prescriptions for my benefit, and that of others! I assure you I shall steadily persevere in the use of them, and intend to begin very soon; though a continued cold, and an unexpected journey, have hitherto unfitted me from taking any medicines of this sort. Mr. ——, of whom you inquired after me yesterday, told me you imputed to the journey my neglect in not having yet sent your prescription to the apothecary's; and I am obliged to your candour for ascribing it to that cause, and not to any disregard of your advice: for I am persuaded,

——Si qua pergama dextra
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.
VIRG. ÆN. II.

I have just been reading Gerhard's Christian Support under all Afflictions; and a most excellent book it is. If your medicines have not the desired effect, I must seek relief from him: From HIM, do I say? From a fellow-mortal? Ah! what are all the consolations that all the creatures in the universe can afford, in comparison of that grand consolation of our condescending Lord's, "Ye are my friends!" John xv. 14. "Come and inherit the kingdom prepared for you," Matt. xxv. 34.; "where the inhabitants shall no more say, I am sick," Isa. xxxiii. 24; "and where there shall be no more death nor sorrow," Rev. xxi. 4.

I am, my dear friend, with great esteem, and under a due sense of many obligations, most affectionately and most sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER CXCIII.

Saturday morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—If you have any law books by you, I wish you would look into the indexes, and see what laws have been made to secure the Lord's day from profanation. It is pity that these* should be unknown to the common people; and still a greater pity, that our justices of peace should not exert themselves vigorously in an affair of such consequence to the present and eternal welfare of their fellow-creatures. I wish a spirited pamphlet was judiciously drawn up and published on this occasion; setting the sins of *omission* in a true light. It grieves me to think how much good might be done, especially by gentlemen who have leisure and abilities to plan schemes for the public benefit; but so far are they from applying themselves in good earnest to promote religion, that they too generally ridicule or discourage any attempts of this kind. Ah! how little do they reflect, that the night is coming on apace, when no man can work, John ix. 4.; and that for all these things God will bring them into judgment.

Can you tell me who was the author of The Duty of Reproof? The most material objections against reproving are there considered; some cautions and directions are added, and in such a manner as may facilitate the successful discharge of this duty. A duty too much neglected, though enjoined us by no less authority than the Scripture itself, which is profitable for reproof. "Reprove one that hath understanding," says Solomon, "and he

* All persons, who profane the Lord's day, are liable to the following penalties; and it is much wished that the magistrates would determine to put these laws in execution with the utmost strictness.

By doing or executing any business or work of their ordinary callings on the Lord's day, or any part thereof, (works of necessity and charity only excepted); under which head is included shaving on Sundays, which is a most shameful and notorious custom.	By the 29th Car. II. cap. 7, persons convict hereof by view of a justice of the peace, confession of the party, or witnesses, are to pay five shillings, or be put in the stocks two hours. licensed houses besides forfeit their licenses.
By public crying, or exposing to sale any wares, merchandize, &c.	By the same act it is forfeiture of goods so exposed to sale.
By idling, or wandering in time of divine service.	By the same acts, 5s. or stocks two hours.
Alehouse keepers, vintners, innkeepers, permitting tippling in their houses.	By 1st Jac. I. cap. 9. if convict of such permission, are to pay 10s. and if convict of drunkenness, disabled to keep an alehouse, for three years, by 21st Jac I. cap. 7.

will understand knowledge," Prov. xix. 25. And the apostle Paul urges Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim. iv. 2. Indeed, my dear friend, you are very deficient in this duty of reproof, though you have so many opportunites of doing it with the utmost propriety. Pray read this little pamphlet over and over again. Weigh it thoroughly. You will then, through the grace of God, be zealous in reproving others, and will readily pardon the freedom I have occasionally taken in reproving you whom I so much love and value. You remember Sir George Lyttleton's lines,

> Some merit's mine to dare to be sincere,
> But greater your's sincerity to bear.

Dr. Sherlock's Defence and continuation of his discourse concerning the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and our union and communion with him, was put into my hands the other day; but, in my opinion, it is far from being a satisfactory defence. Antisozzo* is an unanswerable book; and Dr. Sherlock never was so gravelled in all his life as he was by the publication of that witty, keen, and solid performance.

Do you know any one who has got Schmidius's Greek Concordance to the Greek Testament? I am told it is well executed, and it must be very serviceable, as it shows at one view in what sense the same word is used in different passages. I will buy it, but should be glad to see it first, if you can borrow it for me.

Bishop Patrick on Contentment and Resignation, I here return you; as likewise Dr. Barrow on the same subject.

Baxter on Universal and Special Redemption I must beg to keep a little longer, especially as you tell me your sentiments and his are nearly the same. Our friend Mr. —— highly esteems this book; and he has sent me Baxter's Aphorisms on Justification, which he has desired me, as they are explanatory of each other, to read at the same time. Baxter in these pieces, he tells me, steers a middle course between the Scylla of Arminius's system and the Charybdis of Calvin's. When I have read them with due attention, I shall, without reserve, communicate my remarks to you.

Oh! my dear friend, what need have we for prayer to be guided aright amidst so many different opinions, even of good and great men. Arminius, Calvin, Baxter, all excellent men in their way, yet how divided in their notions! But Jesus, that eternal source of love, will, I would charitably hope, bless all who sincerely desire to magnify his holy name, notwithstanding their different apprehensions on these points. God, of his unerring wisdom, assist us in all our determinations! God, of his infinite mercy, defend us from all error, and grant that we may be true followers of our Lord and Saviour, who is "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel!" What a comfortable consideration is it, that there is such a light for my dear friend, and for his, most affectionately and most inviolably, &c.

* See Letter CCVII.

LETTER CXCIV.

Wednesday morning.

My dear Friend,—I thank you for remembering me before the throne of grace. Let your prayers be for my cheerful resignation to the divine good pleasure, and for clear manifestations to me of Jesus Christ. My life has long been a burden to myself, and is now become unprofitable to others. Your intention to visit me is kind; but I am not fit for company, unable either to carry on or relish conversation; best when alone; therefore do not give yourself the trouble of coming ten miles. I accept the will for the deed. As to your translation of Zimmermannus *De eminentia cognitionis Christi*, I will, if my languid spirits can bear the task, carefully read it over, which I have never been able to do since I saw you in London. I lent it to Mr. ——. When he has done with it, desire him to convey it to me; you shall then have (if the Lord will) the result of my renewed perusal of that piece, which I formerly was so desirous of having translated by you. May the Lord of all power make you strong to labour in his sacred service, and crown your labours with abundant success. I am your truly affectionate brother in Christ, &c.

LETTER CXCV.

Saturday morning.

My dear Friend,—I have no heart to take any medicines. All but Christ is to me unprofitable: blessed be God for pardon and salvation through his blood. Let me prescribe this cordial for my dear friend.

May your health be renewed as the eagle's, though mine has long been fading as a leaf! and may we both from our hearts adore the dispensations of our God and Saviour, which, though to us-ward very different, are in all respects very good.

We were drinking tea yesterday; and I heard one of the company say, to whom you had given Bishop Wilson on the Sacrament, This is Dr. S——'s gift. Oh that God may give him to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ! and to live by faith on

the unsearchable riches of a Redeemer! Then we shall, ere long, eat bread and drink new wine together in the kingdom of our Father.

I have not yet wrote to Biddeford; but the affair you desired me to inquire about shall not be forgot when I next write thither. Can you excuse my dilatory proceeding? Business, to my languid spirits, is like the sons of Anak (Numb. xiii. 28,) to the Israelitish spies, so forbidding and so formidable.

The reasons you urged I have considered; I really know not how to act. May the unerring God vouchsafe to guide a poor sinner! Now, where is my faith in that divine promise, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths?" It is scarcely so much as a grain of the smallest seed: Blessed Jesus, increase it in us both!

Do you, as you formerly did, commit your way unto the Lord, and beseech him to bring it to pass? My dear friend, let us look more unto God, for we have a Friend in the court of Heaven; we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Ever and inviolably yours, &c.

LETTER CXCVI.

Weston Favell, Jan. 3, 1758.

Dear Mr. ——, I received your welcome valuable letter in due time; but almost as soon as I received it I was seized with a violent illness,—so violent, that the current report was, "Hervey is dead." Near to death I certainly was; and God Almighty knows I am, according to human appearance, not far* from it even now; but pray let me, if I live, expect the continuation of your remarks. Your letters are such as I should delight to read even in my last moments.

I wish you many a happy new year on earth, and at the last an abundant entrance into the New Jerusalem, where the voice of joy and health is perpetually heard.

Weak I am, very weak, and much out of order; insomuch that I have not been able to go to church ever since Christmas. But your writings refresh and delight, instead of fatiguing me! Your fourth paragraph has most exactly stated the difference which subsists between yourself and Aspasio relating to faith. The forbearance and candour with which you treat this difference does not give up a jot or tittle of your own opinion, yet it tends very much to conciliate favour and esteem in its behalf.

Your Vision is very grand, and quite striking: I love such strokes of imagination, they keep attention awake, and impart pleasure together with profit. Aspasio is doubly obliged to your pen, formerly for correcting, now for defending his work. You observe, My enemy is yours. He has attacked your generous vindication. In reply to this attack you have spoke my very sentiments.*

Mr. Wesley, you will find, is angry with me on the opposite score, for speaking too much, and, as he thinks, too openly on the side of election and particular redemption. Pray favour me with your free opinion, and wherever you think he charges me justly, or I have expressed myself improperly, spare not to speak the naked truth. He has lately published a large book, price six shillings stitched, on the doctrine of Original Sin; great part of which is an abridgment of Dr. Watts' Ruin and Recovery, and of another treatise wrote by Mr. Hebden. In this he takes occasion to quote two or three passages from Theron and Aspasio, one from Volume II. which he thus introduces: "To explain this a little farther in Mr. Hervey's words, By fœderal head I mean, what the apostle teaches, &c. That as Adam was the first general representative (of *this kind*, says Aspasio, but Mr. Wesley makes him say) *of mankind*, Christ was," &c. "Far from resting upon a single text," &c. he goes on to the bottom of the page, then turning back to the upper part, represents me as forming a conclusion in these words: "All these expressions demonstrate, that Adam (as well as Christ) was a representative of *all mankind*; and that what he did in this capacity, did not terminate in himself, but affected all whom he represented." This is a very injurious representation. One sentence is a palpable misquotation.† Would it be proper to take any notice of it? I am sometimes apprehensive that he would draw me into a dispute about particular redemption. I know he can say startling and horrid things on this subject; and this, perhaps, might be the most effectual method to prejudice people against my principal point. I am, dear sir, with much gratitude and true affection, yours in Christ.

LETTER CXCVII.

Weston-Favell, June 23, 1758.

My dear Friend,—I little though when I put Mr. Wesley's manuscript into

* Mr. Hervey died the December following.

* This refers to the remarks (made by the gentleman to whom Mr. Hervey here writes) on the Scotch author (Mr. Sandeman) who wrote the Letters on Theron and Aspasio.

† See Aspasio Vindicated, p. 435, Lett. 2.

your hand, that I should see it in print so soon. I took very little notice of it, and let it lie by me several months, without giving it an attentive consideration. It seemed to me so palpably weak, dealing only in positive assertions and positive denials, that I could not imagine he would adventure it into the world without very great alterations. But it is now come abroad, just as you received it, in a two shillings pamphlet, entitled, A Preservative from Unsettled Notions in Religion. Of this pamphlet, what he has wrote against me makes only a small part. Now then the question is, Whether I shall attempt to answer it? Give me your opinion, as you have given me your assistance; and may the Father of mercies give you an increase of knowledge and utterance, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Ill I have been, and ill I am; torn almost to pieces by a cough in the night, which admits of no remedy; whatever is taken to assuage, exasperates it. Of all men living, that are not absolutely confined, surely I am the weakest. If by such weakness the Lord Jesus will vouchsafe to glorify his name, how transparent, how effulgent will be the glory of his power! I have not seen Mr. P—— this many a day, no, nor this many a month; how I fear lest the world has beguiled him! Blessed be the Lord, for setting our affections on a happier state; blessed be his grace, for giving us some knowledge of Jesus, as the way to immortal mansions! There we may be citizens, here only sojourners. I am, with true gratitude, and sincere affection, yours in Christ Jesus.

LETTER CXCVIII.

Weston-Favell, Feb. 22, 1758.

MADAM,—I received the favour of your letter, and found no small pleasure in perusing its contents. It gave me a singular satisfaction to see a lady of such fine sense, and in the very bloom of life, mindful of the things which belong to her eternal peace. May this happy disposition increase with your increasing years! and it will be the greatest blessing that you can enjoy, or your correspondent wish.

If my writings have afforded you any entertainment, or been the means of administering the least improvement, I desire to adore and bless the all-gracious God: For he, madam, teaches to profit; his Spirit commands success; and all our good comes wholly from his heavenly benediction.

I am pleased to find this, among your other valuable expressions: "I want to have all those heavenly consolations." You consider religion in a right view. It is not a vexatious burden, or an irksome task; but it is intended to be the comfort of our lives, and the joy of our hearts. God is the God of all comfort, Christ is styled "the Consolation of Israel," and the Holy Ghost is called "the Comforter." The gospel is the most comfortable report imaginable: It is glad tidings, and the joyful sound: It assures poor sinners, that God has laid all their iniquities, both great and small, on his beloved Son; that Jesus Christ has brought in a most perfect and everlasting righteousness, whereby they may be justified; and that our first, our great, our leading duty is, to believe all this in our own behalf, for our own benefit.

By the comfort and peace resulting from these blessings, it would win our hearts to love the God who is so immensely amiable and gracious to us; to be studious of doing his pleasure, who has made such unspeakably rich provision for our happiness. The apostle prays for his Thessalonian converts, that the Father of everlasting compassions would first comfort their hearts, and then, and thereby, establish them in every good word and work.

I should make no scruple to send my fast sermon for your perusal, if I had one. But it has pleased the divine Providence to visit me with a violent fever, which has confined me for many weeks. I am still the prisoner of this disease, so that I was incapable of going abroad on the fast-day. And indeed, if it had been otherwise, I should scarcely have been able to gratify my own inclination, by complying with your hints; because I never write my sermons, having accustomed myself to preach without notes; and it was owing to a particular incident, that those three discourses which I published were committed to writing.

Permit me, madam, to wish, that you may be steadfast and immoveable in your present turn of mind, which is so truly wise and noble; that by him who sitteth in heaven, and beholds all the children of men, it may be said of Miss ——, as it was formerly said of another excellent person "Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her."

To these wishes, allow me the additional pleasure of being, madam, your most obedient humble servant, &c.

LETTER CXCIX.

Weston-Favell, March 4, 1758.

DEAR MR. ——, I have a long letter, containing two or three sheets, from Mr. Wesley. It consists of animadversions on my Dialogues and Letters, which I should

be glad if you would peruse, and favour me with your opinion. He wrote me one before, more stinging and sarcastic than this. I have taken no notice of either, being very unwilling to embark in controversy; but for your judgment on the last, which is written with candour and temper, I should be much obliged, and have an additional reason to be, dear sir, your affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER CC.

Weston-Favell, March 11, 1758.

MADAM,—I am much obliged for your benevolent wishes relating to my health. By way of return, permit me to wish, that your soul may prosper, may flourish, may blossom as a rose; that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

From this passage we may observe, that the way to advance in true holiness of heart and life, is to advance in the knowledge of Christ. It is for want of knowing Christ, that the generality of mankind are so captivated by trifles, and enslaved to transient gratifications: It is for want of knowing Christ more thoroughly, that many Christians have so little peace and joy, and many go mournfully in their way to eternity.

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." By giving them the knowledge of himself, of his divine dignity and inestimably precious work—of that grand price which he paid for the redemption of sinners, which delivers them from the wrath to come, and entitles them to the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

"The divine power," says St. Peter, "has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness." How? "Through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue;" through the knowledge of Christ, as calling us to the enjoyment of eternal glory, which he has procured for us by his blood; and thereby most sweetly leading and engaging us to the exercise of every virtue.

I hope Marshall on Sanctification will be blessed to your consolation and edification. If it is not at the first reading, it may at the second, or it may at the third. I would say to the reader of this excellent treatise, as the prophet Elijah said to his servant, who went to the sea in order to make observation, but found nothing worthy of notice, "Go again, seven times."

I have seen Dr. Glynn's poem, entitled, The Day of Judgment. It is not without elegance and beauty, but it wants that energy and pathos, which, on so grand and interesting an occasion, should alarm, transport, and awe our souls; but its chief deficiency, in my opinion is, that it neglects to ascribe proper honour unto Christ. He is indeed very slightly hinted at in one chosen line, but he should have made the most distinguished figure throughout the whole piece. All judgment is committed to him. It is Christ who will come in the clouds of heaven; we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. This to the believer is a most comfortable and delightful consideration; "My Redeemer is my Judge. He who died for me passes the final sentence. Look how great is his majesty and glory! So great is my atonement and propitiation."

Should I ever come to London, I will be sure to do myself the pleasure of waiting upon Miss ——. In the mean time, what she mentions by way of caution, shall be observed with all punctuality due to a command, by her most obedient humble servant.

LETTER CCI.

Weston-Favell, May 13, 1758.

MADAM,—I have too long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last. The reflection gives me uneasiness, but the occasion gives you an opportunity of exercising indulgence. If you please to ascribe my silence to much business, and little health, you will do justice to my proceeding and to your own candour.

You inquire after the best week's preparation for the sacrament. I cannot say that I much admire any of those books. They are, I think, loose, rambling, indistinct companions: they tend rather to bewilder than inform the judgment. For my own part, I prefer the little account of this ordinance in Mr. Marshall on Sanctification, to all those prolix treatises. It begins page 298 of the sixth edition, to which I wrote a recommendatory preface.

If you should want a collection of prayers suited to this solemnity, or to any other occasion, there is none, in my opinion, better than Mr. Jenks's Offices of Devotion, (which has passed thirteen editions.) I should far sooner choose to read his two volumes of Meditations, than the New Whole Duty of Man. Jenks has written another little treatise excellently good, and truly evangelical; it is entitled, Submission to the righteousness of God. It was one of the first books that gave me an insight into the truth of the gospel; or the way of salvation by the infinitely glorious obedience of our surety, Jesus Christ.

The word *Amen* has two significations. It denotes an ardent wish,—Lord, let it be according to my humble petition. It de-

notes likewise a firm faith,—Lord, I am persuaded that thou wilt fulfil thy promise to grant my petition.

If you love entertainment, my next shall recommend a book, that is as entertaining as a novel* or a play, yet edifying as a sermon. I believe, madam, you would have no reason to repent of the purchase, if you was to buy Mr. Boston's Human Nature in its Fourfold State; of which, as I have given a character in the second volume of Theron and Aspasio, I need not say any thing more in this place.

As God is sending forth his word, and renewing the face of material nature; so may he send forth his blessed Spirit, and reveal Christ, and renew the state of our souls! This will make us to differ from our former selves, as much as the present bloom and verdure of the creation differ from the rugged desolations of the winter.

I wish you, madam, the continual presence of this divine Comforter, and am your most obedient humble servant, &c.

LETTER CCII.

Weston-Favell, Aug. 5, 1758.

Dear Sir,—Herewith I send two other sheets of my intended work. Be so good as to examine them with rigour, and correct them with freedom.

I am afraid lest the weakness of the advocate should injure the blessed cause. I am the more solicitous, because the unexpected acceptance of my fast sermons will probably open a pretty wide door of admission for this piece. Besides six thousand printed in London, an edition was printed in Scotland, which was speedily sold off; and I was desired, by a society established for giving away religious books among the poor, to grant them leave to print an impression for this purpose. In Ireland they have been printed; into Dutch they are translated; and a letter received last week from some pious and ingenious stranger in America, informs me, that they have been reprinted there, and found much acceptance: all this will be a kind of recommendatory preface to this projected piece. The good Lord grant I may speak and write sound words, such as cannot be reproved! My prayer is, that you may be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, always and on all occasions, and more especially when you are sifting and improving the writings of, dear sir, your truly affectionate and much obliged friend.

* The book here meant is De Foe's Family Instructor.

LETTER CCIII.

Weston-Favell, Sept. 4, 1758.

Madam,—Be so good as to present my very affectionate compliments to your excellent friend Mr. Kennedy. Inform him that my intended work has for a long season, on account of my great infirmities, been like the sun in Gibeon, and like the moon in the valley of Ajalon. I shall be particularly pleased and thankful to receive his thoughts on that important subject, the assurance of faith. Mine are much the same as Mr. Ebenezer Erskine's, in his valuable sermons, and as Mr. Boston's, in his most judicious notes on the Marrow of Modern Divinity.

Pray, madam, favour me with a long extract from Mr. Kennedy's* letter: I do assure you, I admire his writings; they have a beauty which is quite natural and artless; joined with a piety which is very affecting and edifying.

A book has lately appeared, in two small volumes, entitled, Letters on Theron and Aspasio. I cannot say I would recommend it to your perusal, but I should be glad if you would mention it in some conversation with your learned and devout visitants, in order to know their opinion. For my own part, I can hardly tell what opinion to form. The author conceals his name; † and it seems difficult to discover his principles or his aim. Some things are excellent, written with spirit, and in a strain truly evangelical; in some things I stand corrected by him, I kiss the rod, and far from being displeased, am thankful for his animadversions; though in some instances he has acted a disingenuous part; not consulting the most correct edition of my book, not adverting to my own explanation of my meaning, and making me approve the whole of a person's works where I only commend some particular part. But what gives me the greatest disgust, and will, I believe, offend every candid reader, is a bitter vein of contempt and invective against some of the best men that ever lived, and some of the best authors that ever wrote. I once thought the apostle James's question implied an impossibility; but it seems to be reduced to real fact by the pen of this critic, and in the Letters on Theron and Aspasio, where the "fountain sends forth" at the same place, in the same performance, "sweet water and bitter." ‡

I hope you will not act with Mr. Kennedy according to the exact rules of retalia-

* Mr. Kennedy, whom Mr. Hervey so highly and justly respected, was minister of the Scots church in Rotterdam, formerly minister at Cavers in Scotland.

† See Letter CXC.

‡ See Sermons and Tracts, p. 674, note.

tion; but though he has been slow to write, you will be swift to answer, that he may the more speedily improve and delight yourself, madam, and your very humble servant.

LETTER CCIV.

Friday night.

DEAR SIR,—I have sent you the following letter for your inspection, and shall make no remarks on it myself, lest I mislead your judgment. The gentleman who wrote it means well, and is desirous of promoting the interest of the gospel in the way which he apprehends to be right; but he thinks differently from you and me, not only in his notions of imputed righteousness, but of other evangelical peculiarities. I have transcribed his letter, and concealed his name, that you may communicate your remarks with more freedom than perhaps you would have done, had I not taken these precautions to prevent your discovery of my correspondent.

October 7. 1758.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Witherspoon's Essay on the Connexion between the doctrine of Justification by the Imputed Righteousness of Christ and Holiness of Life, dedicated to you, was lately put into my hands. You know that I have an unconquerable dislike to your favourite expression, *the imputed righteousness of Christ.* I would on no account have used it in any of my own writings; and I wish it was universally laid aside, particularly by every minister in his pulpit; because I apprehend, the notions which the generality of people conceive of the "imputed righteousness of Christ," has done as much mischief, especially amongst the lower sort, to the cause of Christianity, as the writings of infidelity have done amongst those of a higher rank. This is my settled opinion. Infidels may be, and often have been convinced; but persons of weak minds, habituated to the sound of the *imputed righteousness of Christ,* (a satisfactory definition of which very few can give), are not only steeled against all conviction, but are too apt to disregard morality, and to censure and despise every preacher and writer, who, from principle or any other cause, disapproves of this *cant term.* Pardon me, for I really think it so, and therefore cannot call it otherwise; yet I own myself a great admirer of Witherspoon's Essay; I think it the best defence of the doctrine of redemption that I have ever seen. My principal, and almost only objection, is against the phrase "imputed righteousness." It appears to me quite unscriptural to speak of the "righteousness of Christ being imputed to us;" it is liable to great abuse, and it is not easily understood: nor am I satisfied to use it, notwithstanding all you have said in its defence, and all that so judicious and excellent a man as Dr. Doddridge (in his sermons on Salvation by Grace) has said to explain it. I fall in, however, with Witherspoon's sentiments, though I do not use his particular phrases: and you will observe, he often intermixes others to the same purpose: as, page 17, the Saviour's merit. Page 21, vicarious sufferings. Acceptance of the gospel, page 23. Doctrine of Christ crucified, his atonement, page 29. Flying to the propitiation of Christ, page 36; the doctrine of Christ's mediation, &c. &c. By these it appears, that it is not the phrase, but the thing, justification by Christ alone, on which he lays the stress, (see page 70, line 47,) and his arguments will be equally forcible on any man's principles who is not a Socinian. I believe the doctrine, as he has stated it, page 15, though I should not choose to use some of his expressions. His remark, page 61, line 18, &c. is, I think, very just, and confirmed by many melancholy facts. Pages 63, 64, 65, is perhaps too strong. The same may be said of other systems of morality; they who embrace them, and live unsuitably, are hypocrites, page 65, lines 2d and 3d.

Upon the whole, I heartily wish every Christian, especially every minister in the kingdom, would carefully read this very useful treatise of Witherspoon's, and act accordingly; and if I had any acquaintance with him, though I am hopeless of bringing *you* over to my sentiments, I would endeavour at least to prevail on *him* to abolish the phrase *imputed righteousness* in the next edition, and then his book would be more extensively useful.

I am, my dear friend, (notwithstanding our different opinions in some religious points), with much real esteem, most affectionately and most sincerely yours, &c. &c.

So far my correspondent, whose letter I shall forbear to answer till I hear your sentiments; which I shall expect by the first opportunity. I am sure, if the phrase, *imputed righteousness* were not strictly defensible on scriptural grounds, it should never more be used, either in the pulpit, or in the writings of, dear sir, your obliged friend and servant.

LETTER CCV.

Weston-Favell, Oct. 24, 1758.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Let me repeat my

thanks for the trouble you have taken, and for the assistance you have given me, in relation to my controversy with Mr. Wesley. He is so unfair in his quotations, and so magisterial in his manner, that I find it no small difficulty to preserve the decency of the gentleman, and the meekness of the Christian, in my intended answer. May our divine Master aid me in both these instances, or else not suffer me to write at all.

I have just been reading Hab. iii. 13, which seemed difficult to clear; one of the metaphors referring to an animate, the other to an inanimate structure: I should be glad to know, how you understand, and how you would explain the passage. Perhaps, at your leisure, you will consider the whole chapter; and when I ask for a descant upon one, give me an elucidation of twenty verses.

I have certainly a very great esteem for Dr. Gill, yet I never could assent to his notion of eternal justification. I am very much obliged to you for pointing out to me the passage in Theron and Aspasio which seems to favour, or proceeds upon such a tenet. It shall be altered in the next edition.

My dilatory proceedings you will ascribe to the real cause, sickness; then you will not deal with me according to the law of retaliation, but according to that law of kindness, which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ has written upon your heart.

Indeed, I think your arguments are unanswerable. If so, do not you think there are some things in my third Dialogue exceptionable? I wish you would examine it; bring it to the touchstone of your last letter, and where it is wrong correct it.

I should like to have Theron object something in your way of argumentation, and Aspasio frankly confess that he has overshot the mark. Such an acknowledgment endears the character of the speaker, and such a circumstance makes the sentiment more impressive on the reader.

I have often thought the second verse of Psalm cxxxi. very difficult, and have been at a loss to find out the propriety of the comparison. Why composed and quiet as a weaned child, when we know, that the time of weaning children is always a time of disappointment, often of disease? At this season they are particularly forward and peevish: The very reverse, therefore, of that frame of mind which the Psalmist seems to be illustrating. This was the best solution which occurred to my thoughts: A child weaned from his mother is disquieted and fretful. Such is my natural, and such would be my habitual temper, was I not influenced and calmed by grace; but, through divine grace, my mind is resigned and quiet as the weaned child, when brought back to the mother, and lulled to rest on that soft and warm bosom, where it had so often lain with the greatest delight, but from which it had been for a season withdrawn. You see I would translate, "in pectus sive gremium matris suæ." But whether my translation be warrantable, or my paraphrase such as suits the tenor of the Psalm, I submit to your determination.

Accept my sincere thanks for your valuable correction of a passage in my sermon: such improving animadversions will always be more acceptable than the inebriating voice of applause, far more acceptable to your truly affectionate friend.

LETTER CCVI.

Weston, Oct. 19, 1758.

My dear Friend,—You some time ago sent me a poem, with which I was much delighted, notwithstanding the uncouth metre and obsolete words; I mean Fletcher's Purple Island, to which were subjoined several other of his poetical pieces; one particularly I remember to his brother G. Fletcher, on his poem entitled Christ's Victory in Heaven and on Earth, and his triumph over and after Death.

I happened to mention Fletcher to a gentleman lately, who has since lent me this very poem, which I longed to see, as the title pleased me so much. He tells me, that Phineas Fletcher was not only an excellent poet himself, and the son of a poet, (namely of John Fletcher, a celebrated dramatic writer in the reign of Queen Elizabeth) but brother to two eminent poets, of which this G. Fletcher was one, and a young student at Cambridge when he wrote this poem.

I wish any bookseller could be prevailed with to reprint the Purple Island, and add to it Christ's Victory, &c. in one neat volume. I believe it would sell, if properly revised and altered. It grieves me to think these pieces should be lost to the world, and be for ever buried in obscurity. I have folded down several passages in Christ's Victory and Triumph for your inspection; and if they meet with your approbation, I hope you will join your interest with me, in endeavouring to preserve the work from perishing. The Purple Island is to be sure a superior poem, and abounds with picturesque, useful, and striking sentiments; but with that you are well acquainted, as it has so long been a favourite with you.

I am now so very ill, that I scarce think I shall live to see the approaching Christmas.* Had I been in perfect health, and

* Mr. Hervey died on Christmas day, according to his own supposition.

disengaged from other employment, I question whether I should not have retouched the poetry, changed several of the obsolete words, illustrated the obscure passages by occasional notes, and run the risk of publishing the whole at my own expense. To this I should have been more particularly inclined, as there are so few poems of the scriptural kind wrote by men of genius; though no subject can be equally sublime and instructive, or more entertaining; witness Milton's Paradise lost, and Pope's Messiah.

Could not Rivington get some one to make these necessary alterations? Or if he does not care to engage in it, would not Dodsley undertake it, who is himself a poet, and very capable of abridging it in some places, enlarging it in others, and thoroughly correcting the whole? Do you know Mr. Joseph Wharton of Trinity College, Oxford, who translated Virgil? He is very capable of doing this: and as he is a clergyman, I should imagine he would think his time well employed in thus contributing to our blessed Master's honour.

Methinks if a subscription to modernize valuable authors, and thus rescue them from the pit of oblivion, was properly set on foot by some men of eminence, and the proposals well drawn up, it would meet with due encouragement. I have often wondered that such an attempt has never yet been made. How many excellent books of the last century are now out of print, whilst such a number of useless and pernicious writings are continually published?

I now spend almost my whole time in reading and praying over the Bible. Indeed, indeed you cannot conceive, how the springs of life in me are relaxed and relaxing. "What thou dost, do quickly," is for me a proper admonition, as I am so apprehensive of my approaching dissolution. My dear friend, attend to "the one thing needful." With this I send you my heart, its warmest good wishes, and most tender affections; and till it ceases to beat, I shall never cease to pray for your abundant happiness, or to be, my dear sir, your sincerely affectionate friend, &c.

Some of the passages mentioned in the preceding letter to have been folded down by Mr. Hervey, were as follow.

In the three following stanzas, the poet speaks of man, as destitute of all hope and remedy without Christ.

Should any to himself for safety fly?
The way to save himself (if any were)
Is to fly from himself. Should he rely
Upon the promise of his wife? what there,
What can he see, but that he most may fear—
A syren, sweet to de th? Upon his friends?
Who what he needs, or what he hath not, lends;
Or, wanting aid himse.f, aid to another sends?
His strength? 'tis dust. His pleasure? cause of pain.
His hope? false courtier. Youth or beauty? brittle.
Entreaty? Fond. Repentance? late and vain
Just recompense? the world were all too little.
Thy love? he hath no title to a tittle.
Hell's force? in vain her furies hell shall gather.
His servants, kinsmen, or his children rather?
His child (if good) shall judge; if bad, shall curse his father.

His life? that brings him to his end, and leaves him.
His end? that leaves him to begin his wo.
His goods? what good in that which so deceives him?
His gods of wood? their feet, alas! are slow
To go to help, which must be help'd to go.
Honour, great worth? ah! little worth they be
Unto their owners. Wit? that makes him see
He wanted wit, who thought he had it wanting thee.*

In another place, repentance and faith are thus described:

She† in an arbour sate
Of thorny brier, weeping her cursed state,
And her before a hasty river fled,
Which her blind eyes with faithful penance fed,
And all about the grass with tears hung down its head.

Her eyes, though blind abroad, at home kept fast,
Inwards they turn'd and looked into her head,
At which she often started as aghast,
To see so fearful spectacles of dread:
And with one hand her breast she martyred,
Wounding her heart the same to mortify;
The other a fair damsel‡ held her by,
Which if but once let go, she§ sunk immediately.

In another place is shewn the sufficiency of Christ, and impotency in man.

What hath man done, that man shall not undo,
Since God to him is grown so near akin?
Did his foe slay him? he shall slay his foe.
Has he lost all? he all again shall win.
Is sin his master? he shall master sin.
Too hardy soul with sin the field to try,
The only way to conquer was to fly;
But thus long death hath lived, and now death's self shall die.

Christ is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger he is bread;
If any be a bondman, he is free.
If any be but weak, how strong is he?
To dead men, life he is; to sick men, health;
To blind men, sight; and to the needy, wealth;
A pleasure without loss; a treasure without stealth.

Despair, Presumption, Vain-glory, &c. &c. are personified in different parts of the poem; but the preceding and following stanzas will be sufficient to give the reader an idea of it; and therefore it would be unnecessary to quote all the passages to which Mr. Hervey had referred.

Ere long they came near to a baleful bower,‖
Much like the mouth of that infernal cave,
Which gaping stood all comers to devour,
Dark, doleful, dreary, like a greedy grave
That still for carrion-carcasses doth crave.
The ground no herbs but venomous did bear,
Nor ragged trees did leaf, but everywhere
Dead bones and skulls were cast, and bodies hanged were.

Upon the roof the bird of sorrow sat,
Keeping back joyful day with her sad note,
And through the shady air the fluttering bat
Did wave her leathern sails, and blindly float;
While with her wings the fatal screech-owl smote
The unblessed house; there on a craggy stone
Celæno¶ hung, and made a direful moan,

* Christ. † Repentance. ‡ Faith. § Repentance.
‖ The habitation of Despair described.
¶ One of the Harpies.
Insulæ Ionio in magno: quas dira Celæno,
Harpyriæque colunt aliæ.—*Virg. Æn.* iii.

Like cloudy moon-shine in some shadowy grove,
Such was the light in which DESPAIR did dwell;
But he himself with night for darkness strove,
His black uncombed locks dishevell'd fell
About his face; through which as brands of hell
Sunk in his skull, his staring eyes did glow,
Which made him deadly look; their glimpse did show
Like cockatrice's eyes, that sparks of poison throw.

Now he would dream that he from heaven fell,
And then would snatch the air, afraid to fall;
And now he thought he sinking was to hell,
And then would grasp the earth; and now his stall
To him seem'd hell, and then he out would crawl;
And ever as he crept would squint aside,
Lest he should be by fiends from hell espied,
And forced, alas! in chains for ever to abide.

Christ's triumph over death, by his sufferings on the cross.

A tree was first the instrument of strife,
Where Eve to sin her soul did prostitute;
A tree is now the instrument of life,
Though ill that trunk and Christ's fair body suit;
Ah, cursed tree! and yet, oh blessed fruit;
That death to him, *this* life to us doth give;
Strange is the cure, when things past cure revive,
And the Physician dies to make his patient live.

Christ's triumph over death by his passion in the garden.

So may we oft a tender father see,
To please his wanton son, his only joy,
Coast all about to catch the roving bee,
And, stung himself, his busy hands employ
To save the honey for the gamesome boy;
Or from the snake her rancorous teeth erase,
Making his child the toothless serpent chase,
Or with his little hands her swelling crest embrace.

Thus Christ himself to watch and sorrow gives,
While dew'd in easy sleep dead Peter lies;
Thus man in his own grave securely lives,
While Christ alive with thousand horrors dies,
Yet more for ours than his own pardon cries.
No sins he had, yet all our sins he bare;
So much doth God for others' evils care,
And yet so careless men for their own evils are.

The treachery of Judas is thus represented.

See drowsy Peter, see where Judas wakes,
Where Judas kisses him whom Peter flies;
O kiss, more deadly than the sting of snakes!
False love, more hurtful than true injuries!
Ah me! how dearly God his servant buys!
For God his man at his own blood doth hold,
And man his God for thirty pence hath sold:
So tin for silver goes, and dunghill-dross for gold.

The spirits of just men made perfect, are very poetically described in the following stanza:

No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow;
No bloodless malady empales the face:
No age drops on their hairs his silver snow;
No nakedness their bodies does embase;
No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace;
No fear of death the joy of life devours;
No unchaste sleep their precious time deflowers;
No loss, no grief, no change wait on their winged hours.

LETTER CCVII.

Weston-Favell, Nov. 7, 1758.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I should be very ungrateful, if I did not thank you for your late present; and for the many obliging things you are pleased to say of me and my writings, in your valuable letter. I hope they will be successful advocates for the furtherance of the gospel; and I am very sorry to hear by you, as well as from several other of my correspondents in Scotland, that the gentlemen of letters in that kingdom are deplorably gone off from the simplicity and truth of the Scriptures, and that the Socinian tenets are gaining ground apace. I could wish, methinks, at this critical juncture, that Alsop's * Anti-Sozzo, which made its first appearance in 1675, was judiciously abridged, and, in the neat Glasgow type, reprinted in a duodecimo volume; though it is almost a pity to abridge it, (unless it was well executed), as the whole is so interesting, and might be contained in two duodecimo volumes, or even in one octavo volume, if printed at Glasgow. It is, I can assure you, a very smart book, and one of the best defences of the evangelical doctrines I ever saw, or ever expect to see, even if my life, which now draws very near its end, could be prolonged to the next century. In short, I think it an unanswerable performance; and divines of every denomination would do well to make themselves thoroughly masters of this spirited and entertaining writer, as they would then be able to defend the truth as it is in Jesus against all kind of opponents, how witty, keen, subtle, or malignant soever the attack might be. I would, therefore, beg you to recommend this book as a specific against Socinianism, and use your interest to have it forthwith reprinted at Glasgow.

Glad I am to be informed, that you are so very zealous for the honour and interest of our Lord Jesus Christ. What can make mankind happy, but his gospel? What is worthy of our sedulous application, but his interest? What will be a substantial reward, but his acceptance, favour, and love?

I am now reduced to a state of infant weakness, and given over by my physician. My grand consolation is to meditate on Christ; and I am hourly repeating those heart-reviving lines of Dr. Young, in his fourth night.

This, only this, subdues the fear of death:
And what is this? Survey the wondrous cure;
And at each step let higher wonder rise!
1. Pardon for infinite offence! 2. and pardon
Through means that speak its value infinite!
3. A pardon bought with blood! 4. With blood divine
5. With blood divine of him I made my foe!
6. Persisted to provoke! 7. Though woo'd and aw'd,
Bless'd and chastised, a flagrant rebel still!
8. A rebel 'midst the thunders of his throne
9. Nor I alone! 10. A rebel universe:
11. My species up in arms! 12. Not one exempt.
13. Yet for the foulest of the foul he dies
14. Most joy'd for the redeem'd from deepest guilt!
15. As if our race were held of highest rank;
And Godhead dearer, as more kind to man.

* Anti-Sozzo, or against Socinus (Faustus), a native of Sienna, whose Italian name was Sozzo. He wrote a book about 1575, entitled, De Jesu Christo Servatore, and died 1604.

These amazingly comfortable lines, I dare say, you will treasure up in your heart; and when you think of them, will think of me; and I hope, dear sir, pray for me, that I may not disgrace my ministry, or dishonour the gospel of my Master in my last moments, by unbelief! base provoking unbelief! This probably is the last time you will ever hear from me: for indeed it is with some difficulty I have wrote now; but I shall not fail to remember you in my intercessions for my friends at the throne of Christ; and I humbly beg of God Almighty, that the love of his Son may sweetly constrain you, and that his promises may be ever operative on your mind.—I am, with great gratitude and much esteem, reverend and dear sir, your affectionate brother in Christ.

LETTER CCVIII.

Friday morning.

Dear Sir,—You ask me what I think of you, in case it should please God to take you out of the world in the perplexed state you have described to me. An answer to such a question is much more difficult than you seem to be aware of; and, therefore, I must beg leave to decline passing any sentence. We ministers are to teach, warn, comfort, and exhort every man, according to God's most holy word; but after death comes the judgment on each of us. For, alas! how little, how very little do we know of one another, or of ourselves! The most amazing, perhaps, and one of the most humbling considerations too, which can well be offered to the human mind, is, that though we cannot form a tolerable judgment of any man's real condition, yet God shall judge the world, the whole world, in equity; not so much as one single case, how intricate soever it may seem to us, will he mistake. He was, is, and ever shall be, omniscient and omnipresent. And yet, short-sighted creatures as we are, how often do we usurp this prerogative, and presume to judge our fellow-creatures? A certain author, whose name I forgot, (though I registered to the following effect from him in one of my old diaries), has observed, "That it is impossible for us mortals to form an equitable judgment of the state of any one individual; because God alone knows all the circumstances he has been, and now is in. He alone can be the proper judge of his abilities and powers; what opportunities he had of improving himself, and of doing good; what were the force of his temptations; what difficulties he had to struggle with; what portion of divine grace was given to him; what natural understanding he had; what acquired knowledge was or could be obtained by him; and, in short, what the true state of his case was. Nor will he condemn any one unjustly or arbitrarily. How comfortable a reflection is this! especially to one who is cruelly persecuted, or unjustly censured—that God shall judge the world in equity; and yet what a tremendous thought is it, that every day we live we provoke this Judge of all men, and increase our heap of sin, which swells into such a frightful size, such a stupendous mountain of guilt, as will make us one day stand amazed at the sight of it! But 'what art thou, O thou great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain,' Zech. iv. 7. 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.' Oh! that I may have a devout and lively faith in him, as it is by him alone my sins can be cancelled. May the cry of his blood drown their clamour!—We are, most just God, the children of thy wrath, and he is the Son of thy love, who died to save us, and through whom thou art willing to receive us. Yet what a distrustful fainting of mind comes over me, on the remembrance of former transgressions, which neither a reflection on God's ineffable goodness, nor on the unbounded value of the sacrifice of Christ, can effectually relieve? 'Hear me, O Lord God, in this my hour of heartfelt distress, nor take thou vengeance of my sins; spare thy creature, O Lord, spare him whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood; let thy mighty Spirit fit me for mercy and acceptance, and be not, oh! be not angry with me for ever.'"

With this prose quotation, I send you a copy of verses on the renovation of a sinner; which will, perhaps, at this time, be neither unacceptable nor unseasonable. It was wrote by a very particular friend of mine, and is as poetical as it is instructive and consolatory.

I.

When, with my mind devoutly press'd,
Dear Saviour! my revolving breast
Would past offences trace
Trembling I make the black review,
Yet pleased behold, admiring too,
The power of changing grace.

II.

This *tongue*, with blasphemies defiled,
These *feet*, to erring paths beguiled,
In heavenly league agree;
Who would believe such *lips* could praise,
Or think my dark and winding ways
Should ever lead to thee?

III.

These *eyes*, that once abused their sight,
Now lift to thee their watery light
And weep a silent flood.
These *hands* ascend in ceaseless prayer,
Oh! wash away the stains they wear
In pure, redeeming blood

IV.

These *ears* that pleased could entertain
The midnight oath, the lustful strain,
When round the festal board;

Now deaf to all the enchanting noise,
Avoid the throng, detest the joys,
And long to hear thy word.

V.

Thus art thou served: in every part,
Oh! wouldst thou but transform my *heart*,
That drossy thing refine;
That *grace* might *nature's* strength control,
And a new creature, body, soul,
Be *all*, be ever thine.

I transcribed these verses, as I hope you will commit them to your memory, and often repeat them as you ride or walk, till your tongue, lips, eyes, ears, and very heart, are subservient to the great end of your salvation, and that of others. Exert yourself, be of good cheer, the clouds that darken the face of your affairs, will ere long disperse. He that gave his blood for you, and refused not to bear the racking agonies of the cross for you; he will not leave you, nor forsake you. God, who is faithful and just, has promised to forgive us our sins through the mediation of his Son. Lord, I believe this; help thou our unbelief.—So wishes, and so prays, yours very sincerely.

LETTER CCIX.

Weston-Favell, Monday morning.

DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you for the loan of Dr. Squire's Inquiry into the Foundation of the English Constitution. The performance seems to be curious, useful, and interesting. But how interesting soever the subject may be to others, it can be very little so now to me; as my indisposition is daily increasing, and must, in all human probability, soon put an end to my being.

In spite of the sarcastical reflections you say are thrown upon me, I must recommend to every one Marshall on Sanctification, and Jenks's Submission to the righteousness of God. These are with me the two fundamental books; these teach vital religion. Do they who would decry faith, and extol their good works, distinguish themselves by the practice of them? If not, I must beg leave to say, they are self-condemned. Only observe for the next month (by their fruits you will know them) the conduct of those who are such loud advocates for the merit, the dignity of man, and the freedom of his action; and of those who rely on the active and passive obedience of Christ; and then tell me ingenuously, which are the people that pay the greatest reverence to the word of God; and in particular, to the fourth commandment? Inquire which of them use family prayer? whose conversation is most edifying? which of them visit and travel on Sundays? and which of them pass that holy day as becomes those who have named the name of Christ? I will be bold to say, that, on an impartial examination, the majority will be found on the side of those who embrace the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and who expect salvation by him alone, and not by deeds which they have done. Yet I should wonder how men of discernment (men who, one would think, should be daily sensible of their innumerable failings) could possibly espouse the opposite doctrines, had I not too many melancholy proofs to the contrary. You may safely confide in this doctrine; for this, dear sir, is not to be considered as the particular opinion of James Hervey, but it is the general opinion of our exemplary reformers; it is the doctrine of our Articles and our Homilies. Will you say that our modern moral Christians, if I may so call them, are to be set in competition with men like these? I appeal to facts. Mark the effect of preaching mere morality, and of preaching the grace of Christ. But so long as the devil is suffered to deceive the nations, and so long as the heart is unconvinced of sin, we may assure ourselves, the doctrines of justification by Christ's righteousness, and salvation by free grace, will meet with opposition. Therefore St. Paul exhorts Timothy, Αγωνιζε τον καλον αγωνα της πιστεως, "to fight the good fight of faith:" it is an address to a combatant, and supposes a conflict, a noble conflict; καλος, the finest word in the most expressive language, importing all that is good and great; let us not then be ashamed of the cause.

My cough is very troublesome. I can get little rest; medicines yield no relief; but my never-failing cordial is the love of Christ.

Religion bears my spirits up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope,
In oaths,* in promises,† in blood.‡
WATTS' HYMNS, b. i.

Staynoe (see Let. cxxx.) whom you inquire after, was a good man, a tutor at Trinity College, Oxford, and afterwards rector of St. Leonard, Foster-lane; and in the year 1704, published, in two volumes, octavo, his treatise on Salvation by Jesus Christ. Mine is the second edition. It is no contemptible book, though the style is rather too prolix, and he has some peculiar notions. But who has ever seen a faultless book? All writers have their failings, more or less. No mortal is exempted from them; not even Homer, Virgil, or Milton himself. This ought to teach us candour and humility in such a state of imperfection; and above all, it should inspire us with a reverential admiration of the *book of God*, which alone is free from error; by

* Heb. vi. 17. † 2 Pet. i. 4. ‡ Rev. i 5.

which we are guided into all truth; and in which we are promised eternal life, procured for us by the righteousness, sufferings, and mediation of Jesus Christ. I wish, most heartily wish, you may sufficiently regard this inestimable book; and then you will be like the tree planted by the waterside, which bringeth forth its fruits in due season; and like that happy man of whom it is written by the Psalmist, "Look! whatsoever he doeth it shall prosper." I am, my dear friend, affectionately and unalterably yours, &c.

JACOBI HERVEY

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EPISTOLA AD CAROLUM THAYER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS epistle was published by John Rivington, Mr. Hervey's bookseller, in 1766, and sold at 6d. The following advertisement is prefixed to it.

"The design of this publication is to acquaint the reader with the late ingenious Mr. Hervey's sentiments on the book of Job; and it is given to the community in the language with *which* it was penned, as a specimen of this author's Latin style; but as it has never been corrected, it is presumed that the candid reader will make proper allowances for its defects.

"N.B.—The original letter (without the least variation) was transmitted to the press by the Rev. Mr. Robert Knight, rector of Weston-Favell, in Northamptonshire, who married Mr. Hervey's youngest sister; and it is now deposited in the hands of Mr. Rivington, for the satisfaction of such as desire to be assured of its authenticity."

The translation of this excellent letter, which now makes its first appearance in print, was undertaken by the printer, at the desire of several gentlemen, who conceived that the inserting the Latin copy of it only in our author's works, would be of no use to the generality of the encouragers of this edition. Though the translator does not pretend that the translation is any way equal to the original, yet he flatters himself he has given the author's meaning, which may be of use to the unlearned. Those who are skilled in the learned languages will prefer the original, and cannot be displeased that Mr. Hervey is also made to speak in English to those who do not understand Latin.

REVERENDO VIRO

CAROLO THAYER,

SALUTEM.

MIROR equidem, vir spectatissime, tantam tibi linguæ non vernaculæ, quæque ab hodiernis colloquiis exulat, copiam in promptu esse. Ni te jamdudum nossem, uberrima ista Romani eloquii penus facile me induceret ut crederem, Tusculi* te potius quam Abingtoniæ† habitasse. Quod ad me attinet, quum probe sciam, quam rudis sim et inexercitatus in hoc scribendi genere, paulum abfuit quin silentum mihi perpetuum indixissem. Per plurimos dies, tenuitatis nostræ conscius, manum de tabula timidam cohibui. Verum enimvero pudor reclamavit, animusque ab ingratitudine abhorrens stimulos addidit; atque inde sit ut calamus, impar licet et ineptus, ad epistolare munus jam tandem excitatus est.

Gratias itaque ago, quantas possum maximas, quod plurima mihi notatu dignissima de Jobo, Jobique libro, pro singulari tua humanitate atque eruditione, ultro communicasti. Versionem imprimis ad examen revocas. Nitida ea est, elegantiarum ferax, vimque Hebræarum vocum, supra quod sperari potuit, vix imminutam tradit. Addas licet, novam eam esse in plurimis, sed quæ auctoritatem suam secum afferat, et legentium suffragia primo statim ab intuitu adsciscit. Notas deinde sagaci percurris

* Tusculum, urbs Italica, ubi villa Ciceronis.
† Abingtonia, oppidulum prope Northantoniam.

oculo. Quas qui legit religitque, haud facile est dicere, utrum plus sit reportaturus utilitatis, ex amplissima orientalis eruditionis segete; seu potius oblectamenti, a dulcissimo illo criticæ artis flore. Adeo non frivola sunt et futilia quæ ubique annotantur, ut vocabulorum emphasin, argumentorum pondera, sensuum sublimitatem, colloquii denique telam pulcherrimo ordine deductam, manu limatissima admota collustrant. Imo tanto affuso lumine collustrant, ut vel mihi hebetioris ingenii viro patescant, et patefacta placeant. Quid multis? eum ipsum, puto, commentatorem nactus est Jobus, quem præ omnibus aliis optasset, si superstes adhuc inter homines versaretur.

De Jobi ævo, quo vixit, non constat inter doctos, neque opinor constabit unquam. Atqui verisimilima videtur quam tu aliique tuentur opinio. In vestras partes non invitus transeo. Illustrem hunc principem non nisi post Abrahamum floruisse certo certius est. Qui enim nomen terræ dedit, quam alter amicorum coluit, Temanitidi, is inter Esaui posterus numeratur. Prohibet porro insignissimum istud encomium quo cohonestatur a Spiritu Sancto, ne suspicemur eum diebus patriarcharum Isaaci aut Jacobi vitam transegisse. Vix potuit vere dice "CI AIN CTHU CADING" nisi post funera Josephi. Inter hunc igitur morte ablatum, et Mosen ex ephebis excessum, omnino statuendo videtur æra Jobi.

De scripto ipso, profluxisse illud ab alia quam Jobi manu nullus dubito. Is quippe inter Arabas nutritus, atque Arabum linguæ assuefactus, vix tanta fuit Hæbraicarum literarum peritia imbutus, quanta opus erat ad res tales tali verborum nitore et concinnitate consignandas chartis. Si Mosi authori librum ascribere quis maluit, quod Anglicana nostra in observatiunculis suis margini affixis editio innuit, tum demum abritror ante Israelitas per deserta traductos confectum esse. Legislator ille celeberrimus dum tanto agmini ducem se rectoremque præbuit, vix potuit ad historiam poeticam contexendam animum appellere. Ingens præterea rerum quotidie agendarum multitudo atque onus, ne tale aliquid moliretur, mentem sine dubio abstraherent. Nulla autem ea potuit opportunior esse occasio, quæ illi obtigit, dum exul inter Midianitas commoratus est. Rusticabatur tunc temporis; otiabatur; omnia habuit indulta, quæ poetæ ingenium stimulare atque accendere solent. Huic insuper sententiæ adstipulatur, quod in eas regiones relegatus, omnia quæ ad Jobum, finitimæ terræ incolam, pertinerent, ediscere potuit uberius. Gnaviter quoque pro tali conjectura militat frequentior exotici idiomatis usus, phrasiumque varietas Arabicam, indolem plane redolentium. Warburtonus noster omni nisu id agit, ut Esræ, scriptorum sacrorum ultimo, thesaurarium hoc theologiæ, philosophiæ, atque omnigenæ fere doctrinæ acceptum referamus. Quæ quidem hypothesis, speciosa licet, et rationibus neutiquam contemnendis subnixa, fidem apud me non optinet. Signa enim sunt (ni vanus auguror) et criteria, passim per librum sparsa, quæ ætatem longe antiquiorem subindicant. Ad legem latam aut res gestas Israelitarum ne allusum est, quod mihi videre contigit, uspiam. Nullibi vel mentio fit miraculorum in Ægypto et per deserta editorum. Que tantum cuivis poemati conciliarent decus, tantum porro Judæis solamen suppeditarent, ut a nemine cordato intacta prorsus relinquerentur. Inter alia quæ scripsisti pulcherrima, την γνησιοτητα toti huic historiæ adstruis. Adeo non esse asseris, assertumque probas, fictitium quendam pii ingenii lusum, ut omnia e contra revera agerentur. Proinde non debere aliquem inter legendum putare, sibi ante oculos esse ejus solius quod fieri potuit figmentum, sed genuinam ejus quod fuit narrationem. Me jam antea huic opinioni accedentem, fecerunt quas protulisti rationes, ut ei arctius adhæream. Etsi vero historiæ veritatem sibi vindicet, dramatici tamen operis lepores præ se fert. Voces si spectes, ornatissimæ illæ cultissimæque, non tam enarrant, quam res conspiciendas ferme exhibent. Sensibus autem nihil gravius, grandius, sublimius, Deo inspirante dignius, aut humano generi magis scitu necessarium. Characterum interea diversitas mira; quodque artis est summæ, ad vivum depicti singuli, et sibi invicem undique constantes. Altera insuper venustatis specie gaudet Jobæis nostra, quæ artificiosis dramaticorum commentis decori est atque ornamento. Non fumum ex fulgore, quod monuit criticus, sed ex fumo lucem edit. Sermone pedestri orditur. Inde pedetentim progreditur ad altiores dicendi modos. Et cothurno induto, sensibus quoque assurgit. Rerum major nascitur ordo. Vehementiores congressus. Acriora conflictantium certamina. Usque dum nihil amplius aut fortius hinc illinc dici potuit. Tum demum intervenit moderator. Quæ prave dicta sunt utrinque subacto pensitat judicio, debitaque reprehensione castigat. Summa, si fieri potest, ope nititur, ut fervidos disputantium animos componat, litemque diu agitatam dirimat. Sed frustra. Major inest nodus, et difficilioris longe solutionis, quam ut juveni remonstranti cedat. DEUS, ecce DEUS adest! quidquamne augustius excogitari possit? Qui circuitus cœlorum perambulat, in arenam quasi (constet summa reverentia dicto) descendit. Quique astra per inane volventia librat, ILLE IPSE controversiæ hujus momenta et pondera æqua

quasi bilance trutinat. Deo autem orante causam, ut ferocientes animi subsidunt! reniti cessant. Manus dant. Obmutescunt. Jobus ipse, quem lautiores de fua puritate tumidique nimis conceptus, ultra quam par erat, vexerant, erroris convictus, iniquitatis manifestus, pudore suffunditur, arma projicet, ad pedes infinitæ misericordiæ venerabundus devolvitur. Noscit seipsum; pœnitentiam agit; cedendo vincet; eumque, simul atque se coram Deo humillime deprimit, calamitatis sortitus est exitum, quem nefas esset expectare, dum inculpatam sibi integritatem temere nimis arrogavit. Omnia sua, non ita pridem misere deperdita, cumulatissima manu reponit, auget, stabilitque numen propitium. Palmæ ad instar, pressus resurgit; quamque omnes de felicitate sua conclamatum iri arbitrabantur, tum demum rediviva evasit, multoque, quam olim, lætius efflоruit. Quam subitanea atque insperata prorsus catastrophe! quam jucundus malorum finis! quam pulchra coronis toto operi superinducta!

Leviter hæc tetigisse sufficiat. A rebus curiosæ speculationis, tuo ductus exemplo, ad utiliora longe mentem calamumque verto. Quæ fidem vacillantem suffulciant, praximque errabundam nimis gubernatoris solertis ritu ad clavum assidue sedentis, corrigant dirigantque, ea nunc consideranda occurrunt. Quod prudenter mones, de ediscenda animi fortitudine ex Jobo afflictionum agminibus lacessito, nec tamen fracto aut prostrato; de petendis insuper ad patientiam incitamentis ex Jobo mala acerbissima passo, atque humiliter se et summisse ferendo oneri accingente; id avide aripio; memoria defixum teneo; Deumque precor ut in ima atque intima cordis transeat. Nobilissimum illud quod resurrectioni* mortuorum perhibetur testimonium, te eo remittente meditationes nostras, libenter adeo. Quamque aliqui, de re Christiana non bene meriti, monumentum istud ære perennius, auro pretiosus convellere satagunt, pergratam sane operam navat interpres noster, dum validissimis rationum viribus id sibi stabiliendum accipit. Non te latet fuisse inter eruditos, qui pulcherrimam hanc Jobinæ fidei confessionem aliorsum detorquere student; et de fortunis solummodo redintegratis ut intelligatur velint. Quem quidem errorem radicitus avulsum et funditius deletum, non sine gaudio et gratulatione, in lucubrationibus hisce accuratissimis contemplari datum est. Quod mihi de Redemptore "CALI" suggeris, id profecto arridet magnopere, et toto pectore amplector. Vellem de quocunque sacrorum voluminum libro dicere, quod olim Augustinus optime, "Sunt Scripturæ tuæ deliciæ meæ." Nulla est inter codices divinos pagina, quæ non aurifodinis sit præstantior; nulla vel minutissima inspiratæ veritatis portiuncula, quin melle Hyblæo dulcior longe. Quæ autem de Christo vaticinantur; Christum sive venturum spondent, sive adventum depingunt; Christum, ægris me delam, lugentibus solatium, vicariam pro sontibus victimam, ἀντίλυτρον, ἀντίψυχον, ea, apud me, infinitum quantum! palmam præripiunt. Renident ea margaritarum instar hinc inde coruscantium; sive, ut cum poeta loquar, velut inter ignes luna minores. De his colloquia apud ædes privatas, de his pro rostro conciones, de his denique contemplationes domi, foris, instituere gestirum. Imo in his totus essem, atque immorarer jugiter, nisi corruptela, proh dolor! naturæ insita obstaret; vagæque ac instabiles cogitationes mentem in contraria identidem deflecterent. Hæc enim edidicisse, sapientia est; his fidem adhibuisse, salus. Qui hæc ad unguem callet, bonus evadet theologus; quique animo penitius imbibit, Christianus.

At quo feror? In quæ spatia effusus, trans limites epistolaris commercii excurro? Reprimo me tandem. Unum duntaxat præ aliis eximium, e versione antea laudata, locum seligere liceat. Ea erit scriptiunculæ hujus nostræ meta, et patientiæ tuæ lassæ plus satis et defatigatæ levamen. Verum ibi pristinumque sensum, acerrimo ingenii acumine e tenebris erutum, et non sine magno sanæ doctrinæ commodo repositum, lætus aspicio. Pericopam, si vacat, videre es, cap. iv. 17. Num mortalis *a* (non *præ*, ut nostras se habet hic saltem malefida versio) numine justus erit? Haud memini legisse me, aut narrando accepisse, ab ullo unquam, eo impudentiæ deventum iri, ut justiorem se Deo, perfectionis omnimodæ fonte ac norma, venditare ausit. Vix igitur, imo ne vix quidem operæ pretium fuisset, tanto cum conamine dictorum et pompa refellere, quod in nullius quotquot sunt mortalium cogitationes introire potuit. Neque aliud quam nugatorem agit scriptor divinus, si fidem redditioni receptæ habes; sin vero Schultensii admittas, non item. Exhibet ista nodum deo vindice dignum. Errorem perstringit jugulatque, quo nullus alius exitialior, quive importunius sese in mentes nostras ingerit. Speciem omnem humani, quod vocatur, meriti tollit, convellit, conculcat. Neque sinit, ut minima vel sanctissimis hominum, aut sua junctandi, aut se justificandi, ansa sit relicta. Quin omnes omnino, utcunque pietatis puritatisque encomiis per terras nobilitatos, coram supremo judice reos ἀναπολογήτους, sistit. Nullos proinde posse a tremendo illo tribunali pœnarum expertes abire, nisi gratuito iis condonentur peccata et Christi Mediatoris justitia iis in salutem imputetur. Ecce revera evangelicum ante evangelium! Qui

* Vide Jobi, cap. xix. 25.

non cutem solam œconomiæ istius salutiferæ invenisset palpando, sed in ipsissima vicera et medullas quodammodo, penetrasse videtur. Felices nos nostrosque si eandem fidem medullitus hausisse detur! Amo mehercule hominem, qui feliciter commentando hæc tam luculenta *ευαγγελια* Jobo, Christianismo, nobisque etiam, aut inscitia Hebraicæ dictionis aut incuria interpretum ablata, instauravit demum ac restituit. Te vero impensius, vir reverende, amo atque colo; dulcissima cujus amicitia, plus una alteraque vice experimento cognita, fecit, ut amplissimam ex ea voluptatis atque emolumenti messem sperare, ac mihimet ipsi polliceri audeam. Ut vivas, valeasque, ex animo optat tibi devinctissimus

JACOBUS HERVEY.

P. S.—Si qua in re tibi, salute recuperata, prodesse potero, id ne dicam roges, sed jubeas velim.

TO THE

REV. MR. CHARLES THAYER.

RESPECTED SIR,—Truly I am surprised that you have so ready a faculty of expressing yourself in a language which is not your mother tongue, and which is banished from modern conversation. Unless I had been intimately acquainted with you long ago, that fruitful fund of Roman elocution would easily induce me to believe that you had dwelt at Tusculum* rather than at Abingdon.† As to myself, well knowing my rudeness and want of exercise in this kind of writing, I was on the point of imposing a perpetual silence on myself. For several days, sensible of my own incapacity, I withheld my timorous hand from the desk. But indeed shame remonstrated, and a mind extremely averse to ingratitude, egged me on; and hence it is that my pen, though unequal and ill fitted for the task, is now at last excited to give you the trouble of a letter.

I render you my greatest thanks for your voluntarily communicating to me, out of your singular humanity and erudition, many remarks worthy of the highest notice concerning Job and his book. In the first place, you bring the version to the touchstone. It is neat, replete with elegance, and gives the force of the Hebrew phrases in their full strength, beyond any man's expectation. Add to this, that though it is new in most instances, yet it is what carries its authority in its bosom, and gains the reader's assent at the very first sight. Then you run over the notes with a sagacious eye. Which whoever reads, and reads over again, it is not easy to say whether he will carry off more profit from that very large crop of eastern learning, or rather delight from that most agreeable flower of the art of criticism. So that the remarks everywhere interspersed are not trifling or unimportant, as they, with great ingenuity and skill, illustrate the emphasis of the words, the weight of the arguments, the sublimity of the meaning, and the thread of the discourse laid out in a most beautiful order. Nay, they shine with so glaring a light, that they are clearly understood even by me, a man of dull apprehension; and, being understood, please me. In short, Job, I fancy, has got the very commentator which he would have preferred to all others, if he himself had been now living and conversant among men.

As to the age in which Job lived, the learned are not agreed, nor I suppose ever will. But that opinion which you and others maintain seems to be most probable. I willingly go over to your side. Nothing is more certain than that this illustrious hero lived after Abraham: For he who gave a name to the country which one of his friends, the Temanite, inhabited, is reckoned among the posterity of Esau. Moreover, that very remarkable encomium with which he is honoured by the Holy Spirit, forbids us to imagine that he lived in the days of the patriarchs Isaac or Jacob. It could scarcely be truly said that there was none like him in the earth, unless he had lived after the death of Joseph. The time of Job seems therefore to be truly placed between the decease of Joseph and the manhood of Moses.

As to the writing itself, I have no doubt that it proceeded from no other hand than that of Job. For he being educated among the Arabs, and used to their language, he had scarce so great skill in the Hebrew learning as was necessary for consigning to writing such important matters in so neat and elegant a style. If any choose to ascribe the book to Moses as its author, as our English edition has intimated in the notes on the margin, then I suppose it was wrote before the passage of the Israelites through the wilderness. While that celebrated lawgiver was employed as the guide and ruler of so great a company, he could scarce apply his mind to write a poetical history. Besides, the great number and weight of the matters he had to do every day, would, without doubt, divert his mind from so great an undertaking. And no time could be more favourable to him than that which he enjoyed while he lived as an exile among the Midianites. He dwelt in

* Tusculum, a town of Italy, where Cicero's country-house stood.

† Abingdon, a little town near Northampton.

the country at that time, had much leisure, and had all conveniencies which use to stimulate and fire the genius of a poet. What further strengthens this opinion is, that being banished into those countries, he could have full information of every thing relating to Job, who dwelt in the neighbouring land. The frequent use, too, of a foreign idiom, and a variety of phrases plainly smelling of the Arabian genius, plead strongly in behalf of such a conjecture. Our countryman, Dr. Warburton, labours hard to prove that we are indebted to Ezra, the last of the sacred writers, for this treasure of divinity, philosophy, and all kind of learning. But this hypothesis, however specious, and supported by reasons nowise despicable, does not command my assent. For unless I guess wrong, there are marks and characters scattered everywhere through the book which denote a much more ancient period. There is nowhere any illusion, so far as I could observe, to the promulgation of the law, or the exploits of the Israelites. In no place is there any mention of the miracles performed in Egypt or through the deserts, which would have given so great a dignity to any poem, and afforded so much comfort to the Jews, that they could never have passed unnoticed by any wise man. Among other very beautiful things that you have wrote, you establish the genuineness of this whole history. Consequently you do not assert it to be, and prove what you have asserted, a certain fictitious amusement of a pious genius, but that, on the contrary, it was a real transaction: that therefore no one, in reading, ought to imagine that he has before his eyes a fiction of what might have been done, but a genuine narrative of what actually happened. I was formerly of this opinion, and the reasons you have brought forth make me adhere more closely to it. But although it claims the truth of a real history, it displays all the pleasant entertainment of a dramatic performance. If you consider the words, which are most elegant and ornate, they do not so much relate, as exhibit to view, the several transactions. And nothing is more important, more grand, more sublime, more worthy of an inspiring God, or more necessary for mankind to know. Meantime, there is a surprising diversity of characters, and, what is the highest attainment of art, they are every one painted to the life, and everywhere consistent with one another. Moreover, our history of Job is distinguished by another species of elegance, which is a decoration and ornament to the artificial romances of dramatic writers. He does not bring smoke from a flash, as a critic has observed, but light from smoke. He begins with prose, and then in a trice he proceeds to the higher modes of speaking; and putting on a buskin, rises up to the senses. A greater order of things commences; more vehement conferences, more fierce attacks of the disputants, until nothing more important or more forcible can be said on either side. Then at last a mediator comes in. The perverse sayings of each party he weighs with a deliberate judgment, and chastises with due reprehension. He endeavours with his utmost might, if possible, to calm the warm spirits of the disputants, and decide a controversy that has been long litigated. But in vain. The difficulty is greater, and of far harder solution, than to yield to the remonstrance of a youth. A GOD, behold a God appears! Can any thing more majestic be contrived! He who traverses the circuits of the heavens descends, (let me speak with the utmost reverence), as it were, to the sand. And he who balances the stars that roll through the empty air, HE HIMSELF weighs the importance and weight of this controversy, as it were, in an impartial balance. While God pleads the cause, how do their fierce spirits subside! They cease to resist. They give up their weapons. They are mute. Job himself, whom too splendid and swelling conceptions of his own purity had transported beyond due bounds, being convinced of his mistake, and sensible of his iniquity, is covered with shame, throws down his arms, and, in a worshipping posture, falls prostrate at the feet of infinite mercy. He knows himself; exercises penitence, overcomes by submission; and as soon as he most humbly falls down before God, he obtains an end of his calamity, which he could not lawfully have expected so long as he too rashly arrogated to himself an unblamable integrity. The propitious Deity, with a most liberal hand, replaces, augments, establishes all his effects, which had been not long ago miserably lost. Like the palm-tree, being pressed down he rises up; and when all were going to congratulate him upon his felicity, then at last it revived, and flourished much more plentifully than before. How sudden and unlooked-for a catastrophe! How joyful a period of his distresses! How beautiful a conclusion brought to the whole work!

Let it suffice to have touched these things slightly. Led by your example, I turn my mind and pen from matters of curious speculation to things of greater utility. Those things which support a tottering faith, and rectify and direct a practice too apt to wander, like a skilful pilot who con-

tinually sits at the helm, are now to become the subject of consideration. What you discreetly admonish of, as to learning fortitude of mind from Job teased with a troop of afflictions, yet not broken or dispirited: as to fetching incitements to patience from this man who suffered the most bitter evils, and yet prepared himself humbly and submissively to bear the burden; that I greedily catch at, I hold it fixed in my memory, and I pray to God, that it may penetrate into the lowest and innermost recesses of my heart. I cheerfully proceed, upon your remitting my meditations thither, to that most noble testimony which is given to the resurrection of the dead.* And while some who have not deserved well of Christianity labour to destroy this monument, more lasting than brass, and more precious than gold, our interpreter performs a truly acceptable service, while he undertakes to establish it by the most powerful arguments. You are not ignorant, that there have been some among the learned who endeavour to pervert to a different meaning this most beautiful confession of Job's faith, and would have it understood only of the restoration of his estate. Which error indeed I observed with no small joy and congratulation to be plucked up by the roots, and entirely overthrown in these your most accurate lucubrations. As to what you suggest to me concerning the Redeemer, it truly pleases me very much, and I embrace it with my whole heart. I would wish to say concerning every book of the sacred volumes, what Augustine long ago said excellently, "Thy writings are my delight." There is no page in the divine books which is not more excellent than mines of gold; there is not even the most minute portion of inspired truth, but is sweeter than the sweetest honey. But what they prophesy concerning CHRIST; whether they promise CHRIST to come, or describe his advent; CHRIST, medicine for the sick, comfort to mourners, a vicarious sacrifice for the guilty, a ransom for us, giving his life for us—these things, how infinitely great! carry away the prize. These things shine like pearls sparkling on every side, or, to speak with the poet, as the moon among the lesser stars. Concerning these, I would rejoice to hold conferences in private houses, in the pulpit, in my family, and when abroad. Nay, I would be wholly employed about them, unless the inbred corruption of nature (O grief!) opposed, and wandering and unsettled thoughts now and then diverted my mind to contrary subjects. For to learn these, is wisdom; to believe them, is salvation. He who understands these things exactly, will become a good divine; and he who drinks them into his mind, will become a Christian.

But whither am I carried? Into what excursions, transported, do I run beyond the limits of epistolary correspondence? I repress myself at length. Let me be permitted to select one place at least excellent above others, from the version before extolled; which will put a period to this little writing of mine, and relax your patience, too much tired and wearied out. There with pleasure I behold the true and ancient meaning, by a very brisk effort of genius, rescued from darkness, and restored, not without considerable advantage, to sound doctrine. You may see the defect, if you be at leisure, chap. iv. ver. 17. "Shall mortal man be just before God?" not, more just than God,* as our version, unfaithful here at least, has it. I do not remember to have read, or to have received by report, that any one ever arrived to such a pitch of impudence, as to dare to boast that he was more just than God, the fountain and rule of all manner of goodness. Hardly, therefore, nay, scarcely would it have been worth while to confute, with so great energy and pomp of words, what could enter into the thoughts of no mortals whatsoever. Nor does the divine writer act otherwise than as a trifler, if you believe the received version. But if you admit that of Schultens, he acts quite the reverse. That version discovers a difficulty worthy of a God to unravel. It deciphers and destroys an error, than which there is none more destructive, or that insinuates itself with greater importunity into our minds. It takes away, it refutes, it tramples upon every species of what is called human merit. Nor does it suffer even the least handle to be left to the holiest of men, either to boast of their own deeds, or to justify themselves. Nay, it represents all men, however dignified through the world by the praises of piety and purity, as wholly guilty, and without excuse before the supreme Judge; and shows that none can go away from that tremendous tribunal free from punishment, unless their sins are freely forgiven them, and the righteousness of CHRIST the Mediator be imputed to them for their justification. Behold an evangelist indeed before the Gospel! who by feeling found out, not the sum only of that saving economy, but seems in a manner to have entered into the very bowels and marrow of it. Happy we and our people, if it be given us to draw forth the same faith from the marrow. Truly I love the man, who, by such a happy comment, has at last renewed and restored these bright gospel

* See Job xix. 25.

* See this passage excellently illustrated by our author, in his Contemplations on the Night.

tidings to Job, to Christianity, and to us too, removing either unskilfulness in the Hebrew diction, or the carelessness of interpreters. But, reverend sir, I love and respect you the more ardently, whose most amiable friendship, which I have experienced on trial once and again, has caused me to hope from it a more abundant harvest of pleasure and advantage than I durst promise myself. That you may live and prosper, is the hearty wish of your much obliged

JAMES HERVEY.

P. S.—If upon the recovery of my health, I can be of any service to you in any business, I do not say you should ask it, but command it.

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. JAMES HERVEY.

On vulgar marks Death long had meanly spent
His loaded quiver, and his bow full bent;
Monarchs, who had been great but for a crown,
Statesmen and heroes, sons of high renown;
When, lo! in Heaven this awful mandate past,
"To-morrow's dawn be some famed mortal's last!"
The tidings, to our world officious sent,
Through ALBION'S isles on wing of lightning went:
Impiety, her heart by vipers stung,
Again blasphemes with loud audacious tongue;
Vice stalks abroad, each late retreat forsook,
With all her bold effrontery of look
But, ah! while these malignant triumphs show,
Far other bosoms other feelings know!
The muse in vain conceals her weeping eye,
And each tear Learning answers with a sigh;
Religion starts, though arm'd with tenfold shield,
And Virtue shrinks, though she disdains to yield:
—The arrow sped, Death took his aim too well,
The mitred pontiff lived, and HERVEY fell.

CHARACTER

OF

MR. JAMES HERVEY'S WRITINGS.

THE Reverend Mr. James Hervey being now dead, yet speaketh to us in his valuable writings; writings which, for importance of subject, weight of argument, sublimity of thought, justness of sentiment, and elegance of diction, are equalled by few, and excelled by none.

His strain is truly evangelical; his method inviting, entertaining, and edifying calculated both to profit and to please: and a spirit of meekness, candour, and modesty, breathes through and beautifies the whole.

His favourite topic is the *righteousness* and *atonement* of the Redeemer. On this he expatiates with inexpressible satisfaction, and dwells with rapturous delight. By this he "touches the finest movements of the soul, and strikes all the inmost springs of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy," and sweetly constrains to the obedience of love.

He ransacks the mansions of the dead, turns the grave into a pulpit, and makes putrefaction and mortality preach lessons to the living. He surveys, with Newtonian exactness, the *starry expanse*, and the countless radiant worlds that roll in the nocturnal sky: from these he investigates the glory and perfections of the creating and sustaining God; and from these he enhances the wonders of *redeeming love*. He mounts the believer on the summit of creation, as upon a stupendous eminence, to enlarge his prospect, and exalt his conceptions of the majesty and glory of that God, who *redeemed his church with his own blood*. When imagination itself, with all the assistance of science, is lost in the immensity and awful grandeur of the works of nature; immediately he contracts the universe into a span, and the enormous orbs into fleeting atoms, or the small dust that remains in the balance, when the works of redemption are brought in view.

Thus, he unites the most improved philosopher with the sound believer; and makes reason and nature *subservient to* faith and revelation. Whilst he allows reason its freest inquiry and fullest scope, he gives up with none of the peculiarities of the gospel; but holds forth, with the clearest light, and in various points of view, those truths wherein the *offence of the cross* consists.

May these heavenly doctrines, these precious truths, which flowed in such copious gladdening streams, from his lips and pen, be transmitted pure and unadulterated to the latest posterity; and may that divine Spirit, which gave them their proper energy and influence upon his heart and life, ever accompany them to remotest ages!

THE END.

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